READER'S EVALUATION SHEET IN POLITY

I. EVALUATIONS OF THIS EXAMINATION. The examination consists of three sections, each designed to be completed in one hour. All three sections must be answered. Section III has two options, from which the candidate is instructed to select one. Each section must be evaluated as either “Satisfactory” (S) or “Unsatisfactory” (U). The reader must also assign an overall evaluation for this examination. If any section is omitted it will receive an evaluation of “O”; the examination must then receive an overall evaluation of “Unsatisfactory.” The examination must receive an “S” on at least two out of the three sections to receive an overall evaluation of “Satisfactory.”

Each examination will be evaluated independently by two readers. If both overall evaluations are “S,” the conveners will record a final evaluation of “Satisfactory.” If both readers evaluate the exam overall as “U,” the exam receives a final evaluation of “Unsatisfactory.” If the two readers disagree in their overall evaluations, the exam will be given to a third reader. The conveners will record the final evaluation based on the two concurring overall evaluations.

II. THIS EVALUATION SHEET GOES TO THE CANDIDATE. Each reader’s comments should represent his or her considered appraisal of the paper. These comments are read by the candidate and the candidate’s Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Use the back of this sheet OR attach a separate page for comments explaining the evaluations assigned to each section of this examination.

III. EVALUATIONS:

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IV. OVERALL EVALUATION

NOTE: COMMENTS INCLUDE A MESSAGE FOR COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY. (Please check if applicable.)

Bill Heming

Reader’s name printed

Signature

Reader’s Signature
Section I: Church Ecumenical

The response makes relevant citations and identifies pertinent trends and trajectories from the Book of Order. The presentation to the session is informative and is especially strong as it concludes by inviting the session into a time of discernment. The response could have been strengthened by giving attention not only to interdenominational relationships, but also intradenominational relationships, especially with other governing bodies in a reflection of the connectional nature of the PC(USA). The presentation does offer some concrete ideas about joining with the Church ecumenical and is strengthened by inviting the session into formulating such ideas for itself as it seeks to discern the will of God and follow in God's reforming work in the particular church to be a more effective instrument of mission to the world.

Section II: Nested Congregation

The response is well-balanced in its understanding of many of the polity issues at play in the scenario. The understanding of the responsibility and authority of the presbytery and the administrative commission are particularly strong in the response as is the creative and caring pastoral presentation. One way to strengthen this response would have been giving particular attention to the issue of diversity in the scenario, but this would only be pushing a great response to one that is truly exceptional. The presentation in outline form is full enough that it can be followed and it flows well from the identified issues in the first part.

Section III: The Bells

The response identifies many of the major issues in the scenario, but some of the chosen citations, while adequate, could have been strengthened by looking to the Directory for Worship. When speaking of the elements of worship in general [W-1.4004] and a particular service [W-1.4005] the session and pastor have clear responsibilities and authority, both of which were violated by the music director's autocratic action. The address to the staff takes a potentially explosive situation and turns it into a teachable moment, though the commendation of the stewardship of the music director is perhaps a stretch in attempt to say something positive regarding the inappropriate action. The address could have been strengthened by inviting the music director to speak privately where more balanced pastoral care, including perhaps a reprimand, would have been appropriate. Overall an acceptable response and one that shows ability to pastorally apply polity.

Comments to CPM:

The responses overall balance a good knowledge of relevant polity issues with an appropriate pastoral presence. As always, the responses showed room for improvement, but are perfectly consistent with a pastor in a first call situation.
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[Signatures]

Reader’s name printed

Reader’s Signature

AUGUST 2010

CANDIDATE'S ID# 4684V
Section I: Church Ecumenical

Though this section received a Satisfactory, it would have been strengthened by a greater explanation of what is meant by the sentence at the bottom of page 3, "We submit to the authority of scripture, are guided by our creeds and traditions, and believe that God is at work in our midst today, guiding us, and inspiring us and helping us grow into in understanding of what it means to be God's servants in the world". What does God do to make us "grow into an understanding"?

Section II: Nested Congregation

The paper gave a basic description of the situation and demonstrated a knowledge of the Book of Order. It would have been strengthened by a greater concern for the two churches and what they were going through in their particular situations: perhaps fear and frustration for the NCD and weariness and grief for the Memorial folks.

Section III: The Bells

Again, the paper demonstrated a basic understanding of the polity around the situation. Two suggestions could be made. 1), on page 7, number 3 of part 1, G-10.0102d is cited which describes the session's responsibility for providing worship (including music). For complete clarity,W-1.4005,4-5 might have been included to explain the responsibilities of the pastor for music as well. 2) it would be well to go through the presentation to the staff and discern which portions would be appropriate for a staff meeting and which for a private conversation with the Director.

Comments to CPM:
Section 1

1.

The PCUSA is called to openness to God’s reformation of the church ecumenical that it might be a more effective instrument of mission in the world. This call begins with an understanding that Christ is the head of the church (G-1.0100), and that Christ gives the church its faith, its unity, and its mission—all of which call people to an understanding of the sovereignty of God and God’s saving purpose for our lives.

The Directory for Worship reminds us of our calling. W-7.1002 says that the church in worship is called to join the mission of Jesus Christ in service to the world. Our worship demonstrates our understanding that Jesus is Lord and that Jesus has called us to be a visible manifestation of Christ’s redeeming and reconciling activity in this world. G-3.0200 tells us the church is the provisional demonstration of what God intends for all of humanity, and specifically that the new reality revealed in Jesus Christ is the new humanity, a new creation, and new beginning for human life in which a) sin is forgiven, b) reconciliation is accomplished, and c) the dividing walls of hostility are torn down. In corporate and individual lives we are to give substance to this truth.

G-4.0203 tells us visible oneness is important sign of the unity of God’s people. While divisions into different denominations do not destroy unity, they do obscure it. The PCUSA affirms continuity with the whole church of Jesus Christ, is committed to reduction of the obscurity that denominational divisions demonstrate, and is willing to seek and maintain communion and community with all other branches of one catholic church. G-15.0101 affirms
the commitment of the PCUSA to manifest more visibly the unity of the church of Jesus Christ and calls upon us to be open to opportunities for conversation, cooperation and action with other ecclesiastical bodies and secular groups.

G-3.0103 tells us that God’s redeeming and reconciling activity in world continues through presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, in the Book of Order, several important principles emerge when we consider our calling. 1. As followers of Christ, we are part of the body of Christ, and connected to others who proclaim the Lordship of Christ. 2. That calling is made manifest in Christ’s mission to the world of reconciliation and redemption. 3. That denominational divisions, while not destroying unity, do obscure it, and that we seek to be open and to maintain community with others, and 4) that through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, God continues to work for reconciliation and redemption in the church today.

2.

Session

God’s Mission in the World and the Reformation of the Church Ecumenical

1. God’s Mission

As followers of Christ, we believe that God has chosen us, redeemed us and called us for a purpose. G-3.0200 tells us the church is the provisional demonstration of what God intends for all of humanity. Jesus Christ reveals a new reality in which all people are reconciled to God, in which the sin which keeps us from acknowledging Jesus as Lord is wiped away, and in which the dividing walls of hostility are broken down. We have this beautiful vision of a world in which everyone knows that God is sovereign and
understands themselves as recipients of God’s grace, joyfully serving God and living in their identity as people who are redeemed and reconciled.

2. The Church Ecumenical

One of the stumbling blocks for people when they look at the church as the body of Christ, is the division they see within the body. If we proclaim one God and Savior, how can we be divided? The Book of Order tells us (G-4.0203) visible oneness is an important sign of the unity of God’s people. However, it affirms that divisions into different denominations do not destroy unity. They do obscure it. Therefore the Book of Order calls us to “seek and maintain communion and community with all other branches of one catholic church” (4.0203). Further, it calls us to, “be open to opportunities for conversation, cooperation and action with other ecclesiastical bodies and secular groups” (G-15.0101).

3. Reformation

G-3.0103 tells us that God’s redeeming and reconciling activity in world continues through presence and power of the Holy Spirit. One of the great principles and traditions of the Presbyterian Church is our affirmation that we are “reformed and always reforming”. We submit to the authority of scripture, are guided by our creeds and traditions, and believe that God is at work in our midst today, guiding us and inspiring us and helping us grow into an understanding of what it means to be God’s servants in the world.

Our call:
As a session, I would invite us to consider how we can demonstrate our call to demonstrate to the world God’s reconciling and redeeming activity, our commitment to unity with the body of Christ, and our confidence in the ability of the Holy Spirit to work within our midst. We might seek to make manifest our unity by participating in community worship services, or by sharing in the mission work of ecumenical agencies like Church World Service. Let’s spend some time at our next session meeting exploring this call and possible responses further.

Section II

1. The first issue raised in this scenario has to do with the authority of the Memorial Presbyterian Church to sell the property. All church property is held in trust by the PCUSA (G-8.0200) and it can only be sold with the permission of Presbytery (G-8.0501). Additionally, G-8.0401 holds that the Presbytery has authority to determine the use of property of churches that are dissolved or become extinct, or are abandoned by their particular church.

2. A related issue is that it is unlikely the session could move so quickly. Not only would they have to secure the permission of Presbytery, they have to call a congregational meeting (with appropriate notice), because the congregation must approve matters related to the buying and selling of property (G-7.0304).

3. A third issue has to do with the authority of Presbytery. Only Presbytery can control the location of new churches and of churches desiring to move. (G-11.0103). At this point it is not clear that the Memorial Presbyterian Church has consulted with Presbytery
about its intention to move or dissolve. Presbytery coordinates work of member churches, mobilizing and guiding them for effective witness (11.0103b)

4. A fourth issue is that with new church developments, the Presbytery is involved. It has made a commitment to coordinate the work of the NCD with other churches. (G-7.0202) The Memorial Presbyterian Church is connected to the Presbytery and to this new church development, and is not to act without regard to that relationship. The Presbytery has established an Administrative Commission to organize the Korean NCD. That commission functions as a session on behalf of the Presbytery. A decision involving the ministry of an NCD necessarily involves that Commission.

2. Administrative Commission

Korean New Church Development

1. Response to intention of Memorial Presbyterian Church

   a. We must understand that with only 15 members Memorial cannot support building. They have to make some kind of change.

   b. Need to involve Presbytery so that they can work with Memorial to honor its requirements

      i. Memorial cannot sell property without approval of Presbytery (G-8.0501)

      ii. Memorial has to proceed with congregational meeting (G-7.0304)

      iii. Memorial cannot move its worshipping location without approval of Presbytery (G-11.0103j)
iv. Any decision Memorial makes is properly made with consideration of its
relationship to the NCD that it shares space with and the Presbytery
Administrative Commission that oversees the NCD (G-7.0202)

2. Explore options for future

a. Do with Presbytery, who carries responsibility for coordinating and guiding
witness of congregations to broader community, and carries responsibility for
location of churches (11.0103b)

b. See as an opportunity to move into new future – brainstorm possibilities with
Memorial, but also independently

i. NCD could join with Memorial and form new church

ii. NCD and Memorial could explore ways to maintain space for an agreed
upon time period, allowing NCD time to prepare for future

iii. Could be a challenge to NCD – have been operating for four years – need
to consider what would be an appropriate space

iv. Etc.

Invite the A.C. to see this as an opportunity to explore our understanding of the call of
Memorial and the Korean NCD and the Presbytery to serve Christ in this community, and as an
opportunity to evaluate and move into new future.

Section 3

Question B, Part 1
1. One issue raised by the music director's action has to do with authority. Session has the right to supervise and control the work of every organization within the congregation (G-10.0102m). Something major, like starting a handbell choir and ordering the equipment that is necessary, requires the approval of session.

2. Session also has the authority to establish an annual budget and determine how money is used. Session is also responsible to report on its actions to the congregation. (G-10.0102i). If people make unilateral decisions, session is unable to fulfill this responsibility, and a church budget becomes unworkable.

3. Session is responsible for the worship of the people of God, including the music program (G-10.0102d). A bell choir belongs to this category.

4. Elders are responsible for the life and faith of the congregation. They have been given authority together with the pastor to provide for the worship and service of a congregation. (G-6.0304). Church staff do not have that responsibility or authority. This is because of our form of government in which we elect officers to exercise authority (G-1.0306), believing that under the authority of scripture, guided by the confessions and Book of Order and open to the work of the Holy Spirit, we can operate faithfully as the body of Christ.

Part 2

Church staff, we have an opportunity to think about how we work in a church. This is a good chance for us to think about what principles are important to us in our work, and how we are guided as a staff.
Our music director, in ordering bells, was faithful to our call to be good stewards of our resources. He was very concerned that we get a good buy, and that we use the money entrusted to our care conscientiously. He also has a great heart and vision for growing the music ministry of this church. Those are important characteristics of a church staff.

Because we are a Presbyterian church, however, there are some things that are particular and essential to how we operate. This can be very frustrating, and seem like a slow process at times, but it is grounded in our understanding of how God is at work.

We elect officers to govern the church (G-1.0306). They are the ones with authority, together with me, to provide for the worship and service of a congregation. (G-6.0304). We do this because of our understanding that we are the body of Christ, and as individuals brought together we can act faithfully under the authority of scripture, guided by the constitution of our church and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

We are governed by the Book of Order. The Book of Order gives session authority over every organization of the church (G-10.0102m). Session also has responsibility for managing the budget and determining how money is used. (G-10.0102i). This works to our benefit. It means we have guidelines to live in and I cannot just go spend money without any thought for how it might impact other people and programs in the church. Session also has responsibility for the worship of the congregation (G-10.0102d).

This means that when the Holy Spirit gives us a vision and a call to do something new, we seek affirmation of that vision from the body of Christ. I would invite you to see the blessings in the way we operate. It means that as staff, the worship of the congregation does not fall on us alone. Nor does the management of money, or decisions about what God is
calling us to do fall on any one person. If we establish a bell choir, it would be so much better to do so with the enthusiastic support of the session, who are excited about this vision and call, and are happy to pay for it. When we act unilaterally, the unspoken message is that we do not trust in the work of the Holy Spirit and in the body of Christ come together. So I invite you to live with the frustration that comes with having to make collective decisions, understanding that first, that is the nature of this congregation, and second, that it can be an incredible blessing to our ministry.