Test Results
Church Polity
1/21/2016

Section I
Constitutional Heritage

In F-1.0203 the Book of Order states:

Christ gives to the Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its order and discipline.

REQUIRED RESPONSES (Total responses for this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)

1. Using more than one (1) section of the Book of Order, excluding section F, The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, cite and briefly discuss at least one (1) reference (e.g., X-0.0000) for how the Church demonstrates each of these three (3) pairs of attributes.
2. Drawing on Required Response 1, write a blog post that discusses these attributes of the Church including a description of how they are given by Christ.

Answer
Response 1:

Within the faith and life of the church, God calls us to faith and discipleship. Those who respond to this call offer themselves and their gifts bestowed by God to be used in the life of the community of faith for ministry to the world and one another (W-6.1001). "All Christians are called to care for each other in their daily lives, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need, offering mutual forgiveness and reconciliation." (W-6.6002). This care is largely extended to the community of faith as we worship together, but is also offered to others as we interact together in groups which nurture and conduct the ministries of the church.
Teaching and ruling elders are called to particular responsibility for this type of common pastoral care. Teaching elders are called to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament and "are committed to teaching the faith and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12)." (G-2.0501). They support others in the disciplines of faith in the midst of daily struggles. In addition, they serve as presbyters who participate in the governance of the church.

Ruling elders offer a ministry of discernment and governance in the faith and life of the church. Ruling elders are selected by the congregation to "discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life." (G-2.0301). Those selected to this office should demonstrate wisdom and mature faith, leadership skills, and have a compassionate spirit. Ruling and teaching elders serve the faith and life of the church by exercising "leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline, and have responsibilities for the life of the congregation, as well as the whole church" including other ecumenical associations (G-2.0301).

Joining together in the unity and mission of God contributes to strengthening the community of faith. The mission of the congregation is to engage in the mission of God within the context of the community (G-1.0101). Congregations are joined with one another in unity through relationships that hold them accountable and responsible (G-1.0101). This contributes to their strengths that benefit everyone, including the church. God provides the congregation with the gifts necessary for spreading the gospel in order they may be the church.

One of the ways God uses the church to further the mission of God in the world is through the blessing and offering of spiritual gifts. As the community of faith gathers united to worship God, our worship should always be an opportunity to respond Christ's call of becoming disciples who profess our faith in unity. We have the opportunity to take up the mission of the people of God as we renew our commitment in Christ and his mission in the world (W-2.5002).

Deacons, choir members, and those who are gifted with the ministry of song have a particular mission in the church. Deacons provide a ministry of compassion, witness and service to the world as they minister to the poor, hungry, sick, lost, friendless, and those who are burdened with injustice and distress (G-2.0201). Song in worship is our collective response to God in prayer. It unites the community of faith in common prayer as we gather in worship whether at church, home, or another place (W-2.1003). The primary role of the choir is to lead the congregation in the song of prayer (W-2.1004). United in worshipful prayer allows the choir to pray on behalf of the congregation with introits, responses, and other forms of music.

The responsibilities of order and discipline in the church falls on the council as an expression of unity of the church (G-3.0101). Ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the church council is for the purpose of service Christ and "declaring and obeying his will in relation to truth and service, order and discipline." (G-3.0102). Councils could structure statements of faith, bear witness against errors in church doctrine and immorality, resolve issues of doctrine and discipline, provide council in matters of conscience, and resolve issues brought according to the requirements of the Book of Order.

Response #2

Dear Friends in Christ: As we begin this new year in praise to God for our many blessings, I am reminded of the ways in which Christ gives us these blessings in three ways: Through our faith and life, our unity in mission, and the order and discipline of the church.
Faith and Life – Since creation, God made us to live in covenant community with one another (W-1.1005; W-6.1001). We were called, commissioned and promised by Jesus to gather in his name with the Holy Spirit who gives gifts for building up the body of Christ and equipping it for ministry. In the Great Commission, Jesus taught the disciples what to believe and how to obey his Word. (Matthew 28:20). Here, Jesus promises to always be with them in the ministry in the world.

God uses teaching and ruling elders called to serve diverse areas of ministry to preach and teach the faith in order to form the gospel in the minds of the people and strengthen their witness and service to God (G-2.0301; G-2.0501). God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah promising the people of Judah to send shepherds with a special heart for God to teach others the God’s will (Jer. 3:15). People called to equip others in this ministry serve to unify the body of Christ in their faith and life so as to share our experiences, and promote personal discipleship in our common ministry to the world (W- 1.005 Eph. 4:12).

Unity and Mission – We unite with one another in the bond of Christ by sharing our particular spiritual gifts that we have received by grace through faith in Jesus. Each member of the church has been adorned with particular gifts which strengthen the body of Christ for its mission in the world. Corporate worship in unity with God and one another provides us with opportunities to recognize these gifts in service to God in the church in the world (W-2.5002). In Romans 12:4-8, Paul utilizes the analogy of the body with its many parts to explain the nature of the church. He emphasizes the church’s unity, diversity, and our need to recognize our gifts and to use them correctly within the body of Christ. Paul also instructs us to desire our spiritual gifts and to use them to prophesy in the name of Christ (1 Cor. 14:1).

Order and Discipline – We are called to reconcile our differences. Conciliation and mediation with one another in our differences should not be diminished by the Rules of Discipline as set forth in the Book of Order (G-3.0101; G-3.0102; D-1.0103). In Matthew 5:25, Jesus teaches the church should work towards reconciliation in all aspects of life. It is our job as members in the body of Christ to prayerfully settle our disagreements and quarrels to avoid disciplinary proceedings as set for in the Rules of Discipline through prayerful deliberation to “preserve the purposes of the church.” (D-1.0103; W-2.1003).

Faith and life, unity and mission, and order and discipline within the body of Christ binds us together with our Creator in spiritual oneness. Let’s work together in the new year to spread the word of God together in unity. Peace to all of you.

Reader Responses

| S | This response shows a good use of the Book of Order. The blog post is a good discussion of the three pairings of gifts and invites those reading it to explore these things more deeply. The response in part two is a good discussion of the citations found in part one. |
| S | This exam uses references from the G, W and D sections of the Book of Order. Each of the three attributes is connected to at least one reference. These references are discussed in length. Part 2 has a blog that talks about each of these 3 pairs of attributes and draws from the references used in Part 1. The blog talks about the importance of these 3 attributes pairs and how they affect the life of the church. |
Section II
Constitutional Order for the Particular Church

You are the associate pastor of Central Street Presbyterian Church participating in a deacon meeting. The group is discussing caring for the homebound members of the congregation when the following conversation occurs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marian:</td>
<td>My friend’s church serves communion to the homebound. Even though we only serve communion here at church once a month, I think the deacons should offer it to the homebound every Sunday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bud:</td>
<td>I think that’s a great idea! Is there any reason we can’t start tomorrow?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alberto:</td>
<td>It should only take a couple of minutes to serve juice and bread. We don’t need to do anything else, do we?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micky:</td>
<td>I live right next door to Jack and Bea. I can drop by and serve them anytime. Would that be okay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willy:</td>
<td>My girlfriend would love to do this but hasn’t joined the church yet. Can she serve communion with me?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

REQUIRED RESPONSES (Total responses for this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)

1. Identify and briefly discuss three (3) different issues, each issue raised by a different deacon, citing at least one (1) Book of Order reference (e.g., X-0.0000) for each issue raised.

2. Drawing on your work in Required Response 1, respond to each of the three (3) deacons you identified.

Answer

Response 1:

Service of the Lord’s Supper to those who are homebound (Marian) – The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is the act of God sealing the promises of faith within the community of faith as we worship as a congregation (W-3.3601). As such, the bread and the cup are to be served by those who are commissioned to the ordered ministry of the church such as deacons, or by other members of the church when invited by the session or authorizing council (W-3.3616d). The elements may be served by two or more persons engaged in ordered ministry of the church to those who are homebound (W-3.3616d) provided the elements are served following worship on the same calendar day they were celebrated in the church or thereafter when practically feasible, when scripture is read, and when those serving have been instructed in the pastoral and theological foundations of the liturgical resources (W-3.3616d (1, 2, 3))

Non-member serving communion (Willy) – Only an active member of the congregation who has been received through profession of faith and has been baptized in Christ and elected to ordered ministry of the church may participate in the distribution of the Lord’s Supper to the homebound. (G-1.0402). Ordered ministries are gifts to the church’s life in order that ministry of all of God’s people can increase (G-2.0102). This by no means diminishes the importance of the commitment on the part of all members to the overall ministry of the church.
Time it takes to distribute the elements (Alberto) – It is important for members of the congregation to prepare themselves to partake in the Lord’s Supper (W-3.3609). When partaking in the Lord’s Supper, they are to become reconciled with Christ and one another (W-2.4006) by the hearing of the Word proclaimed and the reading of scripture (W-3.401). This will take time and should not be rushed.

Response 2:
Dear Marion: I am very excited to hear that your friend’s church is providing the Lord’s Supper to the homebound. We at Central St. Pres. Church are encouraged by your story in the last deacons meeting to offer communion to our homebound brothers and sisters in Christ. You as a deacon are considered to be involved in ordained ministry and as such are eligible to offer the sacrament to the homebound provided we can make arrangements for you to travel on either the same day we celebrate the sacrament in worship or some other time that is practical (W-3.3616). Let’s talk before you more forward in this ministry so we can make sure you are properly trained for this important work. Peace to you dear friend.

Dear Alberto: Thank you for your participation in the last deacon’s meeting regarding the distribution of the Lord’s Supper to the homebound. I appreciate all that you do in the service of the Lord at our church. It is important for all who come to the Lord’s Table to properly and prayerfully prepare themselves for this sacrament and often that takes time. They need time to reconcile themselves to Christ and one another and hear the Word proclaimed through scripture (W-2.4006; W-3.401). Although they are unable to participate in worship in our sanctuary, they are nonetheless members of our church and need to be provided with special care (W-3.3609). Let’s discuss your involvement in this important work and thanks again for your service.

Dear Willy: I’m so excited that your girlfriend feels called to service in our Lord at our church. In order to help us in distributing the Lord’s Supper to our homebound, she will need to first become an active member of our church (G1.0402). God has a special calling to those called to his service (G-2.0102). I would love to discuss this with both of you to see how the two of you will be able to share this important calling with God in service to his kingdom. I pray we can get together soon. Peace to both of you.

Reader Responses

| $ | This response shows a good understanding of the polity of Communion. The responses to each of the deacons were pastoral and showed a good knowledge of the Book of Order. The response would have been stronger if it mentioned Session’s role regarding the authorization of Communion. |
| $ | This exam uses references from the G and W sections of the book of worship. It addresses at least three issued raised from three different deacons. First, Marian’s issue that communion should be served the same Sunday to the home bound as it was served to the gathered congregation as an extension of the church’s ministry to those home bound. Second, Alberto’s issue that scripture should be read and proclaimed along with the serving of the bread and cup. Finally, Willy’s issue Membership in the church is required to help with home bound communion. The issues raised in Part 1 and responded to in Part 2 and the responses are pastoral. |

Section III
Constitutional Order as a Tool for Ministry

https://exams.pcusa.org/tests/5689/results/
You are the pastor of Top of the Rock Presbyterian Church and are conducting a training session for newly elected ruling elders. When reviewing the church’s expectations of members in the Book of Order, one of the elders says, “It says one of the duties of a member is the ‘renewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one’s membership, and considering ways in which one’s participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful’ (G-1.0304). Pastor, I’m not sure I’ve ever done this or would even know how to begin. How can we give our members an opportunity to do this?”

REQUIRED RESPONSES (Total responses for this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)

1. Drawing from more than one (1) section of the Book of Order, identify and briefly discuss three (3) different citations from the Book of Order (e.g., X-0.0000) that would be helpful in this evaluation.

2. Drawing on Required Response 1, prepare an outline for a 90-minute class that would assist adult members in reviewing and evaluating their membership and increasing their participation in the worship and service of the church.

Answer

Response 1:

In order to review and evaluate the integrity of membership in the church and determine ways in which a person can participate in its worship and service so as to increase its worship and service, we must first offer occasions for new and current members to be received in the membership of the church through instructional opportunities and renewal of their faith in baptism (W-4.2001). Sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and set apart for a life of service to Christ, members are able to express their faith at the Lord's Table, confirm their commissioning and continue to be nurtured in Christ through affirmation and reaffirmation of their faith (W-6.2001). Believers often have special times of awakening, renewal, and exhibit a fresh commitment which call them to express their commitment in a way that recognizes and celebrates their new found commitment to service in Christ (W-4.2006). People should be encouraged to share their experiences with the session and their teaching elder(s) and the Word received by them from the Holy Spirit. The church may be summoned to allow for public expression of their deepened commitment in a worship service and acknowledge it through prayer. This may be done in a service on the Lord's Day in response to hearing the Word (W-3.3502).

Secondly, the church will need to reevaluate and encourage the participation of others in leading worship (W-1.4003). All members of the church should have responsibility in the church to participate in the royal priesthood of Christ. No one should be excluded from participating or leading public worship in the house of the Lord or on its grounds because of their race, color, class, age, sex, or physical limitations. People may be gifted to particular acts of leadership, but we are to encourage members and others in ordered ministry to use their leadership abilities in worship. This can be done through acts of commitment to discipleship, declaring ones intent to seek baptism, reaffirmation of their baptismal vows (W-3.3701) and during the invocation of the Lord's Supper (W-2.4005). During this evaluation process we must not forget to respond to God's call to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit through our unity in diversity. All are one in Christ and are included in the promise as heirs of Abrahams’ offspring (Gal. 3:27-29; F-1.403). Therefore, church members should be provided the opportunity to be nominated as ruling elders and from the congregation to presbytery. They may be elected commissioners to synod and General Assembly to serve on committees bearing in mind the principles of
inclusiveness and fair representation in the decision making of the church (G-3.0202b; F-1.0403).

Response 2:

Top of the Rock Presbyterian Church

Review and Evaluation Membership in the Life of the Church

A. Review of Our Faith in Baptism (W-4.2001)

1. Study Matthew 3:13-17 discussing the baptism of Jesus and its meaning.
2. Study Galatians 3:27-29 discussing how the wall of separation between us and Christ has been removed.
3. Discuss the meaning of the sacrament in the Reformed tradition as a sign and seal of God's grace through the washing of our sins (W-3.3033).
4. This can be done by our declaration or reaffirmation of our faith which recognizes their new found commitment in Christ (W-6.2001: W-4.2006).
5. Explain that his can be done in the service of the Lord's Day in response to hearing the Word (W-3.3502).

B. Encourage Participation in Leading Worship (W-1.4003).

1. Study 1 Cor. 12 & Eph. 4:7 discussing the purpose and meaning of spiritual gifts.
2. Christians often are reevaluate their spiritual gifts during daily prayer and participation in the service of baptism and the Lord's Supper (W-3.3701; W-2.4005).
3. All are one in Christ and included in the promise of God as heirs to the kingdom (Gal. 3:27-29; F-1.403).
4. How should we respond? Break out work group discussion time.
5. End with a time of open and contemplative prayer.

Reader Responses

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<td>This section showed a good use of the Book of Order, however the class outline was not detailed enough to determine if it would last 90 minutes, nor was it obvious what the goal of the class was. Further, there are more ways to become involved as a member and grow deeper in the membership commitment than just in the context of worship and sacraments. It would have been stronger if the outline explored other ways that membership commitments can be deepened. It would also have been stronger if it included possible questions for discussion as well as activities that the class would participate in, further helping them evaluate the integrity of their own membership.</td>
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https://exams.pcusa.org/tests/5689/results/ 7/28/2016
This exam draws mainly from section G but does include a brief citation from G and F. These references are outlined in a class outline that has two many parts. One on Baptism and Membership that does well to talk about the importance of Baptism in being a member of a church and how remembrance of baptism and reaffirmation of faith are means of evaluation of ones membership in the church. The second part of the classes discusses how one could live out ones service to the church as the priesthood of all believers by being involved in worship leadership. This exam meets the requirements but could have been strengthened by talking about using ones gifts outside of the context of worship in service and mission. Additionally a break down of time would have been helpful for the class outline.

Overall Evaluation

General Comments for Examinee and/or Presbytery

Please include here any comments about the examination as a whole or notes for the presbytery committee/commission overseeing the examinee's preparation for ministry.

Reader Responses

Overall this exam showed competence in using the Book of Order and quality in the pastoral responses.

This exam has adequate knowledge of the Polity of the PC(USA). This exam shows some imagination in how this polity can be used in the church.