AUGUST 2011

EXAMINATION IN CHURCH POLITY

OPEN BOOK

MAXIMUM TIME: 3 HOURS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

This examination is intended to “assess the candidate’s working knowledge of the constitutional structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the method by which differences are properly resolved and programs to fulfill the mission of the church are determined.”

The intent of this examination is to assess readiness for ministry, which includes using the *Book of Order* effectively. Candidates shall utilize a clean, unmarked, printed copy and/or a PDF version of the 2009-2011 *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in responding to the questions. No additional books, notes, outlines or other resources may be used. Questions will be from the Form of Government, the Directory for Worship, and the Rules of Discipline.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

THREE HOURS

OPEN BOOK

The examination consists of three Sections. All three sections are required. Section III has two options. Select one option. Each Section is designed to be completed in one hour.

In order to receive a final evaluation of “satisfactory” on this exam, two of the three sections must receive a “satisfactory.”

In evaluating the examination, the readers will use the following criteria to assess readiness for ministry:

- Recognition and knowledge of the polity issues applicable to the question, and ability to cite relevant sections of the *Book of Order*

- Ability to relate the polity issue to the situation, considering both the letter and the spirit of the constitution

- Ability to express concern for the individual(s) involved in the situation and for the welfare of the church as a whole

- Knowledge of the process by which programs to fulfill the mission of the church are determined

- Ability to be coherent in expressing thoughts
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You are required to use a computer to write this exam. You may bring your own equipment or, at
some exam sites, you may use equipment provided by the proctor. You must confirm with the
proctor in advance of the testing date what equipment (power strips, computers, printers, etc.) is
available at the testing site. You are strongly urged to make sure that all the necessary equipment
and software are properly working and coordinated.

When writing this exam:

- Identify every answer by the number and letter assigned to it (e.g., III. B.).
- Do not consult or copy from personal notes or any other resource on the computer or a
  network during the exam.
- Number the pages.
- Include your candidate number on each page of the exam, but not your name.
- Double-space your responses and use a 12-point font.
- Staple the printed copy inside the exam cover on the right-hand side when finished.
- The completed exam packet must be turned in before you leave the testing area or it
  will not be accepted.
- Papers that cannot be read for any reason shall be returned without being
  evaluated.

Syntax or grammar will not be evaluated. However, the evaluation of papers may be affected if
they cannot be understood because of poor syntax or grammar.

Maintaining the candidate’s anonymity is of fundamental importance to assure fair
evaluation of examination papers. Failure to comply with any of the following instructions
will result in an unsatisfactory exam:

- Do not include your name.
- Do not include the name of your congregation or presbytery.
- Do not identify the seminary you attend or have attended.
- Do not identify professors with whom you have studied.
- Do not indicate whether you have taken this or other ordination exams before.

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IMPORTANT: READ THE ENTIRE QUESTION BEFORE
BEGINNING TO WRITE YOUR ANSWER.
A Historic Principle of church order in G-1.0303 is:

(3) That our blessed Savior, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation of both truth and duty; and that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God. (emphasis added)

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Citing at least four (4) references (e.g., X-0.0000) from the Book of Order, write a summary for an officers handbook that will explain how officers are expected “to exercise discipline, for the preservation of truth and duty” in both their personal life and in their role as officers in the PC(USA).
SECTION II. CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER FOR THE PARTICULAR CHURCH

ONE HOUR          OPEN BOOK          REQUIRED

You are pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church. A member of the youth group asks to speak to you confidentially and says that on a recent retreat the Associate Pastor for Youth was showing images on the laptop computer that were sexually suggestive and inappropriate.

After arranging to counsel further with the youth, you begin to put together a plan of action to deal with what the youth has told you.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

1. Identify at least three (3) issues raised by this scenario. Cite and discuss at least one (1) relevant Book of Order reference (e.g., X-0.0000) for each issue identified.

2. Informed by your answer in Required Response 1, describe your plan of action in detail.
A.

You are conducting a training class for ruling elders in your presbytery. Someone in the class says, “Our pastor is about to retire. Presbytery has told our congregation it will need a temporary pastor until a permanent pastor is called. What is the difference between a temporary pastor and a permanent pastor?” You ask the members of the class how they would respond.

Emily: Both are members of presbytery. Both preach and celebrate the sacraments. Both moderate the session. I think the only difference is how long they stay.

Shin: A few years ago we had a temporary supply. One time our session had a tie vote and our supply told us that only a permanent pastor can vote at a session meeting.

José: Maybe that pastor hadn’t been installed yet. I think there are things a minister can’t do before being installed, but once your temporary pastor is installed you’ll have a real pastor.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

1. Identify at least one (1) issue raised by each of the three (3) ruling elders, Emily, Shin, and José, concerning the differences between teaching elders in temporary and permanent relationships. Provide and briefly discuss one (1) citation (e.g., X-0.0000) from the Book of Order for each issue identified.

2. Informed by your answer in Required Response 1, respond to Emily, Shin, and José.
SECTION III. CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER AS A TOOL FOR MINISTRY

ONE HOUR OPEN BOOK REQUIRED

(Choosing ONE: A or B)

B.

After worship on Sunday morning, one of the college students who has attended regularly since the beginning of the fall semester approaches you. She says, “Pastor, I’d love to become more active in this church. I’ve heard that it’s possible to become an associate member without giving up my home church membership. Is that true?”

REQUIRED RESPONSES

1. Identify and discuss three (3) citations (e.g., X-0.0000) from the *Book of Order* relevant to the conversation.

2. Informed by your answer in Required Response 1, explain to the college student the requirements of membership, and whether it is possible for her request to be granted.