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: S, U or O

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IV. OVERALL EVALUATION

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

[Signature]

Reader’s name printed

[Signature]

Reader’s Signature
**READER'S EVALUATION SHEET IN THEOLOGY**

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.)

Madeline Jervis
Reader's name printed

Madeline Jervis
Reader's Signature
I - Peace

This response is an excellent, brief, and succinct answer to the question.

II - Sabbath

This is a very good and well-developed discussion of the Sabbath. It touches on the problem of Sabbath in our modern culture. A much stronger response would have focused on the sentence: "It helped make clear to people that their fundamental identity was not in their work... but in their identity as children of God..." This is part of the meaning of Sabbath today, for this reader, and should be part of the gospel message of the church.

III - Alzheimer's

Again, this is a well written and thoughtful response. The answer to Linda was theological and well connected to part I, as well as pastorally sensitive. An additional dimension might be found in the doctrines of election and perseverance (C-6.064, C-6.094).

It was a pleasure for this reader to evaluate such a well written, thoughtful, and thoroughly Reformed paper.
Section I  Peace  
The paper uses citations from four confessions and discusses them to develop several aspects of peace. It exhibits a good comprehension of the Reformed understanding of peace. This is a very good paper.

Section II  Sabbath  
The paper states very well the background of the establishment of Sabbath in the Ten Commandments and how it has been practiced in the church. It does not deal in a substantial manner with the influences that exist in today's world that lead or prevent the keeping of a Sabbath other than in the traditional way. The paper is acceptable. It would be made stronger by a deeper discussion of today's world and the practice, or lack thereof, of honoring Sabbath.

Section IIIA  Alzheimer's  
The paper in a very clear manner describes two theological issues contained in Linda's question; faith and remembrance and God's providence. The discussion shows a good understanding of the way the Reformed tradition has viewed the concerns that underlie Linda question. The essay is excellent. The response to Linda is well grounded in the previous essay. It is theologically sound. Well done.
Section 1: Christian Understanding of Peace

Christian understanding of peace is intimately related to our understanding of ourselves as forgiven people of God, and our call to live as people who rest in faith and confidence that God acts to redeem God’s creation.

The Second Helvetic Confession, quoting Corinthians, tells us Christ gave the ministry of reconciliation to his ministers (5.098). Christ’s ministers are considered ambassadors of Christ, exhorting people to be reconciled to God and to each other. We understand reconciliation to be essential for the building and maintenance of relationship. Our understanding is that God created us for relationship with God and with each other, and God’s commandment to us is to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves.

Because we are imperfect human beings, we will at times do things that violate that love, and harm our relationship with God and with each other. We understand that actions that harm and destroy God’s creation work against reconciliation and peace. That is not God’s intention for our lives. The Westminster Confession tells us (6.111) that the powers God ordained and the liberty Christ purchased are not intended to destroy but mutually to uphold and preserve one another. As people claimed by God, valued and treasured by God, nurtured and redeemed by God, we are invited to participate in the building up of God’s rule on earth.

We are therefore called by God to repent of wrongdoing, and to act to restore relationships that we have harmed, whether that harm has occurred within the community of faith, within our personal relationships, or within the larger creation – the communities we live in, the nations we live in, and the creation God has given us. The Confession of 67 identifies some of the brokenness exhibited in the world. It reminds us that God created us to be one
universal family, and in reconciling love overcome the barriers between us, breaking down every form of discrimination. (9.44) God’s reconciliation in Christ is the grounds of peace, justice, and freedom, and that the church in its own life is called to practice forgiveness. It also names our call to work for reconciliation among people as nations, in regards to poverty, and in individual covenantal relationships such as marriage and as parents or children.

The Confession of 67 also calls us to an understanding that we are humbled by our complicity as members of institutions and relationships that are not in line with God’s will. It affirms that in our unity with Christ, guided by Spirit, as individuals and as a community, the church seeks to discern the will of God in problems and crisis, and to act. (9.43)

We exhibit reconciliation and peace when we gather as a community. When we come to worship God, we begin our services with praise to God for all that God has done for us. We acknowledge who we are in front of God, imperfect people who are unable to live without causing harm to God’s creation. We acknowledge our need for God’s grace, and ask God’s forgiveness and the forgiveness of others, and declare our intent to live into our identity as children of God. In many congregations, that desire for reconciliation is made manifest in the passing of the peace.

The Brief Confession invites us to remember and to trust that the Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, and sets us free to accept ourselves and love God and neighbor. We do not have to fear that we alone are responsible for the building of God’s peaceable kingdom, for we are united and bound together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. Working for peace can be a daunting task because the problems in this world are overwhelming. It can also be daunting because it brings us into conflict with evil. But the Brief
Confession assures us that the Spirit gives us courage to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace and to watch for God’s new heaven and new earth. (10.4)

Our understanding that Jesus has initiated the Kingdom of God here on earth, and that we can look forward to the culmination of the Kingdom is a great comfort to Christians. We have been assured that God’s intention is that there will be no more sorrow and pain, that our future with God will be beautiful, that we have a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom, which we celebrate every time we take communion together. This gives us courage to work for peace, knowing that only in Christ is peace ultimately realized.

Section 2: The meaning of Sabbath for life today.

Sabbath has to do with our call to worship God, to remember who we are before God, to celebrate what God has done for us, and to develop a pattern in life that allows our relationship with God to be maintained and nurtured.

We see throughout Scripture, that faithful followers of God understood their need to acknowledge God’s work in their lives. They built pillars and altars to remember places where they encountered God, and they developed festivals and celebrations to acknowledge God’s gifts that sustain life. In the very story of creation, we understand that God from the beginning has given us time to rest in God’s presence, and to give thanks for God’s acts to give life, establish relationship with us, and to restore us when we stray from God. In the Old Testament, God calls us to a covenantal relationship, promising to be our God, and we promise to be God’s people. As God manifested that covenant in the 10 Commandments, God set aside the Sabbath. It helped make clear to people that their fundamental identity was not in their
work, in their families, or in their things, but in their identity as children of God – people who had been chosen and redeemed by God.

In the life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, God affirms that we have indeed been chosen and redeemed for relationship. The early church shifted celebration of the Sabbath to Sunday, the Lord’s Day, in recognition of God’s saving action in the person of Jesus Christ. We acknowledge that it is only through Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit that we can come into the presence of God. We understand that nothing we can do earns us God’s grace, but that it is a gift to us from God, through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we gather to worship God, to thank God, and to affirm our identity as someone Christ has acted to save, as someone that Christ is praying for at the right hand of God, and as someone that Christ is working in to transform.

Our worship services are ordered to acknowledge our need for God. They call us into community, where we are strengthened by each other and the Holy Spirit at work among us. They reminds us who we are before God, sinful people in need of grace, but also people who rest in the assurance that Christ has acted to redeem us. We are people who, by the work of the Holy Spirit are fed by God’s Word, read and proclaimed, and who respond to God’s claim on our lives in prayer and praise and self-offering. We are sealed in baptism and communion and sent out, renewed and strengthened to live out our Christian identity in the world.

The church’s understanding of Sabbath has evolved through the years. Leaders in the faith have always been concerned that it is easy for the immediacy of the concerns of daily life to impinge on our identity as people of God. Our work and our family and our need for the approval of others, and our acquisition of things are all things that can become gods to us, and
Section 3

1. Linda is concerned about her husband because our faith in God seems to depend on our ability to remember who God is for us. If her husband can't remember, how can he know God? What is the relationship between knowledge and faith? Her second concern has to do with providence of God. How does God act in our lives, how does God provide for us, when we are not able to participate in God's action in our lives?

   We are told repeatedly in scripture that faith is very important. The faith of Noah, Abraham, and Moses are lifted up as models to us. Jesus tells us faith is incredibly powerful, and that faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. He tells the people he heals that their faith has made them well. Jesus invites us to remember him every time we share in the Lord's Supper. We believe that the Holy Spirit strengthens us for Christian life as we remember the mighty acts of God in creation, and God's faithfulness to us, and God's work to redeem us.

   In the reformed tradition, we also believe that faith is a gift to us. It was very important to the Reformers that we understand that faith is not something we do, or something that depends on us. We understand that faith is something that comes through our unity with Christ. The Scots described it as engrafting. We understand that in baptism, we are fully united with Christ, with his life, death, resurrection and ascension. Theologians like Torrance and Mulligan invite us to see that in Christ we are lifted into the presence of God and at the same time Christ reaches down, working within us to transform us. This is all a blessing to us because Christ has acted to redeem us and through the Holy Spirit works within us.
Paul reminds us that we are connected to the body of Christ, and that we do not have to have faith by ourselves. We are joined to the entire community of the faithful through Christ. Scripture tells us that when we cannot pray, Christ prays for us. And in the letter to the Hebrews we are reminded that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who strengthen us for our life. When we understand faith as a beautiful gift to us from God, as something we cannot earn or do by ourselves but rather something that happens because we are part of the body of Christ, we can rest at ease that with thanks to God in Jesus Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit, we can receive faith in any circumstance of life.

We also understand that God can act in any situation. Part of the sovereignty of God is the understanding that God has power beyond our understanding and an ability to act in anything that life throws at us. We also understand that God’s intentions for us our good – that God is not vindictive and would not act to harm us – so disease cannot be God’s intention to create a situation in which we cannot be redeemed. God’s providence is God’s action on our behalf – God’s good gifts to us. There are several ways we understand God acting providentially in our lives.

The Reformers began with an understanding of baptism – and particularly the baptism of children. The baptism of children affirms that God claims us before we can say and understand that ourselves. Jeremiah affirmed our understanding that God knows us and calls us while we are yet in the womb. That is a beautiful understanding that can help us when disease destroys our ability to know and claim God for ourselves in later life.

The reformers also strongly affirmed that baptism was effective. We only have to be baptized once. We do not baptize people a second time because they cannot remember their
infant baptism. Baptism is God’s act, God’s claim on our life, and because God is faithful, it is reliable.

2. Linda, I am really glad you came to me with your concerns. It is really hard when someone we have known and loved for so long has Alzheimers. It must feel like such a loss in your life, that your husband cannot remember the things that were so important in his life – you, his faith, his family.

    You are right that the church does affirm the importance of remembering for faith. But I want to assure you that that remembering is a gift to strengthen us at certain stages of our life. We do not have to pass any kind of test of knowledge for Jesus to be able to save us. We understand that it isn’t some measure of our faith that saves us, but rather that it is Jesus saving acts that bring us forever into the presence of God. Even better, through our unity with Christ, we are blessed by Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, praying for us, and working in us transforming our lives in every moment of life.

    You might also think about it this way. In baptism we are claimed by God as infants – before we have ever heard the stories of faith, or proclaimed our own faith in God. If God can claim us as infants, God must be able to claim God’s faithful followers. And we believe that baptism is effective – we don’t even have to remember it. That is because baptism is God’s action in our lives, and God is faithful.

    Another way to think about it is to think about God’s power and providence in our lives. We affirm that God can act in any situation for good. That means that at every stage of our life God is working within us, through the saving act of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit. When we are infants we depend on the gifts of God to nurture and sustain us. As we
grow, one of the gifts God gives us is the gift of faith to sustain us and form us as God’s servants. And as we grow older and our bodies fail us, God works in us in new ways to save us and draw us close. We know that we do not have to do everything in order to be good servants of God. We are connected to the community of faith because at various times in our lives we depend on the gifts of others to nurture and sustain us.

One of the things that we can do is turn to God in prayer, and ask for God to help us see and trust that God is at work as we face all that life brings to us. I’d be happy to pray with you now...