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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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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<th>Mind &amp; Heart</th>
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<td>Section I</td>
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IV. OVERALL EVALUATION

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

Mary A. Morrison
Reader's name printed

Signature

Reader's Signature
Section I: Mind & Heart

This essay sufficiently demonstrates a good grasp of the Reformed understanding of heart and mind in relation to faith by using appropriate Scripture. It would have been stronger if the paper identified who “the Reformers” are that are being referenced. The four confessional citations are appropriate and advance the essay with some basic sense of how heart and mind are related in faith, especially in understanding the Word and Sacraments and following them into faithful living in the world.

Section II: Love of Neighbor

1. This essay demonstrates an excellent understanding of the Reformed view of love of neighbor. It is well-developed and clearly notes significant Scriptures related to this concept from OT hospitality to the Greatest Commandments and the Good Samaritan, to 1 Corinthians. What is impressive is the depth of conversations brought to the essay from various theologians—Reinhold Niebuhr, Calvin, Barth, Brunner all are mentioned with substantive commentary related to Image Dei as a base for understanding love of neighbor.

2. There are three clear responses supported by the essay. They are all good beginning points for deeper conversations.

Section III: Poverty

1. This is a concise and very good essay getting to the heart of the matter of attending to how the church is called to respond to poverty and poor people in both Scripture and in Calvin’s Geneva. Very well written. The reader especially liked the reference that spiritual work was not divided from social work in Geneva and is applicable here.

2. The response to Adam is honest and pastoral with a sound evaluation of how to consider all of ministry areas within the life of the church’s budget. It is supported by the essay. The response to Mary also is solid and real. The reference to Jesus is appropriately supported in the essay.

Comments to CPM:
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IV. **OVERALL EVALUATION**

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

Sang Ki Lee
Reader's name printed

Sang Ki Lee
Reader's Signature
Section I: Mind & Heart

Well reasoned answers are given to the issues raised and are to the point but in part. The Scriptures referenced in the answers are well chosen also in part. But the answers could have been more comprehensive and complete. For example, the examinee could have referenced the fallen nature of men and women, left alone without the mercy, grace and love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord is are to the point but are few.

Section II: Love of Neighbor

Well reasoned answers are given to the issues raised and are to the point.

Section III: Poverty

Good answers. This paper could have added Matt6:33 and apply the teachings the situation at hand.

Comments to CPM:
Section I: Confessional Heritage
How faith involves both the mind and the heart

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus instructs his disciples to love the Lord their God with all of their heart, mind, soul, and strength. These four words are not synonyms, but are clearly intended as four distinct aspects. The Reformers, and those who followed them, recognized the human tendency to unbalance these four aspects of faithfulness. In particular, we tend to set the heart and the mind in opposition to each other and to favor one over the other. Some want to evaluate true faith mostly according to how they feel about themselves and about God. Others want to evaluate true faith mostly according to what they think about themselves and about God. However, the Reformed tradition insists that the Word of God requires the faithful response of both mind and heart.

The Reformers recognized that the human mind did not escape the consequences of the fall and that it could thus be misleading, especially as it concerns matters of faith. However, this did not lead them to discount it entirely. According to the Second Helvetic Confession, "God in his mercy has permitted the powers of the intellect to remain, though differing greatly from what was in man before the fall. God commands us to cultivate our natural talents, and meanwhile adds both gifts and success. And it is obvious that we make no progress in all the arts without God’s blessing. In any case, Scripture refers all the arts to God: and, indeed, the heathen trace the origin of the arts to the gods who invented them" (5.046). Thus, although the powers of the mind have been diminished they are still blessed by God.
This is essential to faith because the mind is required for the hearing of the Word of God. According to the Larger Catechism, “It is required of those that hear the Word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine what they hear by the Scriptures: receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives” (7.270). Thus, we see how the mind is required for comprehending the Word. Prior to hearing it, a person readiness his or her mind by diligent preparation and examination of the Scriptures. But preparation also requires certain attitudes of the heart: love and meekness. Once heard, the truth is hidden in the heart and results in the fruit of obedience in that person’s life.

But the heart has not escaped the consequences of the fall, either, and uncertainty—a feeling of faithlessness—often creeps in. However, according to the Heidelberg Catechism, “The Holy Spirit creates [faith] in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel and confirms it by the use of the holy Sacraments” (4.065). Thus, just as God accommodates Godself to the weakness of our minds, God also accommodates the weakness of our hearts by providing a feeling of certainty through participation in baptism and the Lord’s supper. The Scots Confession adds that, “These sacraments, both of the Old Testament and of the New, were instituted by God not only to make a visible distinction between his people and those without the Covenant, but also to exercise the faith of his children and, by participation of these sacraments, to seal in their hearts the assurance of his promise, and of that most blessed conjunction, union, and society, which the chosen have with their Head, Christ Jesus” (3.21). Therefore, we see that even though our minds and hearts are weak, God works through them both to bring us to faith and we should not, therefore, disregard one in favor of the other; if we do, we risk our ability to
properly hear and receive the Word of God, and thus to experience the fruits of that experience in our lives.
Section II: Constructive Statement of Christian Doctrine
Love of Neighbor

Required Response 1

When asked to identify the greatest commandment, Jesus of Nazareth answered that it was to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength. But he also added that the second is like it: to love your neighbor as yourself. Because the Reformed tradition greatly emphasizes the obligation of obedience to the divine command, this second greatest commandment plays a significant role in Reformed theology. Indeed, Calvin – in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* – identifies love of neighbor as the truest test of doctrine.

Love, then, is not simply a theoretical concept but one that must take on flesh in the form of action. This is confirmed by the Reformed expectation that God is working out his divine purposes within human history. When we are told, as we are in 1 Corinthians, that love abides then we should expect to see evidence of that in our lives and the lives of other Christians. As the Larger Catechism tells us, sin is pardoned by justification by faith through grace but it is subdued by the process of sanctification. As sin is subdued, love increases.

However, this expectation is balanced in the Reformed tradition by the recognition that we remain in the state of sin, and thus our ability to realize the perfect ethic of love as demonstrated by Jesus is limited and frequently fails. In the twentieth century, Reinhold Niebuhr unpacked this phenomenon at length in his two-volume work *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. Looking across two millennia of Christian history, Niebuhr was troubled by the ambivalent results of our attempts to love – sometimes individuals and even societies demonstrated love and other times they didn’t. In these books, he observed that the human condition is limitation. We
live within a limited period of time, whereas God exists beyond the boundaries of time – infinity. Thus, he saw the contrast between human nature and divine nature as that of finitude and infinitude. Essentially, he meant that just as we live in a limited time period, so are our abilities to love limited. God, on the other hand, is not limited and is thus love perfected. Thus, Jesus was able to love perfectly within history, but because we remain limited we are able to love but not to love perfectly. As a result, Niehbur arrived at the sober conclusion that we are required to grow in love while recognizing that we will never reach perfection. This view became known as Christian Realism.

At the practical level, in order to demonstrate love to the neighbor we must first ask, “Who is my neighbor?” Some Christians, such as Aquinas, want to limit the answer to ‘other Christians’ as if we are obligated only to love each other. This is not totally unwarranted by Scripture. In the early chapters of Acts, we find that the believers are sharing everything they have with each other – but not with the stranger. However, when considering the question of who is the neighbor, the Reformed tradition has looked to other themes in Scripture. For example, the theme of hospitality that stretches from the Old Testament to the New. From Abraham welcoming the three strangers to the New Testament command to welcome the stranger – because by doing so we might welcome an angel unawares. Additionally, the Reformed have often focused on the creation stories of Genesis 1-3, in which we are told that humanity is created in the image of God – the *imago Dei*. Reformed theologians have disagreed about what exactly constitutes the *imago Dei* – notably Karl Barth and Emil Brunner – but all agree that all humans are created by God in the image of God and thus all must be respected as such. Finally, the Reformed remember that when Jesus was asked – in response to his second greatest commandment – ‘And who is my neighbor?’ he responded with the parable of the Good
Samaritan which, among other things, tell us that our neighbor might even be our enemy! In the Reformed tradition, then, no person is excluded from the category of neighbor and thus everyone is worthy to be treated as we would like to be treated.

Required Response 2

Jonah, you are correct to observe that none of us is able to love perfectly in this life. If we were able to love perfectly, you might be able to set aside your concerns about yourself entirely, but that just isn’t realistic, is it? However, that doesn’t excuse you from the obligation to love these neighbors in our community. Let’s think together about ways you can love these people who are being persecuted by violence and hate speech without losing your job.

Deb, you’re right: it seems to reason that if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we ought to be able to follow the divine command to love, to imitate Jesus. However, we know that we don’t. The fact is that we remain in a state of sin as long as we live. We all want to love as Jesus did, but so often we find ourselves failing to do so. We will never reach perfection, but we can grow in love if we are honest with our own failings, admit when we have failed, and repent from our unloving natures.

Chloe, thanks for reminding us that we are supposed to love everyone. Jesus tell us that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbors as ourselves, and that everyone is our neighbor – even our enemies! So you’re also right that we can’t be against the people who are hurting the immigrant people in our neighborhood. Are there ways for us to be against their behavior without being against them as people?
Section III: Application to Ministry

A: How the church is called to respond to poverty and poor people

*Required Response 1*

In the Reformed tradition, poverty is a condition of sinful humanity. Perhaps a person is poor because of his or her own bad choices, or perhaps because of the bad choices of another person, or perhaps poverty cannot be traced directly to the sinful actions of a single person or persons, but to the wider systemic problems in human society that are evidence of our collective sinfulness. In any case, Christian efforts will never eliminate poverty because our state of sin persists even though it has been pardoned.

Despite this fact, we are met in Scripture with a multitude of commands to serve the poor. From the Old Testament laws requiring that the edges of fields be left unharvested so that the poor could glean sustenance from them to the letter of James in the New Testament admonishing wealthy Christians to consider themselves lower than the poor among them. Fortunately for us, our efforts to serve the poor are not judged by their effectiveness at eliminating poverty, but instead are judged by their obedience to Christ.

Jesus taught that service to the poor is direct service to him. “Whatever you have done to the least of these you have done to me.” By using our wealth in this way, we build up treasure in heaven. Of course, this service does not earn salvation; it is merely evidence of our having been called by God to salvation. As James writes, “faith without works is dead.” Without this service, we are left with uncertainty about the vitality of our faith.

John Calvin made service to the poor integral to the order of church and government at Geneva. The deacons especially were charged with collecting and distributing funds directly to
think we can, either. We are facing some difficult financial challenges, and maybe we can address them by reducing funding for certain ministries, but I don't think we should eliminate our contribution to the House of Bread entirely.