

THE
BOOK OF
CHURCH ORDER

OF
THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Containing the Standards of
Government, Discipline, and Worship

Together with
Suggested Forms
for Use in Connection with
the Book of Discipline
and Particular Services
and
The Recommended Curriculum
for Ministerial Preparation

— 2005 edition —

Including all revisions effective on
January 1, 2005

The Committee on Christian Education
of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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The Form of Government

First published 1937

Revised 1978, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986,
1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2005

The Book of Discipline

First published 1940

Revised 1983, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1995, 2005

The Directory for the Public Worship of God

First published 1939

Revised 1988, 1991

Printed in USA

Issued by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Published by and available from:

The Committee on Christian Education
of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E

Box P

Willow Grove, PA 19090-0920

Phone 215/830-0900

Also available from:

Great Commission Publications

Phone 800/695-3387

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Preface

It is our prayer that as this book is used in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the great King of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ, will use it in maintaining his Word as its supreme rule of faith and life. Although the standards of government, discipline, and worship are subordinate to the Word of God, they may not be neglected without resulting in serious impairment of the life of the Church. They have been adopted by the Church as part of its constitution. Moreover, they have been received as being based upon the Scriptures, and even the elements not drawn directly from the Word have been acknowledged as being in accordance with the general rules of the Word. Their design is not to take the place of the Word, but to provide effective means for the application of its teaching in the government, discipline, and worship of the Church.

These standards, while printed separately from the doctrinal standards, should not be isolated from them. In using this book, it should be borne in mind that certain sections of the Confession of Faith and of the Catechisms deal directly with the principles and practice of ecclesiastical government. In the Confession, Chapters I, XXI, XXIII, XXV, XXVII–XXIX, XXX, and XXXI—treating respectively of the Scriptures, Christian liberty and liberty of conscience, religious worship and the Sabbath day, the civil magistrate, the church, the sacraments, church censures, and synods and councils—are of the most immediate significance.

The Suggested Forms for Use in Connection with the Book of Discipline, included in this book, were approved “not as a part of the Constitution, but as forms that are suitable and convenient aids in connection with certain phases of judicial discipline.” Similarly, the Suggested Forms for Particular Services were approved

by the Seventh Assembly, “not as part of the Constitution of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but as ‘Suggested Forms’ that are suitable and convenient aids in the conduct of the particular services.” In like manner, the Recommended Curriculum for Ministerial Preparation, adopted by the Fifty-fourth Assembly, is described simply as an “attachment” to the Form of Government, not as a part of it; it “may be amended by a majority vote of a general assembly.”

It seems well to include here a brief summary of the history of the adoption of these standards by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The formation of this book was begun at the First General Assembly, held in June 1936. That Assembly elected a Committee on the Constitution, composed of the Rev. Ned B. Stonehouse (who became chairman), the Rev. H. McAllister Griffiths, and ruling elder Murray Forst Thompson. The Committee was charged, in addition to its primary obligation to recommend the form of the doctrinal standards to be adopted at the Second Assembly, to “prepare for submission to the next General Assembly a Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory for the Worship of God.” Before the Second Assembly convened in November of that same year, the Committee was able to complete only the first of these documents. The Form of Government was considered and provisionally adopted at that time and at the Third Assembly, held in June 1937, finally adopted. The Directory for the Public Worship of God was submitted to the Fourth Assembly, and after discussion and revision at that Assembly and the Sixth Assembly, held in May 1939, it was adopted. The Book of Discipline, although adopted provisionally as early as the Third Assembly, was revised at the Fourth and Sixth Assemblies and finally adopted at the Seventh Assembly, held in June 1940. Others who served on that Committee, in addition to the original members, were the Rev. Messrs. Alexander K. Davison, R. B. Kuiper, Robert Strong, and Paul Woolley.

In 1948 the Fifteenth General Assembly elected a Committee on Revisions to the Form of Government, composed of the Rev.

Messrs. John P. Galbraith (who became chairman), John Murray, and Ned B. Stonehouse. The Committee was charged with “re-working” the Form of Government and proposing amendments to the next Assembly. As the Committee engaged in its work, it became clear that extensive revisions would be necessary. Ultimately, its work was to span a number of years, five versions of a new Form of Government, additions and changes to the personnel of the Committee, and, finally, a virtually new Form of Government. In the course of its work, that Committee studied the governmental standards of other Presbyterian denominations and consulted with representatives of such churches. A source document of especial note was the original Form of Government that grew out of the Westminster Assembly, *The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government and of Ordination of Ministers*; its influence is seen clearly in Chapter I of the present Form of Government. The Committee presented to the Forty-fourth Assembly in June 1977 a text for a new Form of Government. It reported also its intention to recommend final amendment to the Forty-fifth Assembly in 1978, which it did. In both instances, the respective assemblies approved and the presbyteries concurred. The revision was completed at the Forty-sixth Assembly in 1979, and the Committee was discharged.

During the course of its work, the constituency of the Revision Committee underwent a number of changes. In all, 13 members served on the Committee over the years, only one of whom was on the original revision committee. In addition to the original members and those who were active members of the Committee when the revision was approved, given below, those who served at various other times were the Rev. Messrs. Jay E. Adams, Robert L. Atwell, John P. Clelland, and Robert S. Marsden. The active members when the revision was finally approved in 1979 were the Rev. Messrs. John P. Galbraith, chairman, Edmund P. Clowney, D. Clair Davis, Robert W. Eckardt, and John J. Mitchell, and ruling elders Richard A. Barker and Edward A. Haug.

At one time the General Assembly had added revision of the Book

of Discipline to the task of the Committee on Revisions to the Form of Government. But when it became apparent to the Committee that the volume of its work would delay revision of the Book of Discipline, it recommended to the Thirty-fourth Assembly in April 1967 that it erect a separate Committee on Revisions to the Book of Discipline. The Assembly concurred, but then assigned to that Committee the task of revising the Directory for Worship and changed its name to the Committee on Revisions to the Book of Discipline and Directory for Worship. Elected to that Committee were the Rev. Messrs. Edwards E. Elliott (chairman), Edward L. Kellogg, and Lawrence R. Eyres. The Forty-first Assembly reconstituted the Committee and elected the Rev. Messrs. Donald J. Duff (chairman), Glenn D. Jerrell, and Jack J. Peterson as its members. That Committee recommended a major revision of the Book of Discipline, which was adopted effective with the Fiftieth Assembly in June 1983. The Directory for Worship was corrected in 1988 in regard only to reference citations in the Form of Government. That Committee continues to serve.

John P. Galbraith, *stated clerk*
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
September 1988

At the Fifty-sixth General Assembly in June 1989, the Committee on Revisions to the Book of Discipline and the Directory for Worship was renamed the Committee on Revisions to the Directory for Public Worship, and new members were elected. The Rev. Messrs. George R. Cottenden and John P. Galbraith were elected, and later the Rev. Gregory E. Reynolds served on the Committee. He resigned and was replaced with the Rev. Bernard J. Stonehouse. At the Sixty-first General Assembly, the Committee was augmented with the Rev. Messrs. Robert D. Knudsen and Moisés Silva. Mr. John O. Kinnaird was elected as an alternate. Upon the death of the Rev. Bernard J. Stonehouse in June 1999, Mr. Kinnaird began to serve on the Committee. Dr. Robert D. Knudsen died in February 2000. Dr. Moisés Silva resigned from the Committee after the General Assem-

bly in 2000, and the Rev. Larry E. Wilson, who had been elected as an alternate, began active service on the Committee. The Committee continues to serve.

This printing of *The Book of Church Order* has been prepared in accordance with instructions of the General Assembly, in consultation with the stated clerk of the Assembly. The Committee on Christian Education of the General Assembly has taken on the responsibility of publishing and distributing the book. It contains all the revisions to *The Book of Church Order* effective through the Seventy-first General Assembly (2004) and all those which take effect on January 1, 2005, in accordance with the Form of Government, XXXII, 2. As such, it should be the book that is in use in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church until at least the year 2010.

Donald J. Duff, *stated clerk*
Willow Grove, Pennsylvania
January 2005

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Chapter I Christ, the King and Head of the Church

1. Jesus Christ, upon whose shoulders the government is, whose name is called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice, from henceforth even forever, having all power given unto him in heaven and in earth by the Father, who raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come, and put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all; he being ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, received gifts for his church and gave offices necessary for the building of his church, for making disciples of all nations and perfecting his saints.

2. There is therefore but one King and Head of the church, the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, who rules in his church by his Word and Spirit. His mediatorial office includes all the offices in his church. It belongs to his majesty from his

throne of glory not only to rule his church directly but also to use the ministry of men in ruling and teaching his church through his Word and Spirit, thus exercising through men his own authority and enforcing his own laws. The authority of all such ministerial office rests upon his appointment, who has ordained government in his church, revealed its nature to us in his Word, and promised his presence in the midst of his church as this government is exercised in his name.

3. Christ orders his church by the rule of his Word; the pattern of officers, ordinances, government, and discipline set forth in Scripture is therefore to be observed as the instruction of the Lord. Church government must conform to the scriptural pattern and follow the specific provisions revealed in the New Testament. In those circumstances not specifically ordered by Scripture the church must observe the general rules of the Word. Among the biblical admonitions applicable to all circumstances are those requiring that all things must be done decently, in order, and for edification. A particular form of church government is bound to set forth what Christ requires for the order of his church and to arrange particular circumstances only in the manner, to the degree, and for the purposes that the Lord of the church has appointed in Scripture. The presbyterian form of government seeks to fulfill these scriptural requirements for the glory of Christ, the edification of the church, and the enlargement of that spiritual liberty in which Christ has set us free. Nevertheless, while such scriptural government is necessary for the perfection of church order, it is not essential to the existence of the church visible.

4. Jesus Christ, having ascended into heaven, abides in his church by the Holy Spirit whom he has sent. Through his Spirit he has given his Word revealing his ordinances; through the Spirit also he exerts his saving and governing power in the teaching of his Word and the administration of his ordinances. Only by the gifts and calling of the Spirit are men endued and qualified for office in Christ's church.

Chapter II

The Church

1. Jesus Christ, being now exalted far above all principality and power, has erected in this world a kingdom, which is his church.

2. The universal church visible consists of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and promise submission to his commandments.

3. In accordance with the teaching of Scripture, the many members of this church universal are to be organized in local and regional churches, confessing a common faith and submitting to a common form of government.

4. The work of the church, in fellowship with and obedience to Christ, is divine worship, mutual edification, and gospel witness. The means appointed by Christ through which the church does this work include the confession of the name of Christ before men; the exercise of fellowship in encouraging one another; the reading, teaching, and preaching of the Word of God; praying; singing; fasting; administering baptism and the Lord's Supper; collecting and distributing offerings; showing mercy; exercising discipline; and blessing the people.

Chapter III

The Nature and Exercise of Church Power

1. The power which Christ has committed to his church is not vested in the special officers alone, but in the whole body. All believers are endued with the Spirit and called of Christ to join in the worship, edification, and witness of the church which grows as the body of Christ fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in due measure of each part. The power of believers in their general office includes the right to acknowledge and desire the exercise of the gifts and calling of the special offices. The regular exercise of oversight in a particular congregation is discharged by those who have been called to such work by vote of the people.

2. Those who join in exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction are the ministers of the Word or teaching elders, and other church governors, commonly called ruling elders. They alone must exercise this authority by delegation from Christ, since according to the New Testament these are the only permanent officers of the church with gifts for such rule. Ruling elders and teaching elders join in congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies, for those who share gifts for rule from Christ must exercise these gifts jointly not only in the fellowship of the saints in one place but also for the edification of all the saints in larger areas so far as they are appointed thereto in an orderly manner, and are acknowledged by the saints as those set over them in the Lord.

Government by presbyters or elders is a New Testament ordinance; their joint exercise of jurisdiction in presbyterial assemblies is set forth in the New Testament; and the organization of subordinate and superior courts is founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, expressing the unity of the church and the derivation of ministerial authority from Christ the Head of the church.

3. All church power is only ministerial and declarative, for the

Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may presume to bind the conscience by making laws on the basis of its own authority; all its decisions should be founded upon the Word of God. "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship" (Confession of Faith, XX, 2).

4. All church power is wholly moral or spiritual. No church officers or judicatories possess any civil jurisdiction; they may not inflict any civil penalties nor may they seek the aid of the civil power in the exercise of their jurisdiction further than may be necessary for civil protection and security.

5. Nevertheless, church government is a valid and authentic jurisdiction to which Christians are commanded to submit themselves. Therefore the decisions of church officers when properly rendered and if in accord with the Word of God "are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his Word" (Confession of Faith, XXXI, 2).

Chapter IV

The Unity of the Church

1. Since the church of Christ is one body, united under and in one God and Father, one Lord, and one Spirit, it must give diligence to keep this unity in the bond of peace. To this end the church must receive those endued with gifts of Christ as Christ himself, must submit to those whose call to govern in the church has been properly acknowledged, and in particular must learn of those with gifts of teaching the Word of God. Further, since every Christian is endued with some gift for the edification of the body, he must minister this gift to the church as a faithful steward. Church government must maintain this fellowship in Christ and in the gifts of the Spirit and seek its restoration when it has been disrupted through schism.

2. It is the right and duty of those who rule in the church of God to maintain order and exercise discipline, for the preservation both of truth and duty. These officers and the whole church must censure or cast out the erroneous or scandalous, always observing the requirements of the Word of God, and seeking the honor of Christ's name, the good of his church, and the reclamation of the offender.

3. The manifestation of the unity of the church requires that it be separate from the world. Apostasy in faith and life is destructive of the fellowship in Christ; only by rejecting such error can Christian fellowship be maintained. There are many antichrists, many false apostles and teachers. From these the church must turn away, and those who steadfastly hear the voice of false shepherds and follow them cannot be regarded as the sheep of Christ. There are organizations which falsely call themselves churches of God, and others which once were churches, but have become synagogues of Satan. Communion with such is spiritual adultery and an offense against Christ and his saints.

4. The visible unity of the Body of Christ, though not altogether destroyed, is greatly obscured by the division of the Christian church into different groups or denominations. In such denominations Christians exercise a fellowship toward each other in doctrine, worship, and order that they do not exercise toward other Christians. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have gravely departed from apostolic purity; yet all of these which maintain through a sufficient discipline the Word and sacraments in their fundamental integrity are to be recognized as true manifestations of the church of Jesus Christ. All such churches should seek a closer fellowship, in accordance with the principles set forth above.

Chapter V

Offices in the Church

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ established his church of the new covenant on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The apostles were appointed to be witnesses to the risen Christ, testifying in the Holy Spirit to what they had seen and heard, heralding the gospel to the world, and grounding the church in the teaching of Christ. Together with the prophets they spoke by revelation, recording in the Scriptures of the New Testament the fullness of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. When their testimony was completed their calling and office was not continued in the church, and the powers and signs that endued and sealed their ministry ceased.

2. Our Lord continues to build his church through the ministry of men whom he calls and endues with special gifts for teaching, ruling, and serving. Some of these special gifts can be most profitably exercised only when those who possess them have been publicly recognized as called of Christ to minister with authority. It is proper to speak of such a publicly recognized function as an office, and to designate men by such scriptural titles of office and calling as evangelist, pastor, teacher, bishop, elder, or deacon. There are diversities of ministry within any office, for every man is called to be a steward of his own gifts. At the same time, a general designation of office may be applied to a group of functions within which separate offices could be distinguished.

3. The ordinary and perpetual offices in the church are those given for the ministry of the Word of God, of rule, and of mercy. Those who share in the rule of the church may be called elders (presbyters), bishops, or church governors. Those who minister in mercy and service are called deacons. Those elders who have been endued and called of Christ to labor also in the Word and teaching are called ministers.

Chapter VI

Ministers or Teaching Elders

1. The ministry of the Word is a calling of God to stewardship in the gospel. In this ministry there is a diversity of gifts that are essential to the discharge of evangelistic, pastoral, and teaching functions.

2. Every minister of the Word, or teaching elder, must manifest his gifts and calling in these various aspects of the ministry of the gospel and seek by full exercise of his ministry the spiritual profit of those with whom he labors. As a minister or servant of Christ it is his duty to feed the flock of God, to be an example to them, to have oversight of them, to bear the glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing and beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, to exhort and convince the gainsayer by sound doctrine, and to dispense the sacraments instituted by Christ. Among those who minister the Word the Scripture distinguishes the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher.

3. He who fills this office shall be sound in the faith, possess competency in human learning, and be able to teach and rule others. He should exhibit holiness of life becoming to the gospel. He should be a man of wisdom and discretion. He should rule his own house well. He should have a good report of them that are outside the church.

4. Every minister shall be a member of a regional church and has communicant fellowship in any local congregation of that regional church. The presbytery, with the concurrence of a ministerial member, may request a session within its bounds to exercise pastoral care over him in its behalf. A session, with the concurrence of the presbytery, may grant the right to vote in the congregation to any ministerial member of the regional church.

Chapter VII

Evangelists

1. Jesus Christ, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth, has commanded his church to make disciples of all the nations. From the throne of his glory he sent forth the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, to empower the witness of the church to the gospel. While it is the calling of every believer to confess Christ before men, and while God gives particular gifts and calling to some to minister the Word, and while every minister of the Word must evangelize in the fulfillment of his calling, there are some who are particularly called by Christ and his church as evangelists. Ordinarily such men shall preach the Word free of pastoral charge in a particular flock in order that they may labor to bring in other sheep. And to those sheep whom Christ has brought in, evangelists shall administer the sacraments until a congregation shall have been regularly organized. Since the gifts and functions of evangelists are necessary until the end of the age, this ministry is permanent and not confined to the apostolic period.

2. The evangelist, in common with other ministers, is ordained to perform all the functions that belong to the sacred office of the minister. Yet distinctive to the function of the evangelist in his ministry of the gospel are the labors of (a) a missionary in a home or foreign mission field; (b) a stated supply or special preacher in churches to which he does not sustain a pastoral relation; (c) a chaplain in institutions or in military forces; (d) an administrator of an agency for preaching the gospel; and (e) an editor or similar ministry through the press and other means of communication.

Chapter VIII

Pastors

Christ's undershepherd in a local congregation of God's people, who joins with the ruling elders in governing the congregation, is called a pastor. It is his charge to feed and tend the flock as Christ's minister and with the other elders to lead them in all the service of Christ. It is his task to conduct the public worship of God; to pray for and with Christ's flock as the mouth of the people unto God; to feed the flock by the public reading and preaching of the Word of God, according to which he is to teach, convince, reprove, exhort, comfort, and evangelize, expounding and applying the truth of Scripture with ministerial authority, as a diligent workman approved by God; to administer the sacraments; to bless the people from God; to shepherd the flock and minister the Word according to the particular needs of groups, families, and individuals in the congregation, catechizing by teaching plainly the first principles of the oracles of God to the baptized youth and to adults who are yet babes in Christ, visiting in the homes of the people, instructing and counseling individuals, and training them to be faithful servants of Christ; to minister to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dying; and to make known the gospel to the lost.

Chapter IX

Teachers

1. A teacher is a minister of the Word who has received particular gifts from Christ for expounding the Scripture, teaching sound doctrine, and convincing gainsayers, and is called to this ministry.

2. A minister may serve a local congregation as a teacher if there is at least one other minister serving as pastor. The teacher may also give instruction in a theological seminary; or teach the Word in a school, college, or university; or discharge this ministry in some other specific way, such as writing or editing in the field of Christian religious education. He shall take a pastoral oversight of those committed to his charge as teacher, and be diligent in sowing the seed of the Word and gathering the harvest, as one who watches for souls.

Chapter X

Ruling Elders

1. Christ who has instituted government in his church has furnished some men, beside the ministers of the Word, with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereto. Such officers, chosen by the people from among their number, are to join with the ministers in the government of the church, and are properly called ruling elders.

2. Those who fill this office should be sound in the faith and of exemplary Christian life, men of wisdom and discretion, worthy of the esteem of the congregation as spiritual fathers.

3. Ruling elders, individually and jointly with the pastor in the session, are to lead the church in the service of Christ. They are to watch diligently over the people committed to their charge to prevent corruption of doctrine or morals. Evils which they cannot correct by private admonition they should bring to the notice of the session. They should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourning, and nourish and guard the children of the covenant. They should pray with and for the people. They should have particular concern for the doctrine and conduct of the minister of the Word and help him in his labors.

Chapter XI

Deacons

1. The Scriptures designate the office of deacon as distinct and perpetual in the church. Deacons are called to show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the church. To this end they exercise, in the fellowship of the church, a recognized stewardship of care and of gifts for those in need or distress. This service is distinct from that of rule in the church.

2. Those chosen to this office should be of great faith, exemplary lives, honest repute, brotherly love, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.

3. In order to facilitate the performance of the duties of their office the deacons of each particular church shall be constituted a board of deacons. The board shall choose its own officers from its membership.

4. The board shall oversee the ministry of mercy in the church and shall collect and disburse funds for the relief of the needy. Other forms of service for the church may also be committed to the deacons.

5. In the discharge of their duties the deacons shall be under the supervision and authority of the session. Accordingly, the board shall keep a record of its proceedings and of all funds and their distribution, and shall submit its records to the session once every three months, and at other times upon request of the session. If it seems to be for the best interest of the church, the session may require the board of deacons to reconsider any action, or may, if necessary, overrule it.

6. It is desirable that the session and the board of deacons meet

together at regular intervals to confer on matters of common responsibility.

7. In a church in which there are no deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the session.

Chapter XII

Governing Assemblies

1. All governing assemblies have the same kinds of rights and powers. These are to be used to maintain truth and righteousness and to oppose erroneous opinions and sinful practices that threaten the purity, peace, or progress of the church. All assemblies have the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline reasonably proposed and the power to obtain evidence and inflict censures. A person charged with an offense may be required to appear only before the assembly having jurisdiction over him, but any member of the church may be called by any assembly to give testimony.

2. Each governing assembly exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters belonging to it. The session exercises jurisdiction over the local church; the presbytery over what is common to the ministers, sessions, and the church within a prescribed region; and the general assembly over such matters as concern the whole church. Disputed matters of doctrine and discipline may be referred to a higher governing assembly. The lower assemblies are subject to the review and control of higher assemblies, in regular graduation. These assemblies are not separate and independent, but they have a mutual relation and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate body.

3. Assemblies have the authority to erect committees and commissions and to delegate to them specific interim powers. The membership of such committees and commissions need not be limited to the membership of the appointing assembly when the delegated tasks and powers do not require it.

4. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted in these assemblies, nor shall any one be allowed to vote except when the vote is being taken.

Chapter XIII

The Local Church and Its Session

1. The local church consists of a definite membership organized as a distinct congregation with its officers. Two or more local congregations may be associated together under the government of a single session. The membership of a local congregation consists of communicant and noncommunicant members, all of whom have the privilege of pastoral oversight, instruction, and government by the church.

2. Communicant members are those who have been baptized, have made a credible profession of faith in Christ, and have been enrolled and admitted to all the rights of church membership by the session. Noncommunicant members are the baptized children of communicant members.

3. The officers in local congregations are ministers, ruling elders, and deacons. The number of each is to be determined by taking into account the needs of the congregation and the number of those to whom Christ has given the gifts required for such offices.

4. The session, which is the governing body of the local church, consists of its pastor, its other ministers, and its ruling elders. It shall choose its own moderator annually from among its members.

5. The session shall convene at the call of the moderator, the presbytery, any two members of the session, or upon its own adjournment. A quorum of a session is two ruling elders, if there are three or more, or one ruling elder if there are fewer than three, together with the pastor or one of the pastors of the local congregation. In no case may the session conduct its business with fewer than two present who are entitled to vote.

6. When the pastor is unable to be present, or when for other

reasons it seems advisable, another minister, normally of the same presbytery, acceptable to the session and the pastor, may be invited to be present for counsel; he shall be without vote, but may be elected to moderate the meeting.

When a church is without a pastor, the session shall request the presbytery to appoint a minister, normally of the same presbytery, to meet with them, or shall itself invite such a minister; he shall have the right to vote, and to be elected to moderate the meeting.

When it is impractical without great inconvenience for a minister to attend, those present may conduct business, but the grounds for the call of such a meeting shall be reviewed at the next meeting at which a minister is present.

7. The session is charged with maintaining the government of the congregation. It shall oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship; it shall concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation. It shall receive, dismiss, and exercise discipline over the members of the church, supervise the activities of the diaconate, the board of trustees and all other organizations of the congregation, and have final authority over the use of the church property. The session also shall appoint ruling elder commissioners to higher assemblies.

8. The session shall keep the following records: (1) minutes of its meetings, including a record of the administration of the sacraments and changes in the membership of the congregation; (2) minutes of the meetings of the congregation; and (3) rolls of the members of the congregation, both of communicant members and of their baptized children, with the dates of their reception. Such rolls shall designate those members worshiping with a mission work. Births, baptisms, censures, restorations, deaths, and removals shall be noted on these rolls. The session shall submit its minutes and the minutes of the congregation to the presbytery for review at least once every year.

9. The names of members shall be placed upon or removed from the rolls of the church only by order of the session, and according to

the provisions of the Book of Discipline.

When upon the request of a member the session dismisses him to another congregation the clerk shall send a letter commending him to its care, and the clerk of the receiving church shall notify the dismissing church of the date of his reception. When notification is received the clerk shall remove his name from the roll and record the fact in the minutes.

Whenever a member desires dismissal to a church of which the session cannot approve, and he cannot be dissuaded, it shall grant him a certificate of standing, unless the session institutes disciplinary action against him; upon being informed that he has joined such a church the clerk shall erase his name from the roll.

10. If a session shall cease to exist or become so small as to prevent it from working effectively, the presbytery shall provide for an election and ordination of elders from within the congregation; or the presbytery, with the consent of the congregation, may appoint ruling elders or ministers, or both, normally from within the same presbytery, to be an acting session or to augment the existing session temporarily.

Chapter XIV

The Regional Church and Its Presbytery

1. A regional church consists of all the members of the local congregations and the ministers within a certain district. The general assembly may organize a regional church when there are at least four congregations, two ministers, and two ruling elders, within a region.

2. The presbytery is the governing body of a regional church. It consists of all the ministers and all the ruling elders of the congregations of the regional church.

3. Meetings of the presbytery shall be composed, insofar as possible, of all the ministers on the roll and one ruling elder from each congregation commissioned by the respective sessions. Any four presbyters, among whom shall be at least two ministers and one commissioned ruling elder, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum.

4. The moderator shall be chosen from among its members from year to year, or for some shorter term if the presbytery so determines, and shall serve until his successor is installed.

5. The presbytery has the power to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care, always respecting the liberties guaranteed to the individual congregations under the constitution. In the exercise of its jurisdiction the presbytery has responsibility for evangelism within the bounds of its region, especially in areas which are not within the sphere of service in any one congregation. Similarly the presbytery shall seek to foster fellowship in worship and nurture in the church as a whole within its region.

The presbytery has the power to organize and receive congregations (cf. Chapter XXIX), to unite and dissolve congregations,

at the request of the people and with the advice of the sessions involved, to visit particular churches for the purpose of inquiring into their state and of taking proper measures to insure that the evils which may have arisen in them shall be redressed. Presbytery shall examine and approve or censure the records of church sessions.

Further, the presbytery has power to receive and issue all appeals, and other matters, that are brought before it from church sessions in a regular manner, subject to the provisions of the Book of Discipline; to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline seriously and reasonably proposed; to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the church; to take under its care, examine, and license candidates for the holy ministry; and to ordain, install, remove, and judge ministers.

6. It shall be the duty of the presbytery to keep an accurate record of its proceedings and to submit this record to the general assembly for examination at least once each year. The presbytery shall also report to the general assembly each year the licensures, ordinations, the receiving or dismissing of members, the removal of members by death, the organization, reception, union, or dissolution of congregations, or the formation of new ones, and in general, all the important changes which have taken place within its bounds in the course of the year.

7. The presbytery shall meet on its own adjournment; and when any emergency shall require a meeting sooner than the time to which it stands adjourned, the moderator, or, in case of his absence, death, or inability to act, the stated clerk, shall, at the request of any two ministers and two ruling elders, the ruling elders being of different congregations, call a special meeting; the moderator or the stated clerk, as the case may be, if otherwise qualified to do so, may be one of those making the request. For this purpose a circular letter shall be sent, specifying the particular business of the intended meeting, to every minister and the clerk of every session under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, at least

ten days prior to the meeting. Nothing shall be transacted at such special meeting besides the particular business for which the judicatory has been convened.

8. Each day's session shall be opened and closed with prayer.

9. Uncommissioned elders of the regional church, and presbyters in good standing in other presbyteries or in churches of like faith and practice, who may be present, may be invited to sit with the presbytery as corresponding members. Such members shall be entitled to deliberate and advise, but not to vote in any decisions of the presbytery.

Chapter XV

The Whole Church and Its General Assembly

1. The whole church consists of all the members of its regional churches.

2. The general assembly, which is the governing body of the whole church, shall consist of not more than one hundred and fifty-five voting commissioners, including the moderator and stated clerk of the previous assembly and such ministers and ruling elders as are commissioned by the respective presbyteries in accordance with proportions determined by a previous general assembly. In the event that the general assembly fails to establish such proportions, the next general assembly shall consist of every minister and of one ruling elder from every local church.

3. The general assembly shall meet at least once in every year. On the day appointed for the purpose the moderator of the preceding assembly shall open the meeting and preside until a moderator is chosen. In the event of his absence the member present who was last elected moderator of the general assembly shall preside in his place. Each commissioner shall present his credentials to the clerk of the assembly. Any twenty of these commissioners, of whom at least five shall be ministers and at least five ruling elders, being met on the day and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business. No commissioner shall have a right to deliberate or vote in the assembly until he has been enrolled.

4. The moderator of the preceding assembly, or a minister appointed by him in his place, shall preach a sermon at the opening of the general assembly. Each session of the assembly shall be opened with prayer. And the whole business of the assembly being finished, and the vote taken for dissolving the present assembly, the moderator shall say from the chair, "By virtue of the

authority delegated to me by the church, let this general assembly be dissolved, and I do hereby dissolve it, and require another general assembly, chosen in the same manner, to meet at _____ on the ____ day of _____ A.D. _____," after which he shall pray and return thanks, and the apostolic benediction shall be pronounced.

5. When any emergency shall require the calling of a general assembly sooner than the time specified by the previous assembly, the moderator of the previous assembly, or in the case of his absence, death, or inability to act, the stated clerk, at the request of twenty presbyters, including at least five ministers, and ruling elders from at least five congregations, shall call a special general assembly. The moderator or the stated clerk, as the case may be, if otherwise qualified to do so, may be one of those making the request. For this purpose a circular letter shall be sent, specifying the particular business of the intended meeting, to every minister and to the clerk of every session at least twenty days prior to the meeting. Nothing shall be transacted at such special meeting except the particular business for which the assembly has been convened.

6. The general assembly shall seek to advance the worship, edification, and witness of the whole church. It shall seek to resolve all doctrinal and disciplinary questions regularly brought before it from the lower assemblies. It shall seek to promote the unity of the church of Christ through correspondence with other churches.

7. The duties peculiar to the general assembly include organizing regional churches, reviewing the records of the presbyteries, and calling ministers or licentiates to the missionary or other ministries of the whole church directly or through its standing committees.

8. The general assembly is not invested with power, by virtue

of its own authority, to make pronouncements which bind the conscience of the members of the church. Yet the deliverances of the general assembly, if declarative of the Word of God, are to be received with deference and submission not only because of their fidelity to the Word of God but also because of the nature of the general assembly as the supreme judicatory of the church. Deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and other actions which have the effect of amending or adding to the subordinate standards shall not be binding unless they have been approved by the general assembly and presbyteries in the manner provided in this Form of Government for the amendment of the constitution.

Chapter XVI

Congregational Meetings

1. Meetings of the congregation shall be called by the session. A stated meeting shall be held at least once annually to consider the affairs of the congregation. Other meetings shall be called when the session deems it to be for the best interests of the congregation or when requested in writing to do so by one-fourth of the communicant members of the congregation in good and regular standing. Only those and all those persons who are communicant members of the congregation in good and regular standing shall be entitled to vote. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted, nor shall anyone be allowed to vote except when the vote is being taken.

2. The provisions of Section 1 of this chapter shall apply to a mission work which may hold a congregational meeting in its area when duly called by its session or presbytery. Such a congregational meeting may be held when at least one member of the session is present and when a quorum of communicant members of the mission work as designated by the session is present.

3. Public notice of a meeting of the congregation shall be made at the worship services on the two Lord's Days prior to the meeting or by circular letter at least ten days prior to the meeting. When the meeting is called for the transaction of specific matters of business no business shall be conducted except that which is stated in the notice.

4. The moderator and the clerk of the session shall serve as moderator and clerk respectively in congregational meetings. In the event that it is impracticable or inexpedient for either or both of these to serve, the session shall appoint others from among its number, or request a minister or ruling elder of the presbytery to serve.

5. The clerk shall keep a correct record of all the business transacted at the meeting and preserve it with the records of the session. Minutes of the congregational meeting shall be approved by the congregation before the close of the meeting.

6. When the laws of the state require, the congregation shall transact business as a corporation. All other business shall be conducted in the congregational meeting.

7. A congregation may withdraw from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church only according to the following procedure:

a. Before calling a congregational meeting for the purpose of taking any action contemplating withdrawal from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the session shall inform the presbytery, ordinarily at a stated meeting, of its intention to call such a meeting, and shall provide grounds for its intention. The presbytery, through representatives appointed for the purpose, shall seek, within a period not to exceed three weeks after the presbytery meeting, in writing and in person, to dissuade the session from its intention. If the session is not dissuaded, it may issue a written call for the first meeting of the congregation. The call shall contain the session's recommendation, with its written grounds, together with the presbytery's written argument.

b. If the vote of the congregation favors withdrawal, the session shall call for a second meeting to be held not less than three weeks, nor more than one year, thereafter. If the congregation, at the second meeting, reaffirms a previous action to withdraw, it shall be the duty of the presbytery to prepare a roll of members who desire to continue as members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and to provide for the oversight of these continuing members.

c. The presbytery shall be given the opportunity, at any congregational meeting at which withdrawal is being considered, to dissuade the congregation from withdrawing.

Chapter XVII

Congregations without Pastors

1. A congregation without a pastor shall continue to meet on the Lord's Day for the purpose of prayer, the singing of praises, and the hearing of the Word of God. When a minister or licentiate is not available the session shall be responsible for the conducting of services. A sermon or exhortation in accord with the standards of the Church shall be presented by reading, recording, or oral delivery to the congregation.

2. The presbytery may supervise a church that is without a pastor through a ministerial advisor (cf. Chapter XIII, Section 6) or a committee. Such supervision includes cooperation with the session, or with any authorized committee of the particular church, in the supply of the pulpit and in the seeking and securing of a pastor.

3. Under ordinary circumstances only ministers and licentiates of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall be employed as regular supplies in congregations without pastors. However, other ministers or licentiates may be employed as regular supplies upon approval of the presbytery.

Chapter XVIII

Moderators

1. In the judicatories of the church there shall be a moderator chosen from among its members as presiding officer so that business may be conducted with order and dispatch.

2. The moderator is to be considered as possessing, by delegation from the whole body, all authority necessary for the preservation of order, for convening and adjourning the judicatory, and directing its operations according to the rules of the Church. The moderator of the presbytery as provided in Chapter XIV, Section 7, and the moderator of the previous general assembly as provided in Chapter XV, Section 5, of this Form of Government, shall be empowered to convene the judicatory before the ordinary time of meeting.

3. If the moderator is a member of the body over which he presides, he may vote in all decisions of that body.

Chapter XIX

Clerks

Every judicatory shall choose a clerk from among those who are or those eligible to be its members to serve for such a term as the judicatory may determine. It shall be the duty of the clerk to be accountable for the recording of the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required; and such extracts under the hand of the clerk shall be considered as authentic vouchers of the facts which they declare, in any ecclesiastical judicatory and to every part of the Church.

Chapter XX

Ordination and Installation

1. It being manifest by the Word of God that no man ought to take upon himself the office of deacon, ruling elder, or minister, the Scriptures declare that the church shall set men apart by solemn act for its service.

2. Ordination is that act by which men are set apart to the offices of deacon, ruling elder, and minister. It is the church's solemn approval of and public attestation to a man's inward call, his gifts, and his calling by the church.

3. The church shall invest him with the office only when satisfied as to his gifts and only in response to a call to do work appropriate to that office. In the case of deacons and ruling elders their service shall be in the church. In the case of ministers their service normally shall be in the church, though in unusual circumstances it may be, if approved by the presbytery, in nonecclesiastical religious organizations.

4. The ordaining body, before investing a man with office, shall provide, or assure itself that he has received, such training and testing of gifts as may be necessary for the proper performance of the duties required by the office.

5. Ordination shall be performed by the body which examines the candidate. In the case of deacons and ruling elders it shall be by the session, except that when a congregation is without a session the presbytery shall ordain such officers as have been elected by the congregation and approved by the presbytery. In the case of ministers ordination shall be by the presbytery.

6. Installation is the act by which a person who has been chosen to perform official work in the church, having been or-

dained, is placed in position to do that work. When a man receives his first call to a service his ordination and installation shall be performed at the same time.

7. The installation of deacons and ruling elders shall be performed by the session except as provided in Section 5, above. The installation of ministers shall be in the charge of the presbytery.

8. When an officer, by reason of advanced age or disability, retires or is retired from a position and is no longer engaged in a service that requires a call in terms of Chapters XXIII or XXV of this Form of Government, the body calling him to that service in which he was last engaged before his retirement may, in recognition of his long and/or meritorious service, designate him “emeritus” with the title of his previous service.

Chapter XXI

Licensing Candidates to Preach the Gospel

1. The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously made of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, in order that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the gifts of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed. For this purpose candidates for ordination shall first be licensed by presbyteries to preach the gospel as probationers. After a period of probation sufficient to make trial of their qualifications and service, and having received reports that their services are edifying to the church, the presbyteries may in due time proceed to ordain such probationers, or licentiates, to the sacred office.

2. Prior to licensure candidates shall be taken under care of a presbytery. A candidate must be a communicant member of a local congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; ordinarily it should be of the same presbytery in which he is applying to be taken under care. The presbytery shall receive a written recommendation from the session of the local congregation of which the candidate is a member, certifying that in its judgment his Christian faith and potential gifts qualify him to be taken under the care of the presbytery with a view to ordination to the gospel ministry. It is of particular importance, at this time, that the presbytery inquire as to the grace of God in him and whether he be of such holiness of life as is requisite in a minister of the gospel. It is therefore the duty of a presbytery, in taking a candidate under its care, to examine him respecting his Christian faith, life, service, and the motives influencing him to desire the sacred office. The presbytery must show its continuing concern for the progress of all the candidates under its care, and shall continually guide, counsel, and help them as they further prepare themselves for the work of the ministry.

If a candidate desires to place himself under the care of a presbytery other than his own, he shall request his presbytery to forward the written recommendation of his session to the presbytery under whose care he desires to place himself. That presbytery shall examine the candidate as required above of all candidates and, if it receives him as a candidate shall give him all that continuing care above required.

3. It is highly reproachful to religion and dangerous to the church to entrust the preaching of the gospel to weak and ignorant men. The presbytery shall therefore license a candidate only if he has received a bachelor of arts degree, or its academic equivalent, from a college or university of reputable academic standing, and has completed an adequate course of study lasting at least one year and a half in a theological seminary.

4. The candidate for licensure shall be examined by the presbytery, or by a committee appointed for that purpose, in the English Bible, ecclesiastical history, theology, and the original languages of the Scriptures. The presbytery shall also satisfy itself, by receiving testimonials or by other means, of the candidate's piety and exemplary life and his personal zeal for and experience in presenting the gospel to others. If the examination of candidates is referred to a committee, an examination at least in theology shall also be held before the presbytery; and if one-fourth of the presbyters present at the meeting are dissatisfied with the examination in theology, the candidate shall be required to continue the examination at a future meeting of the presbytery.

5. In order to make trial of his gifts to explain and vindicate and practically to enforce the doctrines of the gospel, the presbytery shall further require that the candidate prepare (1) a sermon, which the presbytery may ask to be delivered in its presence, (2) an essay on a theological theme, and (3) an exegesis of the Hebrew or Greek text of a passage of Scripture.

6. That the most effectual measures may be taken to guard against the admission of unqualified men into the sacred office, no exception shall be made of any of the educational or other requirements for licensure outlined above unless the presbytery, after reporting the whole matter to the general assembly and weighing such advice as it may offer, shall judge, by a three-fourths vote of the members present, that the exception is warranted by the manifest qualifications of the candidate for the holy office of the gospel ministry.

7. If the presbytery is satisfied with the trials of a candidate for licensure, it shall then proceed to license him in the following manner. The moderator shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you promise to seek the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church?

(4) Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this presbytery, or any other presbytery under the jurisdiction of which you may come?

8. After the candidate has answered these questions in the affirmative the moderator shall offer prayer suitable to the occasion and shall address the candidate in the following or similar words: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority that he has given to the church for its edification, we license you to preach the gospel, wherever God in his providence may call you; and for this purpose, may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen."

The presbytery shall record the licensure in its minutes and provide the licentiate with a certificate in the following form:

At _____ on the _____ day of _____ the Presbytery of _____ having received testimonials in favor of _____, of his being in the communion of the church, of his piety and exemplary life, of his proficiency in the liberal arts, divinity, and other studies, and of his personal zeal for the gospel and his ability to present it to others, approved all these parts of trial; and he having adopted the Confession of Faith of this Church, and satisfactorily answered the questions to be put to candidates to be licensed, the presbytery did license to preach the gospel of Christ as a probationer for the holy ministry within the bounds of this presbytery, or wherever else he shall be orderly called.

9. When any candidate for licensure shall have occasion, while his trials are going on, to remove from the bounds of his own presbytery into those of another, the latter presbytery, on his producing proper testimonial from the former, may take up his trials at the point at which they were interrupted, and conduct them to a conclusion.

10. A licentiate shall move outside the limits of his regional church for an extended period of time only by permission of his presbytery; in such a case an extract of the record of his licensure and a statement of his service as a licentiate, signed by the clerk, shall be his testimonials to the presbytery under whose jurisdiction he shall come. When a licentiate shall undertake regular duties within the bounds of a regional church he shall place himself under the jurisdiction of its presbytery.

11. When, over a considerable period of time, either a licentiate's services do not appear to be edifying to the church, or he is not actively seeking a call to ministerial service except for reasons of furthering his preparation for the ministry, the presbytery may, if it think proper, recall his license. The period of time ordinarily should not exceed two years.

Chapter XXII

Calling a Minister

1. A minister or licentiate may be called to ministerial service by a congregation; he may also be called by a presbytery or the general assembly, either directly or through their agencies, for work not related to any one particular congregation. Only ministers and licentiates may be called.

2. All calls shall be presented to the person called only by consent of presbytery. No minister shall be transferred to other service without his consent.

3. When a congregation desires to call a pastor it shall ordinarily choose a special committee from its own membership to assist it in selecting him. If the committee is not identical with the session, invitations to preach to the congregation shall be issued only with the approval of the session. No person shall be called by the congregation without the prior approval of the session, except that any ten members entitled to vote or one-fifth of all those entitled to vote, which ever be the larger number, may present a nomination to the congregation, such nomination having been previously submitted to the special committee for its consideration.

4. When the special committee is prepared to make its report it shall inform the session and present to it a copy of its proposed report so that the session may consider such nominations as may be contemplated in the proposed report. The session shall then, if it deems it advisable, convene a meeting of the congregation for the purpose of hearing the report of the committee and acting on it; it shall, however, always be the duty of the session to convene the congregation in accordance with Chapter XVI, Section 1, and to conduct the meeting in accordance with that chapter.

5. When the meeting has been convened and the call of the

meeting has been found in order, it is expedient that the moderator give an exhortation to the congregation suited to the purpose of its coming together. The special committee, or the session, shall then present its report, after which the congregation shall determine whether it wishes to proceed to call a pastor.

6. If the congregation decides to vote to call a pastor the moderator shall conduct the election. The voting shall be by ballot, a majority being required for election.

If the vote is unanimous a call shall be drawn in due form. If there is a majority and a minority the moderator shall address the congregation seeking to persuade the minority to concur in the call. A ballot shall then be taken to determine the number concurring in the call. If there is still a minority unwilling to concur, the moderator shall advise the majority and the minority concerning their mutual responsibilities. A final ballot shall then be taken to determine the number desiring to prosecute the call in the circumstances. If a majority decides to prosecute the call it shall be drawn in due form and the presbytery shall be informed of the proceedings.

If at any point in the meeting the congregation decides not to call a pastor it may refer the matter back to the special committee, or to the session, as the case may be, for report to a later meeting, or take such other action as may be appropriate.

7. When the congregation has determined to issue a call it shall by vote determine the terms of the call, and shall order it subscribed either by the electors, or by the session or other representatives of its choice. The session shall then draw up the call in proper form and see to its signing by the proper signatories.

After the congregation has determined the signatories of the call it may appoint commissioners to represent it at the next meeting of the presbytery to which the congregation belongs for the purpose of having the call found in order and its terms approved. The clerk of the session shall present the call to the clerk of the presbytery, who shall present it to a meeting of the presbytery

at the earliest practicable time.

8. If the congregation has chosen to subscribe its call by representatives the moderator shall certify to the presbytery that the persons signing have been appointed for that purpose by a vote of the congregation.

The moderator shall also certify as to the validity of the meeting of the congregation and that the call as presented has been prepared in all respects as directed by vote of the congregation.

9. A call from a congregation shall be in the following or like form:

The congregation of _____ Church being, on sufficient grounds, well satisfied with the ministerial qualifications of you _____, and having good hopes that your ministrations in the gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation; promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly care and employment, we promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of _____ in regular _____ payments during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church, together with free use of a house and _____ vacation each year.

A call from a presbytery or the general assembly or an agency thereof shall be in appropriately similar form.

10. When a call from a congregation has been presented to its presbytery for approval the presbytery may find the call in order, approve its terms, and determine to place it in the hands of the person called, whether or not he be of the same presbytery; may refer the call back to the congregation with recommendations either to amend or desist from the call; or may, for reasons which

it shall communicate to the congregation, decline to place the call in the person's hands.

If the call is to a minister or licentiate who is under the jurisdiction of another presbytery of this Church the clerk of the presbytery which has jurisdiction over the calling congregation shall, if that presbytery approves the call, forward the call to the person called and a copy to the clerk of his presbytery. The calling congregation's presbytery may, before acting on the call, require the person called to be interviewed by the presbytery or a committee of the presbytery in order to judge of his fitness in the circumstances. If the person resides at an inconvenient distance from the presbytery's area such an interview may be arranged, if agreeable to all parties, at the time of his visiting the congregation prior to the issuance of a call.

11. When a call is issued by a presbytery or the general assembly, or an agency thereof, a person designated by the calling body shall sign the call, forward it to the person called, send a copy to the presbytery that has jurisdiction over him, and certify to that presbytery as to the validity of the meeting at which the call was issued and that the call has been prepared in all respects as determined at that meeting.

12. The procedures to be followed in response to a call from within the Church shall be:

a. When the call is to the pastor of a congregation, and he is disposed to accept the call, he shall inform the congregation of his desire and ask them to concur with him in requesting their presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship; such request shall be voted on by the congregation at a regularly called meeting of the congregation.

If the congregation concurs in his request the pastor shall request their presbytery to approve the call and to dissolve the pastoral relationship. If the congregation declines to concur in his request he may, if he is still disposed to accept the call, request the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship; in such a case the

congregation shall be given the opportunity to be represented at the meeting of presbytery to plead its cause.

When the presbytery has received a request to approve a call and to dissolve a pastoral relationship it may grant the request, require the pastor and congregation to give the matter further consideration, or require the continuance of the relationship.

If a pastoral relationship is dissolved, the presbytery shall declare the pulpit vacant as of a specified date and record the facts in its records. If the call is to work under the jurisdiction of another presbytery, the minister shall be dismissed to that presbytery as of a convenient date and the clerk of the dismissing presbytery shall so inform the presbytery to which the minister is being dismissed.

b. When the call is to a minister serving a presbytery or the general assembly, or an agency thereof, a procedure parallel to that for a pastor shall be followed.

c. When the call is to a minister without a charge, or if his charge is not under the jurisdiction of the Church, he shall, if he is disposed to accept the call, request the presbytery to approve the call and grant him permission to accept it.

d. When the call is to a licentiate and he is disposed to accept the call he shall request his presbytery to approve the call and grant him permission to accept it. Before the presbytery considers his request it shall have determined that he has satisfactorily completed his probation for the gospel ministry.

e. If the person called decides to decline the call he shall promptly inform the calling body and the presbytery through which the call was issued, and return the call to the calling body.

f. No minister may leave his charge without the prior approval of the presbytery.

13.a. When a call to a minister of another denomination is contemplated the person presiding at the meeting of the calling body shall, before a vote is taken, inform it of the provisions of this section.

b. When the calling body has voted to issue a call to such a minister it shall present it to the appropriate presbytery for approval; if the presbytery approves the call it shall place it in his hands contingent upon his reception into the presbytery.

c. If the minister desires to accept the call the presbytery shall require him to give evidence of possessing the qualifications in regard to piety, faith, and learning that are required of candidates for ordination as given in Chapter XXIII. This evidence shall include written testimonials from qualified persons of his satisfactory exercise of the requisite gifts for the ministry of the Word.

In no case shall an examination on the floor of presbytery be waived. If one-fourth of the presbyters present are dissatisfied with the examination in theology the minister shall be required to undergo an examination in the subject again at a future meeting of the presbytery. If at the outset of such subsequent meeting one-fourth of the presbyters so request, a clear recording of this examination shall be made and filed with the presbytery.

The presbytery shall require him to answer affirmatively the following questions:

- (1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- (2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?
- (3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?
- (4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
- (5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?
- (6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may

arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?

d. Under no circumstances shall such a person be permitted to undertake any of the duties contemplated in the call nor to occupy living quarters that are to be provided by the calling body, and he shall be strongly advised not to change his residence in any case, until after the call has been approved and his reception by the presbytery has been completed.

14. A person receiving a call shall respond to it ordinarily within three weeks unless otherwise agreed to by the calling body.

15. The acceptance of a call shall be regarded as a request for installation in the case of a minister, and for ordination and installation in the case of a licentiate, and the presbytery shall proceed as soon as convenient to act upon the request in terms of Chapter XXIII, Sections 4ff.

16. Within the terms of this chapter the phrase “find the call in order” shall mean to determine that the call has been properly drawn and issued, and that its terms conform to the constitution of the Church; and the phrase “approve its terms” or “approve the call” shall mean to sanction the terms specified in the call.

Chapter XXIII

Ordaining and Installing Ministers

1. When a call is issued to a minister or licentiate it shall be regarded as a request by the calling body for his installation. When the person called has declared his willingness to accept the call this shall be regarded as his request to be installed; in the case of a licentiate it shall be regarded as a request first to be ordained.

2. A licentiate may be ordained as a minister of the Word when he has given sufficient evidence that he has the ministerial gifts required for instruction and rule in Christ's church in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XXI, Section 1, and has been called to a ministerial service approved by the presbytery. A minister may be received from another denomination when he has given sufficient evidence that he has the ministerial gifts required for instruction and rule in Christ's church in accordance with the provisions of Section 6 of this chapter.

3. That the most effectual measures may be taken to guard against the admission of unqualified men into the sacred office the presbytery shall ordain a licentiate, or receive a minister from another denomination, if he has satisfactorily completed the academic requirements set forth in Chapter XXI, Section 3, and an adequate course of study in a theological seminary equivalent to that required for a regular three-year theological degree.

Ordination of a licentiate, or reception of a minister from another denomination, without the full requirements specified above and in Section 6, below, may be granted as an exception to the above rule only if the presbytery, after reporting the whole matter to the general assembly and weighing such advice as it may offer, shall judge, by a three-fourths vote of the members present, that such exception is warranted by the qualifications of the candidate.

If the presbytery is satisfied as to the ministerial qualifications

of the candidate but finds that he lacks competency in the Hebrew and Greek languages, or one of them, it may judge by a three-fourths vote of the members present to waive these requirements without referring this question to the general assembly for advice. Such action shall be taken only when the applicant has given affirmative answer to the following question:

Do you agree that you will make a continuing endeavor, under the direction of the presbytery, to attain competency in those languages until the presbytery is satisfied?

4. When a licentiate indicates his willingness to accept a call, the presbytery shall, at the earliest time convenient to both the presbytery and the licentiate, examine him as to his qualifications for the sacred office, with a view to his ordination.

5. If a licentiate is called to ministerial service within the Church, and the presbytery has authorized his ordination, he shall be ordained and installed at an occasion arranged for the purpose. If he is called to ministerial service under auspices other than those of this Church and indicates that he desires to accept the call, the presbytery, if it approves of the call and authorizes his ordination, shall ordain him at a time suitable to the parties concerned.

6. Trials for ordination shall consist of the following: (1) the evaluation of written and oral testimonials as to the candidate's satisfactory exercise of the gifts for the gospel ministry; (2) an examination as to the candidate's Christian faith and life; as to his knowledge of the Bible, theology, apologetics, ecclesiastical history, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and such other branches of learning as to the presbytery may appear requisite; and as to his knowledge of the confession, government, discipline, and worship of the Church; this examination may include such written discourses, founded on the Word of God, as shall seem proper to the presbytery. If the examination is referred to a committee an examination at least in theology shall also be held before the presby-

tery; if one-fourth of the presbyters present at the meeting are dissatisfied with the examination in theology, the candidate shall be required to continue the examination at a future meeting of the presbytery.

7. When a licentiate has been called to be the pastor of a congregation and has expressed his desire to accept the call, and the presbytery has satisfied itself that he has the requisite qualifications for the office and service as specified in Sections 1, 5, and 6, above, the presbytery shall appoint a time to meet to ordain and install him. The service shall be, if convenient, in the church of which he is to be the minister. It is also recommended that a day of prayer and fasting be observed in the congregation previous to the day of ordination.

8. At the time for ordination and installation the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall preside over the meeting of the presbytery, with the congregation present. A minister previously appointed shall preach a sermon appropriate to the occasion. Afterwards the moderator shall briefly inform the congregation of the proceedings of the presbytery preparatory to this occasion; he shall also instruct the congregation concerning the warrant and nature of the office of minister of the Word of God, and the duties of a pastor toward a congregation and a congregation toward a pastor, and shall endeavor to give to the congregation a proper sense of the solemnity of both ordination and installation.

Then, addressing the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions:

- (1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- (2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?

(8) Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation, in agreement with your declaration when you accepted their call? And do you promise to discharge the duties of a pastor to them as God shall give you strength?

9. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the moderator shall propose to the people the following questions, to which they shall answer in the affirmative by holding up their right hands:

(1) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive _____, whom you have called to be your minister?

(2) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?

(3) Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

(4) And do you promise to continue to him, while he is your

pastor, that worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?

10. If these questions have been satisfactorily answered, the candidate shall then kneel, and by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, according to the apostolic example, he shall be solemnly ordained to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise and the moderator shall declare him to be ordained a minister of the Word of God and the pastor of that congregation. The presbytery shall then extend to him the right hand of fellowship. The moderator, or others appointed for the purpose, shall give solemn charges in the name of God to the newly ordained minister and to the people, to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties, and shall, by prayer, commend them both to the grace of God and his holy keeping. At the conclusion of the service the pastor shall dismiss the congregation with a benediction.

11. When a minister of this Church is to be installed as the pastor of a congregation the installation may be performed either by the presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient; and the following order shall be observed therein:

A time shall be appointed for the installation at such time as may appear most convenient and due notice thereof given to the congregation.

When the presbytery, or committee, shall be convened and constituted at the time appointed, a sermon shall be delivered by a previously appointed minister. Immediately thereafter the moderator shall state to the congregation the purpose of the meeting and briefly review the relevant proceedings of the presbytery. And then, addressing the minister to be installed, he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation

as its pastor, in agreement with your declaration when you accepted its call?

(2) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(3) Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the gospel of Christ?

Having received satisfactory answers to all these questions, he shall propose to the people the following questions, to which they shall answer in the affirmative by holding up their right hands:

(1) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive _____, whom you have called to be your minister?

(2) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?

(3) Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

(4) And do you promise to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?

If these questions have been satisfactorily answered the moderator shall pronounce and declare the minister being installed to be regularly constituted the pastor of that congregation. Solemn charges in the name of God shall then be given to the newly installed pastor and to the people, to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties, and they shall both, by prayer, be com-

mended to the grace of God and his holy keeping. At the conclusion of the service the pastor shall dismiss the congregation with a benediction.

12. a. When a minister of another denomination is called to be the pastor of a congregation of this Church and has indicated his desire to accept the call, the presbytery shall require him to give evidence of possessing the qualifications in regard to piety, faith, and learning that are required of candidates for ordination as provided in Sections 3 and 6, above. This evidence shall include written testimonials from qualified persons of his satisfactory exercise of the gifts for the ministry of the Word.

In no case shall an examination on the floor of presbytery be waived. If one-fourth of the presbyters present are dissatisfied with the examination in theology the minister shall be required to undergo an examination in the subject again at a future meeting of the presbytery. If at the outset of such subsequent meeting one-fourth of the presbyters so request, a clear recording of this examination shall be made and filed with the presbytery.

The presbytery shall require him to answer affirmatively the following questions:

- (1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- (2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?
- (3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?
- (4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
- (5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?
- (6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the

unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?

b. After the fulfillment of these requirements the presbytery shall proceed to install the minister in the following manner:

A suitable time shall be appointed for the installation and due notice given to the congregation.

When the presbytery shall be convened and constituted at the time appointed, a sermon shall be delivered by a previously appointed minister. Immediately thereafter the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall state to the congregation the purpose of the meeting and briefly review the relevant proceedings of the presbytery.

Then, addressing the minister to be installed, he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the

unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?

(8) Are you now willing to undertake the work of the ministry in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and do you promise to discharge the duties which may be incumbent upon you in that capacity as God may give you strength?

(9) Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation as its pastor, in agreement with your declaration when you accepted its call?

(10) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge you are influenced by a desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(11) Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the gospel of Christ?

Having received satisfactory answers to all these questions, the moderator shall propose to the people the following questions, to which they shall answer in the affirmative by holding up their right hands:

(1) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive _____, whom you have called to be your minister?

(2) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?

(3) Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

(4) And do you promise to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?

If these questions have been satisfactorily answered the presiding minister shall solemnly pronounce and declare the minister being installed to be regularly constituted the pastor of that congregation. A charge shall then be given to both parties and prayer offered as directed in Section 10. At the conclusion of the service, the pastor shall dismiss the congregation with a benediction.

c. Under no circumstances shall a person be permitted to undertake any of the duties contemplated in the call nor to occupy living quarters that are to be provided by the calling body, and he shall be strongly advised not to change his residence in any case, until after the call has been approved and the presbytery has approved him for installation and reception.

13. When a licentiate has been called to be an evangelist, or teacher of the Word of God, and he has indicated his desire to accept the call, and the presbytery has been satisfied with his qualifications for ordination to the sacred office and for installation into the service to which he has been called, in the terms of Sections 1, 3, and 6, above, it shall appoint a time for him to be ordained and installed. It is fitting that these be done before a congregation at a service held for the purpose.

14. At the time for ordination and installation the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall preside over the meeting of the presbytery with the congregation present. A minister previously appointed shall preach a sermon appropriate to the occasion. Afterwards the moderator shall briefly inform

those assembled concerning the warrant and nature of the office of minister of the Word of God and concerning the duties which the minister's service will place upon him, and shall endeavor to give them a proper sense of the solemnity of both ordination to the office and installation in his field of service.

Then addressing the candidate he shall propose to him the following questions:

- (1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- (2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?
- (3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?
- (4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
- (5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?
- (6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?
- (7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before those among whom you labor wherever you may be?
- (8) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God) you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?
- (9) Are you now willing to undertake the work of an evangelist

(or a teacher of the Word of God), and do you promise to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties of this ministry as God may give you strength?

15. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, he shall then kneel, and by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, according to the apostolic example, he shall be solemnly ordained to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise and the moderator shall declare him to be ordained a minister of the Word of God and installed as an evangelist (or teacher of the Word of God). The presbytery shall then extend to him the right hand of fellowship.

The moderator, or another appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God to the newly ordained and installed minister to persevere in the discharge of his duties, and shall then, by prayer, commend him to the grace of God and his holy keeping. The newly ordained and installed minister shall close the service with a benediction.

16. When a minister of this Church is called to be an evangelist, or a teacher of the Word of God, and he has indicated his desire to accept the call, the presbytery shall satisfy itself that he has the qualifications for that service. If it is satisfied it shall appoint a time for his installation by the presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose. It is fitting that the installation take place in the presence of a congregation at a service held for that purpose.

The time being come, and the meeting convened, a sermon shall be preached by a previously appointed minister. The moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall then briefly inform those assembled concerning the purpose of the meeting and concerning the relevant proceedings of the presbytery.

Then addressing the minister to be installed, he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God) you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(2) Are you now willing to undertake the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God), and do you promise to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties of this ministry as God may give you strength?

Affirmative answers to these questions having been made, a solemn charge in the name of God shall be given to the newly installed minister to persevere in the discharge of his duties. Prayer shall then be offered, commending him to the grace of God and his holy keeping. The newly installed minister shall close the service with a benediction.

17. When a minister of another denomination is called to serve as an evangelist, or as a teacher of the Word of God, and the provisions of Chapter XXII, Section 13, have been fulfilled, the presbytery shall install him in the following manner in the service to which he has been called:

A time shall be set for the installation at which the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall preside. It is fitting that the installation take place in the presence of a congregation at a service held for that purpose.

The time being come and the presbytery convened, a sermon shall be preached by a previously appointed minister. The moderator shall then briefly inform those assembled concerning the purpose of the meeting and concerning the relevant proceedings of the presbytery.

Then addressing the minister to be installed, he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith

and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before those among whom you labor wherever you may be?

(8) Are you now willing to undertake the work of the ministry in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and do you promise to discharge the duties which may be incumbent upon you in this capacity as God may give you strength?

(9) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God) you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(10) Are you now willing to undertake the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God), and do you promise to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties of this ministry as God may give you strength?

Affirmative answers to these questions having been made, a solemn charge in the name of God shall be given to the newly

installed minister to persevere in the discharge of his duties. Prayer shall then be offered, commending him to the grace of God and his holy keeping. The newly installed minister shall close the service with a benediction.

18. If a minister of another denomination, though not having a call to service in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, desires to labor in the gospel in this church, the presbytery to which he applies shall require him to give evidence of possessing the qualifications, in regard to piety, faith, and learning, that are demanded of candidates for ordination as provided in Sections 3 and 6, above. The evidence shall include written testimonials from qualified persons of his satisfactory exercise of the gifts of the ministry of the Word.

In no case shall an examination on the floor of presbytery be waived. If one-fourth of the presbyters present are dissatisfied with the examination in theology the minister shall be required to undergo an examination in the subject again at a future meeting of the presbytery. If at the outset of such subsequent meeting one-fourth of the presbyters so request, a clear recording of this examination shall be made and filed with the presbytery.

If the presbytery is satisfied as to the ministerial qualifications of the candidate but finds that he lacks competency in the Hebrew and Greek languages, or one of them, it may judge by a three-fourths vote of the members present to waive these requirements without referring this question to the general assembly for advice. Such action shall be taken only when the applicant has given affirmative answer to the following question:

Do you agree that you will make a continuing endeavor, under the direction of the presbytery, to attain competency in those languages until the presbytery is satisfied?

Although such a minister may not be received as a minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church until the favorable judgment of the presbytery has been confirmed by his receiving a call to

specific service the presbytery, after approving his examination, shall require him to give affirmative answer, before the presbytery, to the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely approve the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Will you, if you become a minister of this Church, be willing to be in subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Are you induced, so far as you know your own heart, to enter the ministry of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church from love for God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Will you, if you become a minister of this Church, be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before those among whom you labor wherever you may be?

(7) Will you, if you become a minister of this Church, be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(8) Will you, if you become a minister of this Church, undertake and discharge the duties which may be incumbent upon you as an Orthodox Presbyterian minister, as God may give you strength?

The candidate having been approved and having answered the above questions in the affirmative, the fact shall be recorded in the

minutes of the presbytery, and the clerk shall promptly inform the other presbyteries of the church of this fact. Normally the minister will remain in his denomination while he seeks a call to service in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. However, if such continued membership is unacceptable to him the presbytery may, at his request, enroll him as a member of the regional church; he shall thus not be enrolled as a member of the presbytery, and the presbytery shall hold his ministerial credentials in suspense while he seeks a call to service. The presbytery, having approved his qualifications for the ministry, shall authorize him to preach in the church as a candidate for a call to service. If and when he receives a call to service his ministerial credentials shall be restored and he may be installed for his service.

If after a period not to exceed two years gifts for the ministry are not confirmed by receipt of a call to service the presbytery shall consider divesting him from office in accordance with Chapter XXVI, 3, of the Form of Government. If the presbytery divests him of office, presbytery shall require him to seek membership in a particular congregation.

19. If a minister is to be installed in a position that is a change of function from his previous service the presbytery shall weigh his qualifications for the new function when consideration is given to approval of his call. Such change of function, if approved, shall be noted in the records of the presbytery.

20. When a presbytery has ordained or installed a minister a record of the fact shall be made in the minutes of the presbytery.

The presbytery's decision to install shall be regarded also as its decision to receive the minister into the presbytery if he had been a licentiate or was coming from another presbytery or denomination. Upon installation his name shall be placed on the roll of the presbytery.

If the newly enrolled minister has come from another presbytery of this Church the clerk of the installing presbytery shall notify promptly the presbytery from which the minister has come

so that his name may be removed from the roll of his former presbytery. If the minister has come from another denomination the clerk of the installing presbytery shall notify the proper authority of the minister's former denomination.

21. If a minister enrolled in a presbytery (a) desires to engage in a ministry not under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church within the bounds of another presbytery, or (b) desires to transfer to another presbytery for other purposes for which a call and installation are inappropriate, such transfer may be effected without a call and without installation, provided the minister's reasons are satisfactory to both the dismissing and the receiving presbytery (cf. Chapter XX, Section 8).

Chapter XXIV

Dissolving Ministerial Relationships

1. When a minister desires leave to resign a ministerial charge in order to accept a call to similar service in another charge within the Church the provisions of Chapter XXII, Section 12, shall be observed.

2. If any congregation desires to be relieved of its pastor it may, through a duly called meeting of the congregation, ask him to resign. If the pastor agrees to do so, the presbytery shall be requested to dissolve the pastoral relationship as of a mutually agreeable date. If the pastor is not willing to resign the congregation may petition the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship and may send representatives to the meeting to support the request. The presbytery may grant the request, but only after giving the pastor opportunity to present his reasons for not concurring, or it may urge the congregation to reconsider its action.

3. If a presbytery, or an agency of a presbytery or of the general assembly, decides to dissolve its relationship with a minister who is serving it under terms of a call it shall inform him of its decision and of the date on which the dissolution is to take place. It shall also provide adequate care of his needs to permit him to find another field of service.

If the body is an agency of a presbytery or of the general assembly, the agency shall at the same time notify the minister's presbytery of its decision.

a. If the minister agrees to leave his service with a body that is not a presbytery the body shall inform his presbytery of the dissolution.

b. If the minister does not agree to leave his service with the body he shall consult with it in person or by correspondence to clarify the reasons for the dissolution and to seek agreement.

If the body is a presbytery and the minister continues to with-

hold his agreement, the presbytery may nevertheless proceed to dissolve the relationship.

If the body is an agency of a presbytery or of the general assembly and the minister continues to withhold his agreement, he may request his presbytery to consult with the agency in the matter. If the presbytery agrees that the relationship should be dissolved it shall so inform the minister and the agency he serves and the dissolution shall be implemented as of the date originally set or, if that has become impractical, a later date established by the agency.

If the body is an agency of a presbytery and the presbytery does not agree with the dissolution the presbytery shall determine what redress is appropriate.

If the body is an agency of the general assembly and the presbytery does not agree with the dissolution it may, nevertheless, counsel the minister to accept the decision in the circumstances or it may overture the general assembly, seeking redress.

Continuation of the minister's financial support in such cases shall be determined by the body in the light of the existing circumstances.

If the matter is concluded by dissolution of the relationship the minister's presbytery shall be informed and the fact entered in its records.

4. If a minister desires permission to resign a charge in order to take up a different kind of labor he shall offer his resignation to the body he serves and shall seek its concurrence, and shall ask his presbytery to approve the contemplated labor. Presbytery shall require him to inform it of the kind of work he would perform, with a view to determining if the work is the work of the ministry and if it would be in accord with his ministerial vows.

If the presbytery approves his doing the contemplated work, and if the body that he serves has agreed to his resignation, he shall be free to leave at a mutually agreeable date, and the presbytery shall be informed. If the body that he serves does not agree to his resignation he may withdraw it or ask the presbytery, at a

meeting to which the body may send representatives to plead its cause, to dissolve the relationship. The presbytery may ask him to reconsider his request, or deny it, or grant it.

5. When a minister desires to resign a charge without other ministerial work in view the procedures of Section 4 shall be followed. If the presbytery grants the request it shall advise with him concerning his resuming ministerial labor, taking into consideration Chapter XXVI of this Form of Government.

Chapter XXV

Electing, Ordaining, and Installing Ruling Elders and Deacons

1. Every congregation shall elect ruling elders and deacons, except in extraordinary circumstances. Those elected must be male communicant members in good and regular standing in the church in which they are to exercise their office.

2. Each congregation shall determine, by vote of communicant members in good and regular standing, to choose elders or deacons for either lifetime service or limited terms of service on the session or board of deacons. In a congregation that has determined to choose ruling elders or deacons for limited terms of service a full term shall be three years. When there are three or more ruling elders or three or more deacons the session or board of deacons shall consist of three classes, one of which shall be elected each year. A person may be elected for a full term or partial term. Ruling elders, once ordained, when they are not reelected to a term of service, shall not thereby be divested of the office, but may be commissioned to higher judicatories by the session or the presbytery, and may perform other functions of the office when so appointed by an appropriate judicatory. Similarly deacons, when not elected to a term of service in the congregation, may be commissioned by an appropriate judicatory to perform specific diaconal functions.

3. In order that these sacred offices not be committed to weak or unworthy men, and that the congregations shall have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the gifts of those by whom they are to be governed and served, no one shall normally be eligible for election to office until he has been a communicant member in good standing for at least one year, shall have received appropriate training under the direction of or with the approval of the session, and shall have served the church in functions requir-

ing responsible leadership. Men of ability and piety in the congregation shall be encouraged by the session to prepare themselves for the offices of ruling elder or deacon so that their study and opportunities for service may be provided for in a systematic and orderly way.

4. Any member of the congregation who is entitled to vote may propose to the session nominations for these offices. The session shall certify those nominees whom, upon examination, it judges to possess the necessary qualifications for office. At least one Lord's Day preceding the date appointed for the election the session shall announce to the congregation the names of those it has certified. Election shall be from among those certified.

5. After a person has been elected to the office of ruling elder or deacon the session shall determine a time for his ordination. The person elected shall be put in actual possession of his office only by ordination whereby he is solemnly set apart for the labor to which he has been called.

6. The person elected shall be ordained and installed, in the presence of the congregation, in the following manner:

a. The minister shall state the warrant and nature of the office of ruling elder or deacon, the character to be sustained by the officer, and duties to be fulfilled.

b. He shall then propose to the candidate the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise to seek the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church?

(5) Do you accept the office of ruling elder (or deacon) in this congregation and promise, in reliance on the grace of God, faithfully to perform all the duties thereof?

c. When each of these questions has been answered in the affirmative, the minister shall address to the members of the congregation the following question:

Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder (or deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord, to which his office, according to the Word of God and the constitution of this Church, entitles him?

d. When the members of the church have answered this question in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel and be ordained by prayer and with the laying on of hands to the office of ruling elder or deacon.

e. The minister shall then declare:

I now declare that _____ has been regularly elected, ordained, and installed a ruling elder (or deacon) in this church, agreeably to the Word of God, and according to the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; and that he is entitled to all that honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord to which his office entitles him.

f. After this the minister shall give to him and to the congregation an exhortation suited to the occasion.

g. When there is an existing session, it is proper that the members of that body, in the face of the congregation, take the newly ordained elder by the hand, saying, in words to this purpose, "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this office with us."

7. A ruling elder or deacon who has been installed for a limited term of service may be elected to additional terms of service in the same or another congregation in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 of this chapter. When such a person is elected to further service he shall be publicly installed in the following manner:

a. The minister shall review before the congregation the warrant and nature of the office of ruling elder or deacon, the character to be sustained by the officer, and the duties to be fulfilled.

b. He shall then propose to the officer the following question:

Do you agree to serve as a ruling elder (or deacon) in this congregation, and promise, in reliance on the grace of God, faithfully to perform all the duties thereof?

c. When the question has been answered in the affirmative the minister shall address to the members of the congregation the following question:

Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder (or deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord, to which his office, according to the Word of God and the constitution of this Church, entitles him?

d. When a majority of the members of the church who are present have answered this question in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the minister shall then declare:

I now declare that _____ has been regularly elected and installed a ruling elder (or deacon) in this church, agreeably to the Word of God, and according to the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; and that he is entitled to all that honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord to which his office entitles him.

e. After this the minister shall give to him and to the congregation an exhortation suited to the occasion.

Chapter XXVI

Divesting from Office

1. An officer may be divested of his office, or deposed, by judicial discipline for an offense in doctrine or life. Such divestiture, or deposition, shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Book of Discipline.

2. An officer may also be divested of his office without censure, for reasons other than delinquency in faith or life.

3. a. A presbytery shall consider divesting a minister of his office without censure if:

(1) he fails to seek a ministerial charge actively unless temporarily for reasons of health; or

(2) it appears to the presbytery, over a period of time normally not to exceed two years, that he is not called to ministerial service because he does not possess the gifts requisite for the gospel ministry; or

(3) he fails to perform adequately the work of the ministry through lack of the requisite gifts; or

(4) permanent physical or mental disability prevents him from exercising the office.

b. If a presbytery contemplates divesting a minister without censure the minister in question shall be duly informed and given the opportunity at a meeting of the presbytery to defend his continuance in office or to demit the ministry.

c. A motion to divest shall require a two-thirds majority of those voting.

d. When a minister is divested of his office or demits the ministry, the presbytery shall remove his name from its roll and dismiss him to a local church. Until his reception he shall continue a member of the regional church without membership in a local congregation.

e. If a minister desires to resign from or refuses to serve in

his office, the presbytery ordinarily shall require him to wait six months and in the meantime ascertain whether the reasons for his actions are of sufficient weight. If at the end of this time his desire is unchanged and the presbytery is satisfied of his reasons, he shall be allowed to demit the ministry and the presbytery shall record the fact in its minutes and remove his name from the roll.

4. a. A ruling elder or deacon may be divested of his office if his services do not appear to be edifying to the congregation. In such a case the following procedure shall be followed:

(1) The process of divestiture may be originated by the session or by a petition to the session signed by one-fourth of the communicant members in good and regular standing. The officer in question shall be given the opportunity at a meeting of the session to defend his continuance in office or to demit the office.

(2) If the question is to be presented to the congregation it shall be at a regularly called meeting. The call for the meeting shall stipulate that this matter is to be considered at the meeting, and the officer shall be notified at the same time.

(3) The congregation, by a two-thirds majority of those voting, may request the presbytery for permission to remove him from office.

(4) If the presbytery gives its permission the session shall divest him of his office.

b. A ruling elder or deacon who desires to resign from or refuses to serve in the office shall be counseled by the session concerning his decision. If, after such counseling, he persists in his decision, he shall be allowed to demit his office, and the session shall record the fact in its minutes.

5. A man who has been divested of office and who is subsequently elected to that office shall be viewed as receiving initial election to that office.

6. Nothing in this chapter shall be held to imply that when a minister retires, or is retired, because of advanced age or disabil-

ity, from his official position, he shall be divested of his office or prevented from performing any of the functions of that office.

7. Nothing in this chapter shall be held to imply that when a ruling elder or deacon retires, or is retired, because of advanced age or disability, from his official position, he shall be divested of his office or prevented from performing, on occasion, the functions of that office.

Chapter XXVII

Missions

1. Sessions, presbyteries, and the general assembly have their respective responsibilities for the work of missions. Each congregation and presbytery, as well as the general assembly, is obliged to pursue the task of evangelism within its respective bounds. Foreign missions is conducted by the general assembly on behalf of the whole church, or by individual presbyteries and congregations acting in coordination with one another and with the general assembly.

2. The general assembly or its agencies normally may initiate mission work within the bounds of a presbytery only with the consent of that presbytery; but in extraordinary circumstances the general assembly on its own initiative may appoint missionaries to labor within the bounds of a presbytery for a period not to exceed six months.

3. A person appointed to labor within the bounds of a presbytery shall place himself under the jurisdiction of that presbytery as soon as practicable. If his work is not limited to one presbytery he shall be under the jurisdiction of that presbytery most convenient to him.

Chapter XXVIII

Ministers Laboring outside the Church

1. A minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church may under certain circumstances and conditions labor in churches other than those of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. A candidate for ordination who seeks or intends to labor in such a church may under certain circumstances and conditions be ordained by a presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Such labor may be distinctly missionary in its nature and purpose in that it may provide the minister with the opportunity of ministering the gospel to unbelievers and of promoting the cause which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church represents. Such labor may, in certain cases, be that of a pastor or of a teacher, presenting the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the opportunity of providing other churches with a ministry which otherwise they might not enjoy.

2. Although it is impossible to delineate all the practical circumstances and conditions under which it may be proper for a minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to engage in such labor, the following general principles based upon the standards of the Church must be adhered to in all cases:

a. Ministers cannot undertake to labor in other churches if such labor requires the performance of functions inconsistent with their ordination vows or with the other provisions of the standards of the Church. They cannot undertake such work if the relationship requires that they preach anything contrary to the system of truth taught in the Holy Scriptures or requires that they refrain from preaching the whole counsel of God. Such work cannot be undertaken if the relationship requires them to conduct worship that is not in accord with the standards of the Church. Ministers cannot participate in the government of such churches if such government is contrary to the principles of presbyterian government set forth in these standards. And such discipline as the relationship may require them to administer must be in accord

with the principles of discipline set forth in these standards.

b. Ministers who perform such labor shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the churches concerned shall be advised of this fact.

c. Though the churches in which such ministers labor are in no respect under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the presbyteries and the general assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall always exercise oversight of the work being performed by such ministers, and shall take due care that the work being performed is consistent with the standards of the Church.

d. Ministers may act as pastors of such churches provided none of the foregoing conditions is violated in the assumption of such a responsibility.

e. Presbyteries cannot install ministers as pastors of churches other than those of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

f. If ministers are installed as pastors under other auspices, the installation must not be such as in any way prejudices the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church over them. Such pastoral installation cannot take place if the installation formula prescribed by the church concerned prejudices this jurisdiction.

g. The ultimate objective of all such labor cannot be anything less than the establishment of such churches as churches of Presbyterian and Reformed testimony, provided that the churches concerned are not already such. To make the objective less than this would be inconsistent with the profession and vows made in ordination.

3. The principles of Sections 1 and 2 shall also apply to the relationship of ministers to nonecclesiastical religious organizations.

4. Such ministers shall report at least once each year to the presbytery under whose jurisdiction they are. This report shall concern their ministerial activities, and shall include especial reference to the relationship of these activities to the interest and welfare of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Chapter XXIX

Organizing and Receiving Congregations

A. Organizing Congregations

1. A group of believers, meeting regularly for worship on the Lord's Day and under the jurisdiction of a session or presbytery, and not yet organized as a separate congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, shall be denoted in the records of the presbytery as a mission work. Such persons may be enrolled as members of an existing congregation or as members at large of the regional church. The mission work may, with the permission of the session or presbytery, use the name Church in its publicity.

2. A group of believers may be organized as a separate congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church only under the supervision of presbytery. The presbytery of the regional church to which the congregation would most naturally belong shall have the jurisdiction in the matter.

3. In organizing a mission work of an existing congregation as a new and separate congregation (church) the procedure shall be as follows:

a. The session shall designate a list of members for the proposed new congregation according to the preference of the members. This list shall become the charter roll of the new congregation.

b. The session shall call joint or separate congregational meetings of the continuing congregation and the mission work for the purpose of petitioning presbytery to organize the mission work into a new and separate congregation.

c. The session shall call a congregational meeting of the mission work for the purpose of electing ruling elders and deacons (Form of Government, Chapter XXV) and the calling of a pastor (Form of Government, Chapter XXII) to serve as officers of the

new church.

d. When the above actions have been approved by presbytery, a service of recognition and installation shall be conducted by the presbytery or a committee appointed by the presbytery. At the appointed time the congregation shall be informed of the action of the presbytery and the moderator shall address to the members of the congregation the following question:

In reliance upon God for strength do you solemnly promise to walk together as a church of Jesus Christ according to the Word of God and the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

The members shall answer in the affirmative by raised hand. After this the congregation shall be recognized as a new and separate church of the regional church and the officers shall be (ordained and) installed according to this Form of Government.

4. In organizing a mission work of a presbytery as a new and separate congregation (church) the procedure shall be as follows:

a. While it is preferable to have members of a mission work as members of a local congregation under the jurisdiction of a local session, circumstances may make it easier to enroll such members as members at large of the regional church under the direct jurisdiction of the presbytery. In such cases the presbytery shall maintain a list of such members at large of a mission work.

b. When it appears that it is desirable and feasible to organize a mission work of the presbytery as a new congregation, the presbytery, with the concurrence of the members at large, shall designate the list of the members at large of the regional church of the mission work as the charter roll of the proposed new congregation.

c. The presbytery shall call a meeting of the members at large of the regional church of the mission work for the purpose of petitioning presbytery to organize them into a new church.

d. The presbytery shall call a meeting of the members at

large of the regional church of the mission work for the purpose of electing ruling elders and deacons (Form of Government, Chapter XXV) and the calling of a pastor (Form of Government, Chapter XXII) to serve as officers of the new church.

e. When the above actions have been approved by presbytery, a service of recognition and installation shall be conducted by the presbytery or a committee appointed by the presbytery. At the appointed time the congregation shall be informed of the action of the presbytery and the moderator shall address to the members of the congregation the following question:

In reliance upon God for strength do you solemnly promise to walk together as a church of Jesus Christ according to the Word of God and the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

The members shall answer in the affirmative by raised hand. After this the congregation shall be recognized as a new and separate church of the regional church and the officers shall be (ordained and) installed according to this Form of Government.

5. In organizing a group of believers who are not members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and are not an existing congregation of another church as a new and separate congregation (church) of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church the procedure shall be as follows:

a. Such persons as are associated together in a desire to be a new and separate congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall apply to the presbytery, through its clerk, to be received. In their application they shall state the reasons which have moved them to apply for membership in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

b. The presbytery, a committee of presbytery, or a session appointed by the presbytery shall examine the applicants as to their Christian faith and life and their knowledge of and willingness to submit to the standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian

Church. If the presbytery or the appointed session is satisfied regarding these matters it may proceed to approve them for membership and appoint a time for their reception and organization as a particular congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

c. At the appointed time the group of believers shall be informed of the action of the presbytery and the moderator shall address to them the vows of membership and the following question:

In reliance upon God for strength do you solemnly promise to walk together as a church of Jesus Christ according to the Word of God and the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

The members shall answer in the affirmative by raised hand. After this the congregation shall be recognized as a new and separate church of the regional church.

d. The presbytery or the appointed session shall then see to it that there are officers to serve the new church according to the provisions of this Form of Government, Chapters XXV and XXII.

B. Receiving Congregations

1. A congregation not belonging to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church may be received only under the supervision of presbytery. The presbytery of the regional church to which the congregation would most naturally belong shall have jurisdiction in the matter.

2. In receiving an existing, local church not belonging to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a new and separate congregation (church) the procedure shall be as follows:

a. A congregation which desires to become a congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall apply to the presbytery, through its clerk, to be received. In its application the congregation shall state the reasons which have moved it to apply for membership in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

b. The presbytery or a committee appointed by the presbytery shall examine the applicants as to their Christian faith and life and their knowledge of and willingness to submit to the standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

c. The elders of the congregation, if there be such, shall be examined as to their qualifications as set forth in Chapter X and as to their subscription to the formula for the ordination of elders in Chapter XXV, Section 6, of this Form of Government.

d. The pastor of the congregation, if there be such, shall be examined according to Chapter XXIII, Section 2, of this Form of Government.

e. When the above actions have been approved by presbytery, a service of recognition and installation shall be conducted by presbytery or a committee appointed by the presbytery. At the appointed time the congregation shall be informed of the action of the presbytery and the moderator shall address to the congregation the following question:

In reliance upon God for strength do you solemnly promise to walk together as a church of Jesus Christ according to the Word of God and the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

The congregation shall answer in the affirmative by raised hand. After this the congregation shall be recognized as a new and separate church of the regional church. Then the officers shall be (ordained and) installed according to this Form of Government.

Chapter XXX

Organizations of Members of the Church

1. Every Christian has the freedom and obligation to exercise the general office of the believer not only individually but also in fellowship with other members of the body of Christ. Members of the church may therefore associate together for specific purposes in the exercise of their common calling. Such organizations, however, under ordinary circumstances, shall not assume the prerogatives or exercise the functions of the special officers of the church.

2. When a church fails to perform its divinely given task, church members should seek remedies through biblical procedures of government and discipline. In the event that remedy cannot be obtained, or if the church is unable to work in a particular situation, Christians may organize to carry on activities that would more normally be conducted under the appropriate judicatory of the church, until these unusual circumstances are overcome.

3. When an organization purports to represent a particular church, or a presbytery, or the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, it must obtain the approval, and be subject to the jurisdiction and oversight, of the session of the particular church, or of the presbytery, or of the general assembly, respectively.

Chapter XXXI

Incorporation and Corporations

1. The general assembly, the several presbyteries, and the several churches may maintain corporations to act as agents of the respective authorities to handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil authorities.

2. Only those and all those who are communicant members of a particular church in good and regular standing and meeting the requirements of the civil authorities shall be entitled to vote at corporation meetings of the particular church. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted, nor shall anyone be allowed to vote except when the vote is being taken.

3. The board of trustees of a particular church shall ordinarily be chosen from among the ruling elders and deacons in that church, but other communicant members of the church may be elected as trustees if it seems desirable, provided, however, that the number of such members shall be less than one-half the total memberships of the board. Its duties shall be those which the state requires of trustees of corporations together with such other duties relating to the properties of the church as may be delegated to them by the session or the congregation. Such delegation shall be in accord with Chapter XIII, Section 7, of this Form of Government.

4. Meetings of corporations for the transaction of their business shall be provided for in their charter and bylaws, which must always be in accord with the standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and must not infringe upon the powers or duties of the judicatories of the Church.

5. All particular churches shall be entitled to hold, own, and enjoy their own local properties, without any right of reversion to

the Orthodox Presbyterian Church whatsoever, unless the particular church should become extinct, provided, however, that any particular church may, if it so desires, give or dedicate its property to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. A congregation that desires to withdraw from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and to retain its property shall follow the provisions of Chapter XVI, Section 7, of this Form of Government. Dissolution of a particular church by any judicatory, or by any other form of ecclesiastical action, shall not be deemed as making a particular church extinct within the meaning of this article. But these provisions shall not be construed as limiting or abrogating the right of the judicatories of this Church to exercise all constitutional and proper authority over the particular churches as spiritual bodies.

Chapter XXXII

The Constitution and Its Amendment

1. The constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, consists of its standards of doctrine, government, discipline, and worship, namely, its Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory for the Public Worship of God. When the latter three documents are published together, the combined document shall be entitled *The Book of Church Order of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*.

2. With the exception noted in Section 3, below, the Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory for the Public Worship of God may be amended only in the following manner: The general assembly after due discussion shall propose the amendment to the presbyteries; each presbytery shall vote on the question before the next regular assembly, and the clerk of each presbytery shall notify the clerk of the assembly, in writing, of the action of the presbytery; if a majority of the presbyteries has thus signified approval of the amendment, the amendment shall become effective on January 1 of the first year ending in 5 or 0 following the year in which the clerk announces to the assembly that a majority of the presbyteries has approved the amendment. If the assembly proposing the amendment desires it to become effective earlier than the date hereinbefore provided, it may set an earlier date, but not sooner than the next regular assembly, by a two-thirds vote. No amendments shall be proposed to the presbyteries without written grounds for the proposed amendments.

3. The Confession of Faith and Catechisms and the forms of subscription required of ministers, licentiates, ruling elders, and deacons, as these forms are found in the Form of Government, may be amended only in the following manner: The general assembly shall determine whether a suggested change is worthy of

consideration. If so determined, it shall appoint a committee to consider any suggested change and to report to the next regular assembly with recommendations; that assembly may then propose the amendment to the presbyteries by a two-thirds majority of the members voting; approval by a presbytery shall be by a majority of the members voting, and following the decision the clerk of presbytery shall notify the clerk of the assembly, in writing, of the decision of the presbytery; if two-thirds of the presbyteries approve the amendment it shall be adopted finally only after approval of the next ensuing assembly by a two-thirds vote of the members voting.

4. Organic union of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with another denomination shall follow the same procedure as in Section 3, above, for amending the Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

5. None of the provisions of Sections 3 and 4 of this chapter nor of this fifth section shall be modified except by the process that is set forth in Section 3.

THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

Chapter I The Nature and Purposes of Discipline

1. Ecclesiastical discipline is the exercise of that authority which the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to the visible church for the preservation of its purity, peace, and good order.

2. Administrative discipline is concerned with the maintenance of good order in the government of the church in other than judicial cases. The purpose of its exercise is that all rights may be preserved and all obligations faithfully discharged.

3. Judicial discipline is concerned with the prevention and correction of offenses, an offense being defined as anything in the doctrine or practice of a member of the church which is contrary to the Word of God. The purpose of judicial discipline is to vindicate the honor of Christ, to promote the purity of his church, and to reclaim the offender.

4. All members of the church, both communicants and those who are members by virtue of baptism only, are under the care of the church, and subject to ecclesiastical discipline including administrative and judicial discipline.

Chapter II Jurisdiction

A. General Provisions

1. Original jurisdiction over an individual belongs to the judicatory of the body of which the individual is a member. Original jurisdiction over judicatories belongs to the next higher judicatory.

2. All certificates of dismissal shall specify the particular body to which the person is dismissed, and shall be sent directly to that body by the dismissing judicatory. The receiving body shall notify the dismissing judicatory of the fact of reception when accomplished.

3. If a person charged with an offense requests that he be dismissed to another body within the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the judicatory of jurisdiction shall grant this request only for reasons which it deems weighty. If the request is granted, it shall inform the judicatory to whose care the person is being committed of the charge which has been brought against him and also of any action which the dismissing judicatory may have taken with reference to the charge, and the judicatory which receives him shall conclude the case.

B. The Session's Jurisdiction

1. The session of a particular church shall have jurisdiction over all those whose names are on the roll of the church.

2. Members shall be received and their names placed on the roll of the church only by order of the session and according to the following provisions:

a. Members may be received by a letter of transfer from

another Orthodox Presbyterian church. The session shall acquire jurisdiction over him by virtue of its vote of reception, and at that time he shall become invested with all the rights and privileges of membership therein, which rights and privileges shall not be impaired by the filing of a complaint, unless and until such complaint shall be sustained by the highest judicatory to which such complaint is made.

b. Members may be received by a letter of transfer from another church of like faith and practice approved by the session. The session may examine the candidate for membership to assure itself so far as possible that he possesses the knowledge requisite for active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation on the work of Christ alone, is trusting Christ for salvation, and is determined by the grace of God to lead a Christian life. The session shall acquire jurisdiction over him by virtue of its vote of reception and his public profession of faith before the congregation according to the Directory for the Public Worship of God, Chapter V, Section 5, and at that time he shall be invested with all the rights and privileges of membership therein, which rights and privileges shall not be impaired by the filing of a complaint, unless and until such complaint shall be sustained by the highest judicatory to which complaint is made.

c. Members may be received by reaffirmation of faith. Reaffirmation of faith is made by an individual who has previously confessed his faith and united with a church other than a church of like faith and practice, and now desires to become a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The session shall examine the candidate for membership to assure itself so far as possible that he possesses the knowledge requisite for active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation on the work of Christ alone, is trusting Christ for salvation, and is determined by the grace of God to lead a Christian life. The session shall acquire jurisdiction over him by virtue of its vote of reception and his public profession of faith before the congregation according to the Directory for the Public Worship of God, Chapter V, Section 5, and at that time he shall be invested with all the rights and privileges of membership therein,

which rights and privileges shall not be impaired by the filing of a complaint, unless and until such complaint shall be sustained by the highest judicatory to which complaint is made.

d. Members may be received by confession of faith. Confession of faith is made by an individual who has not previously been a communicant member of the church, and now desires to become a communicant member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The session shall examine the candidate for membership to assure itself so far as possible that he possesses the knowledge requisite for active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation on the work of Christ, is trusting Christ for salvation, and is determined by the grace of God to lead a Christian life. The session shall acquire jurisdiction over him by virtue of its vote of reception and his public profession of faith before the congregation according to the Directory for the Public Worship of God, Chapter V, Section 5, and at that time he shall be invested with all the rights and privileges of membership therein, which rights and privileges shall not be impaired by the filing of a complaint, unless and until such complaint shall be sustained by the highest judicatory to which complaint is made.

e. Noncommunicant unbaptized children whose parent(s) are members of the church shall be received by baptism.

f. Noncommunicant baptized members may be received with their parent(s).

3. The names of members shall be removed from the roll of the church only by order of the session and according to the following provisions:

a. Members may be removed by a letter of transfer to another congregation approved by the session. When upon the request of a member the session dismisses him to another congregation, the clerk shall send a letter commending him to its care, and the clerk of the receiving church shall notify the dismissing church of the date of his reception. When notification is received the clerk shall remove his name from the roll and record the fact in its minutes. He shall be considered subject to the jurisdiction of

the session which dismissed him until the time when he actually is received by the body to which he has been dismissed.

b. Members may be removed when they desire to be dismissed to a church of which the session cannot approve as a church of like faith and practice. If it appears to the session that the spiritual interests of the members will be advanced by their uniting with such a church, it shall grant them certificates of standing, and, upon being informed that they have joined such a church, shall remove their names from the roll and record the circumstances in its minutes.

c. Members shall be removed from the roll of the local church by ordination as a teaching elder, according to the Form of Government, Chapter VI, Section 4.

d. Members may be removed by erasure according to the following provisions:

(1) When a member desires dismissal to a church of which the session cannot approve as a church of like faith and practice, nor a church which will advance his spiritual interests, and he cannot be dissuaded, it shall grant him a certificate of standing, unless the session institutes disciplinary action against him; on being informed that he has joined such a church the clerk shall erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in its minutes.

(2) When a member of a particular church, whether or not he be charged with an offense, informs the session that he does not desire to remain in the fellowship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the efforts of the session to dissuade him from his course have failed, it shall erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in its minutes, unless the session institutes or continues other disciplinary action against him.

(3) When a member unites with a church of another denomination without a certificate of dismissal, the session may erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in its minutes.

(4) When a member cannot be found, the session may, after two years, erase his name from the roll and record the

circumstances in its minutes.

(5) When a member, without adequate reason, persists in attending a church of another denomination in preference to his own, or persistently and over an extended period of time absents himself from the stated services of the church, his name may be erased from the roll according to the following procedures: he shall be earnestly and personally dealt with by the session. If this effort fails, he shall be notified that at a meeting of the session not less than two months later his standing shall be reviewed. The session shall inform him of the time, date, and place of this meeting and invite him to show why his name should not be erased from the roll. If satisfactory reasons are not presented, the session shall erase his name from the roll, record the circumstances in its minutes, and send notification to him.

(6) When a noncommunicant member neglects the ongoing exhortation of the session to profess faith in Christ and rejects the covenantal responsibility of submission to home or church, the session may upon prior notification erase his name from the roll.

e. Noncommunicant members may be removed with their parent(s).

f. Members shall be removed at their death. The session shall remove the name of the deceased from the roll and record the fact in its minutes.

g. Members may be removed by excommunication according to this Book of Discipline, Chapter VI, Sections B.5, C.1, and C.2.

C. The Presbytery's Jurisdiction

1. Presbytery shall have original jurisdiction over all the members of the regional church not enrolled as members of a local church. The provisions of this chapter, Section B, Paragraphs 2 and 3, shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

2. The presbytery shall have original jurisdiction over all the

teaching elders who are on the roll of the presbytery. The names of teaching elders shall be placed on or removed from the roll of presbytery only by order of the presbytery, and according to the provisions of the Form of Government and this Book of Discipline. If a teaching elder has been dismissed to another presbytery, he shall be considered subject to the jurisdiction of the presbytery which dismissed him until the time when his name is placed on the roll of the presbytery (cf. Form of Government, Chapter XXIII, Section 20) to which he has been dismissed. The receiving body shall acquire jurisdiction over him when his name is placed on the roll of the presbytery (cf. Form of Government, Chapter XXIII, Section 20) and at that time he shall be invested with all the rights and privileges of membership therein, which rights and privileges shall not be impaired by the filing of a complaint, unless and until such complaint shall be sustained by the highest judicatory to which complaint is made.

D. Special Circumstances

1. If a session shall cease to exist or become so small as to prevent it from working effectively, the presbytery shall provide for an election and ordination of elders from within the congregation; or the presbytery, with the consent of the congregation, may appoint ruling elders or ministers, or both, normally from within the same presbytery to be an acting session or to augment the existing session temporarily.

2. If a church ceases to exist, the presbytery of jurisdiction shall secure the records, exercise care over its members, and issue certificates of dismission to other churches.

3. If a presbytery ceases to exist, the general assembly shall assign each church and minister to some other presbytery.

4. The higher judicatory in each instance shall either conclude any uncompleted case of discipline begun in the lower judicatory,

or refer the case to the judicatory to whose care the accused has been committed.

Chapter III

Steps in the Institution of Judicial Process

1. A charge of an offense may be brought by an injured party, by a person not an injured party, or by a judicatory. The offense alleged in the charge should be serious enough to warrant a trial (cf. Chapter III, Section 7.b [6]). No charge shall be admitted against an elder, unless it is brought by two or more persons, according to I Timothy 5:19.

2. No charge shall be admitted by the judicatory if it is filed more than two years after the commission of the alleged offense, unless it appears that unavoidable impediments have prevented an earlier filing of the charge. A charge shall be considered filed when it has been delivered to the clerk or the moderator of the judicatory.

3. Every charge of an offense must: (a) be in written form, (b) set forth the alleged offense, (c) set forth only one alleged offense, (d) set forth references to applicable portions of the Word of God, (e) set forth, where pertinent, references to applicable portions of the confessional standards, (f) set forth the serious character of the offense which would demonstrate the warrant for a trial.

Each specification of the facts relied upon to sustain the charge must: (a) be in written form, (b) declare as far as possible, the time, place, and circumstances of the alleged offense, (c) be accompanied with the names of any witnesses and the titles of documents, records, and recordings to be produced.

4. Offenses are either public or private. Public offenses are those which are commonly known. Private offenses are those which are known to an individual only, or, at most, to a very few individuals. Private offenses may or may not be personal, a personal private offense being one which involves injury to the person bringing the charge.

5. No charge of a personal private offense shall be admitted unless the judicatory has assured itself that the person bringing the charge has faithfully followed the course set forth in Matthew 18:15–17; nor shall a charge of a private offense which is not personal be admitted unless it appears that the plaintiff has first done his utmost privately to restore the alleged offender. However, even in the case of public offenses, it is not wrong to seek reconciliation in terms of Matthew 18:15–17 or Matthew 5:21–26 or Galatians 6:1.

6. When a member of the church is about to present a charge, he shall be solemnly warned by the judicatory that he may be censured if the judicatory, after conducting the preliminary investigation defined in this chapter, Section 7, determines that judicial process with respect to such charge may not be instituted. No censure stronger than a rebuke shall be pronounced without a trial.

7. a. If a charge in the form prescribed in this chapter, Section 3, is presented to the judicatory of jurisdiction by an individual or individuals, the judicatory shall proceed to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether judicial process shall be instituted. A committee may be appointed for this purpose, but its findings shall always be reviewed by the judicatory.

b. The judicatory, or the committee, shall consider (1) the form of the charge; (2) the form and relevancy of the specifications; (3) the competency of the witnesses named in the specifications; (4) the apparent authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any documents, records, and recordings adduced in support of the charge and specifications; (5) whether the specifications, if true, would support the charge; and (6) also, whether the charge, if proved true, would constitute an offense serious enough to warrant a trial. It shall also prepare a statement of the facts of the case, arranged by date in the form of a chronology.

An offense which is serious enough to warrant a trial is: (1) an offense in the area of conduct and practice which seriously

disturbs the peace, purity, and/or unity of the church, or (2) an offense in the area of doctrine for the nonordained member which would constitute a denial of a credible profession of faith as reflected in his membership vows, or (3) an offense in the area of doctrine for the ordained officer which would constitute a violation of the system of doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures as that system of doctrine is set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

The judicatory, or committee, should it be persuaded that the charge and specifications, if proved true, would constitute an offense serious enough to warrant a trial, shall not dismiss the case on technical grounds but shall require that the charge and specifications be put in proper form. If the person bringing the charge fails to do this, it shall become the responsibility of the judicatory.

c. Furthermore, if a person who has brought the charge requests the judicatory to assume responsibility for prosecuting the case, the judicatory shall bring the charge, provided the preliminary investigation warrants instituting judicial process.

d. When the form of the charge and specifications has been approved by the judicatory, it shall fix the time, date, and place for the trial of the case and shall cite the accused to appear at that time.

8. a. A judicatory may contemplate bringing a charge of an offense against a person subject to its jurisdiction. If a charge in the form prescribed in this chapter, Section 3, is presented to the judicatory by the judicatory, it shall conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether judicial process shall be instituted. A committee may be appointed for this purpose but its findings shall always be reviewed by the judicatory.

b. The judicatory, or the committee, shall consider (1) the form of the charge; (2) the form and relevancy of the specifications; (3) the competency of the witnesses named in the specifications; (4) the apparent authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any documents, records, and recordings adduced in support of the charge and specifications; (5) whether the specifications, if true,

would support the charge; and (6) also, whether the charge, if proved true, would constitute an offense serious enough to warrant a trial. It shall also prepare a statement of the facts of the case, arranged by date in the form of a chronology.

An offense serious enough to warrant a trial is: (1) an offense in the area of conduct and practice which seriously disturbs the peace, purity, and/or unity of the church, or (2) an offense in the area of doctrine for the nonordained member which would constitute a denial of a credible profession of faith as reflected in his membership vows, or (3) an offense in the area of doctrine for the ordained officer which would constitute a violation of the system of doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures as that system of doctrine is set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. The judicatory, or committee, should it be persuaded that the charge and specifications, if proved true, would constitute an offense serious enough to warrant a trial, it shall not dismiss the case on technical grounds, but shall require that the charge and specifications be put in proper form.

c. When the form of the charge and specifications has been approved by the judicatory, it shall fix the time, date, and place for the trial of the case and shall cite the accused to appear at that time.

[Suggested forms for filing a written charge and for citing the accused to appear can be found on pages 141–42.]

Chapter IV

The Trial of Judicial Cases

A. Rules for Those Involved

1. Regarding the Judiciary

a. At the beginning of every trial, the moderator shall announce:

This body is about to sit in a judicial capacity and I exhort you, the members, to bear in mind your solemn duty faithfully to minister and declare the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and to subordinate all human judgments to that infallible rule.

The announcement and the exhortation shall be repeated at the opening of each subsequent session of the trial judiciary. A session shall terminate as soon as the trial judiciary recesses, but a meeting is terminated only by adjournment.

b. The judiciaries of the church shall ordinarily sit with open doors. In every case involving a charge of heresy the judiciary shall be without power to sit with closed doors. In other cases, where the ends of the discipline seem to require it, the trial judiciary at any stage of the trial may determine by a vote of three-fourths of the members present to sit with closed doors.

c. No person shall be deprived of the right to set forth, plead, or offer in evidence in any judiciary of the church the provisions of the Word of God or of the subordinate standards.

d. If unusual circumstances require it, a judiciary may deny an accused person the right of participating in the Lord's Supper, or of performing the functions of his office, until the case is concluded.

e. In a trial before the session if the accused refuses or fails to appear without satisfactory reason for his absence at the time appointed for the trial of the case, he shall again be cited, with the

warning that, if he does not appear, it will proceed with the trial in his absence. The time allowed for the appearance on a citation shall be determined by the issuing session with due consideration for the circumstances.

In a trial before a presbytery if the accused refuses or fails to appear without satisfactory reason for his absence at the time appointed for the trial of his case, it will proceed with the trial in his absence.

2. Regarding the Clerk

a. The clerk shall keep an accurate roll of the members attending each session of the trial judicatory. A session shall terminate as soon as the trial judicatory recesses.

b. The trial judicatory shall preserve a complete and accurate record of the trial. In the minutes recording the course of the procedure, the following shall not be omitted: (1) the charge and specifications; (2) objections made and exceptions taken at any stage of the trial; (3) a list of witnesses who testified and a summary of their testimony; (4) all rulings and decisions of the trial judicatory; and (5) the minutes of any private deliberations. Reproductions of part of the trial or the entire trial may be incorporated into the minutes of the trial judicatory. These minutes, together with all relevant papers, shall be certified by the trial judicatory and transmitted to the higher judicatory in cases of appeal.

c. Ordinarily all citations shall be served in person, but in case that is not possible, citations shall be sent by certified mail to the person cited.

3. Regarding the Accused

a. The accused shall be entitled to the assistance of counsel. No person shall be eligible to act as counsel who is not a member in good standing of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The accused may not sit in judgment on his own case at any stage thereof, including the preliminary investigation. No person who is counsel in a judicial case may sit in judgment on the same case in any stage following the preliminary investigation.

b. The accused may take exception to any and all rulings or decisions made by the trial judicatory.

c. The accused shall be allowed one copy of the minutes at the expense of the judicatory. Additional copies may be obtained by him at cost.

4. Regarding Witnesses

a. Any person may be a witness in a judicial case if the trial judicatory is satisfied that he has sufficient competence to make the affirmation required of witnesses in this chapter, Section A.4.b.

b. The moderator shall require each witness before he testifies to make the following affirmation: "I solemnly swear, that by the grace of God, I will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth concerning the matters on which I am called to testify."

c. If it becomes necessary to obtain testimony from witnesses who are subject to the jurisdiction of another judicatory of the church, such testimony may be obtained either by the taking of depositions, or by having such judicatory, at the request of the trial judicatory, issue citations directing such persons to appear and testify before the trial judicatory.

d. The trial judicatory shall have power to direct that the testimony of witnesses be taken by a commission appointed by the trial judicatory when it concludes that unusual circumstances require such a course. A representative of the trial judicatory and the accused, or his counsel, may examine and cross-examine such witnesses, and interpose objections concerning (1) the admissibility of any oral testimony, (2) the competency of the witnesses, (3) the authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any documents, records, and recordings identified by the witnesses. The commissioners must be communicant members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. They shall record such testimony and objections as may be offered, and, without ruling upon the objections, shall transmit to the trial judicatory a complete transcript of the proceedings.

e. If a witness who is a member of the church fails to obey a lawful citation, he shall be cited again with the warning that if he

does not appear, or give satisfactory reason for his absence, he may be charged with contempt. The time allowed for appearance on a citation shall be determined by the issuing judicatory with due consideration for the circumstances.

f. If a member of the church under the jurisdiction of another judicatory has been cited as a witness, and such person refuses to appear, the trial judicatory will communicate the facts to the judicatory having jurisdiction over the person concerned.

B. Rules for Evidence

1. Evidence must be factual in nature. It may be direct or circumstantial. Caution should be exercised in giving weight to evidence which is purely circumstantial.

2. The accused may object to the competency of any witness and the authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any testimony or evidence produced in support of the charge and specifications. The trial judicatory shall decide on all such objections after allowing the accused to be heard in support thereof.

3. A specification presented in support of a charge may be established by the testimony of witnesses or by duly authenticated documentary evidence. The testimony of one witness shall not be sufficient to establish the truth of any specification.

4. If the accused so requests, no witness, unless a member of the judicatory, called to witness regarding facts in support of any specification shall testify in the presence of another witness who is to testify concerning the same specification.

5. The trial judicatory shall appoint one of its members to conduct the examination of witnesses on its behalf, but other members shall also have the right to take part in the examination. Witnesses produced in support of the charge and specifications shall testify in the presence of the accused unless the accused has failed to present

himself after citation according to this chapter, Section A.1.e. Witnesses named in the specifications shall first be examined by the trial judicatory. The accused may then cross-examine. If the trial judicatory asks any further questions, the accused shall be given opportunity for recross-examination. Witnesses summoned at the request of the accused shall first be examined by the accused. If the trial judicatory cross-examines, the accused shall be given opportunity to conduct a redirect examination. Leading questions shall be permitted only under cross-examination.

6. Certified records of a judicatory shall be received in evidence in any other judicatory if their relevancy is first established.

7. All questions concerning the competency of any witness and the authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any testimony or evidence taken by a commission shall be determined by the trial judicatory after the accused has been given an opportunity to be heard.

8. New evidence discovered during the trial may be offered, but, if such evidence is produced against the accused, he shall be given reasonable time to investigate it and to supplement his defense.

9. If new evidence is produced by the accused after he has been found guilty, the trial judicatory shall examine such evidence. If it is satisfied that there was good reason for not producing it at the trial, it shall grant a new trial, or, in case an appeal has been lodged, it shall certify these facts to the appellate judicatory and the record of the case shall then be returned to the trial judicatory for the purpose of a new trial.

C. Rules of Trial Proceedings

1. First Meeting of the Trial

At the first meeting of the trial judicatory only the following actions shall be taken:

a. The charges and specifications shall be read and formally presented to the accused together with the names of any witnesses and copies of any documents which may be presented against him.

b. The trial judicatory shall fix the time, date, and place for the second meeting of the trial, which shall not be less than ten days later, and shall issue citations directing all persons to appear at that time whose presence it may deem necessary.

c. The accused shall be granted citations in which he may insert the names of the witnesses whom he wishes the trial judicatory to summon.

No meeting of the trial judicatory held prior to the time at which it proceeds with the previously mentioned actions shall be considered the first meeting within the meaning of this chapter.

2. Second Meeting of the Trial

a. At the second meeting of the trial judicatory the accused may interpose objections concerning (1) the regularity of the proceedings up to this point and (2) the form of the charge, the form and relevancy of the specifications, the competency of the witnesses named in the specifications, and the authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any documents, records, and recordings submitted in support of the charge and specifications. The trial judicatory shall determine the validity of any such objections. If the accused at this point requests the trial judicatory to do so, it shall determine whether the proof of the charge and specifications would show the commission of an offense serious enough to warrant a trial. It may dismiss the case forthwith, or permit such amendments of the charge and specifications as do not alter their essential nature. If the trial judicatory decides that the trial should proceed, the accused shall be called on to plead "guilty" or "not guilty," and his plea shall be entered upon the record. If the accused pleads "guilty," the trial judicatory shall determine the censure. If the accused pleads "not guilty," or refuses to plead, the trial shall proceed. The proceedings described in this section may extend over as many meetings as are necessary for their completion.

b. Absence from any session of the second or of a subsequent

meeting of the trial judicatory shall disqualify a member from voting thereafter and from being counted in the computation of a quorum, but shall not deprive him of any other right as a member of the trial judicatory. Unless a quorum is present, a trial judicatory shall not continue in session, but it may recess or adjourn.

c. When all the evidence against the accused has been presented and he has had an opportunity to cross-examine the witnesses testifying against him, the accused shall have the right to move for the dismissal of the charges. If this motion is denied by the trial judicatory, the accused may then present the evidence in support of his defense.

3. Conclusion of the Trial

a. After all the evidence has been presented, the accused may make his final argument with respect to the evidence and the law of the church. The trial judicatory, after deliberation, shall vote on each charge and each specification separately. If the trial judicatory decides that the accused is guilty, it shall proceed to determine the censure.

b. When the trial judicatory has concluded its deliberations, the moderator shall announce its decision on each charge and each specification. If the accused has been found guilty, the trial judicatory shall state what censure it proposes to pronounce against the accused. The censure shall not be pronounced before the expiration of the time in which the accused may file notice of appeal. If notice of appeal is filed and an appeal is taken within the time prescribed in this Book of Discipline, Chapter VII, the trial judicatory may not execute its judgment unless and until the judgment is affirmed by the judicatory to which final appeal is taken.

4. Trial in Absentia

If the judicatory proceeds with the trial in the absence of the accused, a counsel shall be appointed at the first meeting of the trial to present a case to the trial judicatory in defense of the accused. Such counsel, although not acting directly in behalf of the accused, shall be entitled to present evidence, interview witnesses,

interpose objections, and otherwise act in defense of the accused. The trial judicatory shall deliver copies of the charge, specifications, and names of witnesses either personally or by certified mail to the accused along with notification that the trial is proceeding without him and the time, date, and place of the second meeting of the trial judicatory. The second meeting of the trial judicatory shall proceed as though the accused had pleaded “not guilty” in the case. The trial shall then proceed according to the provisions of this chapter. When the trial judicatory has concluded its deliberations, the moderator shall announce its decisions according to this chapter, Section C.3.b and shall communicate such decisions to the accused in writing either personally or by certified mail.

[A suggested form for citing a witness is found on page 143.]

Chapter V

Cases without Full Process

1. When a person comes before a judicatory as his own accuser, the judicatory may proceed to judgment without full process, determining first, what offense, if any has been committed, and, if a serious offense (cf. Chapter III, Section 7.b [6]) has been committed, what censure shall be pronounced.

2. Erasure is an act of discipline without full process.

a. The names of members may be removed from the roll of the church by erasure according to the following provisions:

(1) When a member desires dismissal to a church of which the session cannot approve as a church of like faith and practice, nor a church which will advance his spiritual interests, and he cannot be dissuaded, it shall grant him a certificate of standing, unless the session institutes disciplinary action against him; on being informed that he has joined such a church the clerk shall erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in its minutes.

(2) When a member of a particular church, whether or not he be charged with an offense, informs the session that he does not desire to remain in the fellowship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the efforts of the session to dissuade him from his course have failed, it shall erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in its minutes, unless the session institutes or continues other disciplinary action against him.

(3) When a member unites with a church of another denomination without a certificate of dismission, the session may erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in its minutes.

(4) When a member cannot be found, the session may, after two years, erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in its minutes.

(5) When a member, without adequate reason, persists

in attending a church of another denomination in preference to his own, or persistently and over an extended period of time, absents himself from the stated services of the church, his name may be erased from the roll according to the following procedures: he shall be earnestly and personally dealt with by the session. If this effort fails, he shall be notified that at a meeting of the session not less than two months later his standing shall be reviewed. The session shall inform him of the time, date, and place of this meeting and invite him to show why his name should not be erased from the roll. If satisfactory reasons are not presented, the session shall erase his name from the roll, record the circumstances in its minutes, and send notification to him.

(6) When a noncommunicant member neglects the ongoing exhortation of the session to profess faith in Christ and rejects the covenantal responsibility of submission to home or church, the session may upon prior notification erase his name from the roll.

b. The names of ministers may be removed from the roll of the presbytery by erasure according to the following provisions:

(1) When a minister, whether or not he be charged with an offense, informs the presbytery that he desires to renounce the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church by abandoning his ministry and membership therein, or by declaring himself independent, or by joining another body without a regular dismissal, the presbytery shall seek to dissuade him from his course, and, if these efforts fail, it shall erase his name from its roll and record the circumstances in its minutes unless the presbytery institutes or continues disciplinary action.

(2) When a minister has been absent from the meetings of presbytery for two years and the presbytery after diligent search is unable to find him, his name shall be erased from the roll.

Chapter VI

Censure and Restoration

A. Censure

1. In judicial discipline there are five degrees of censure: admonition, rebuke, suspension, deposition, and excommunication. Censures shall be pronounced in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, as an act of the whole church, by the moderator on behalf of the trial judicatory.

2. If a person who has been adjudged guilty refuses or fails to present himself for censure at the time appointed, the trial judicatory shall cite him to appear at another time. If he does not appear after this citation, the censure shall be pronounced in his absence.

B. Degrees of Censure

1. Admonition

Admonition consists in tenderly and solemnly confronting the offender with his sin, warning him of his danger, and exhorting him to repentance and to greater fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Rebuke

Rebuke is a form of censure more severe than admonition. It consists in setting forth the serious character of the offense, reproving the offender, and exhorting him to repentance and to more perfect fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Suspension

a. Suspension is a form of censure by which one is deprived of the privileges of membership in the church, of office, or of both. It may be for a definite or an indefinite time. Suspension of an officer from the privileges of membership shall always be accompanied by suspension from office, but the latter does not necessarily involve the

former.

b. An officer or other member of the church, while under suspension, shall be the object of deep solicitude and earnest dealing to the end that he may be restored. When the trial judicatory which pronounced the censure is satisfied of the penitence of the offender, or when the time of suspension has expired, the censure shall be removed and the offender shall be restored. This restoration shall be accompanied by a solemn admonition. Restoration to the privileges of membership may take place without restoration to those of office.

c. When a minister has been indefinitely suspended, the judicatory shall immediately notify all the presbyteries of the church.

4. Deposition

a. Deposition is a form of censure more severe than suspension. It consists in a solemn declaration by the trial judicatory that the offender is no longer an officer in the church.

b. When a minister is deposed from his office, the presbytery shall erase his name from the roll of the ministerial members of the presbytery and dismiss him to a particular church or enroll him as a member of the regional church without membership in a particular church.

c. Deposition of a pastor or his suspension for an indefinite time involves the dissolution of the pastoral tie. The sentence of deposition or suspension shall be read before the congregation, and the pulpit shall be declared vacant. In case of suspension for a definite period the presbytery, after giving the session an opportunity to be heard, shall decide whether the pastoral relation shall be dissolved.

d. When a minister has been deposed, the judicatory shall immediately notify all the presbyteries of the church.

5. Excommunication

Excommunication is the most severe form of censure and is resorted to only in cases of offenses aggravated by persistent impenitence. It consists in a solemn declaration by an ecclesiastical judicatory that the offender is no longer considered a member of the body

of Christ.

C. Procedural Considerations

1. Pronouncement of Censure

The indefinite suspension, deposition, or excommunication of an officer or other member of the church shall be announced to the church in which the officer holds office, or in which the member holds membership. These censures shall always be accompanied by prayer to God that he may graciously use the discipline for the restoration of the offender, the edification of the church, and his own glory.

2. Review of Suspension

a. In case of indefinite suspension, the judicatory of original jurisdiction shall review the suspension, not later than twelve months after imposition of censure, to determine whether or not the offender has shown repentance and may be restored.

b. When, in its review of suspension, the judicatory of original jurisdiction is not satisfied that the offender has shown repentance, the judicatory shall determine whether the suspension should be continued or increased to deposition or to excommunication or to both.

c. Continued suspension for an indefinite time shall be reviewed again within twelve months of the conclusion of the previous review.

3. Increase of Censure

a. No further trial is necessary to increase the censure of indefinite suspension from office to deposition or the censure of indefinite suspension from the privileges of church membership to excommunication.

b. If increase of censure is imposed, without further trial, it shall be the duty of the judicatory so acting to record the circumstances in its minutes.

c. The judgment to increase censure shall in any case be

subject to appeal.

D. Restoration

1. An officer deposed because of a commonly known offense shall be restored only after the judicatory has assured itself that the restoration will not be attended by injury to the cause of the gospel.

2. An officer who has been deposed cannot resume his former office without again being ordained.

3. Restoration shall always be accompanied by a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his redeeming grace.

Chapter VII

Appeals

1. An appeal in a judicial case is the removal of the case to an appellate judicatory by the filing of a petition asking that the final judgment of a lower judicatory be reversed or modified. An appeal may be taken by the accused, or by a judicatory whose judgment has been reversed or modified by an appellate judicatory.

2. Decisions and rulings made by the trial judicatory during the course of the trial shall not be appealable but may be assigned as grounds of appeal from the final judgment of the judicatory.

3. Notice of an intention to appeal must be filed in writing, within ten days after the judgment has been announced, with the clerk or the moderator of the judicatory from which appeal is to be taken.

4. In order to perfect an appeal, the appellant must lodge the appeal and the specifications of error with the clerk of the appellate judicatory within thirty days after the filing of the notice of appeal. The appellant shall also serve a copy of the appeal to the clerk of the judicatory from whose judgment the appeal is taken. The clerk of the appellate judicatory shall give the appellant and the judicatory from whose judgment the appeal is taken reasonable notice of the time, date, and place fixed by the appellate judicatory for the hearing of the appeal.

5. The clerk of the judicatory from whose judgment the appeal is taken shall submit the entire record of the case, including the chronology, to the clerk of the appellate judicatory.

6. If the appellate judicatory does not sustain any of the specifications of error, the judgment of the lower judicatory shall be affirmed. If the appellate judicatory sustains any specification of

error, it shall determine whether the error is of such importance as to require a reversal or modification of the judgment. An appellate judicatory which decides not to sustain the judgment of a lower judicatory may remit the case to the trial judicatory for a new trial, may modify the judgment, or may reverse the judgment.

7. When the judgment of a lower judicatory is before an appellate judicatory, neither the appellant, nor any member of the judicatory from whose judgment the appeal is taken shall propose or second motions, or vote in any decisions concerning the case.

[Suggested forms to use when giving a notice to appeal or for the appeal itself are located on pages 144–45.]

Chapter VIII

Dissents and Protests

1. Any member of a judicatory who is entitled to vote on a question and who votes against the action or judgment of the judicatory thereon may request that his vote be recorded in the minutes of the judicatory.

2. Any member of a judicatory may file a written protest stating his reasons for objecting to an action or judgment of the judicatory. A protest must be filed with the moderator or clerk within ten days after the judicatory has taken the action or announced the judgment, provided, however, that a protest against an action or judgment of the general assembly must be filed prior to the dissolution thereof. A protest shall be read to the judicatory and shall be recorded in the minutes.

3. The judicatory may, if it so desires, place in its minutes an answer to a protest.

Chapter IX

Complaints

1. A complaint is a written representation, other than an appeal or a protest, charging a judicatory with delinquency or error. It may be brought by an officer or other member of the church against the session or the presbytery to which he is subject, by one session against another session, by a session against the presbytery which has jurisdiction over it, or by one presbytery against another presbytery.

2. A complaint shall first be presented to the judicatory which is alleged to be delinquent or in error, and this judicatory shall be asked to make amends. The complaint shall be presented as soon as possible after the alleged delinquency or error, and always within three months, unless it is shown that it could not have been presented within that time.

3. If, after considering a complaint, the judicatory alleged to be delinquent or in error is not convinced that it has been delinquent or has erred, and refuses to make amends, the complainant may appeal to the next higher judicatory having jurisdiction. The appeal shall carry the complaint to that judicatory. Appeal shall be entered at the earliest possible time. Before this action is taken, notice of intention to appeal must be given to the judicatory against which the complaint is directed. The complaint carried to the higher judicatory must be the same complaint presented to the lower judicatory.

4. When a complaint has been carried to a higher judicatory, the clerk of the judicatory which is charged with delinquency or error shall submit to the clerk of the higher judicatory the relevant papers, including a statement of the facts of the case arranged by date in the form of a chronology, and a certified copy of any minutes or other documents evidencing the alleged delinquency

or error. The clerk of the higher judicatory shall give the complainant and the judicatory against which the complaint is directed reasonable notice of the time, date, and place fixed for the hearing of the complaint by the higher judicatory. Neither the complainant nor any member of the judicatory whose alleged delinquency or error is complained of shall propose or second motions, or vote in any decisions concerning the matter.

5. If a complaint against a session has been carried to the presbytery which has jurisdiction over it, and the presbytery has rendered a decision, either the complainant or the session may appeal the decision to the general assembly. The appeal shall carry the complaint against the session to the general assembly and the general assembly shall adjudicate the case as constituted by that complaint. Appeal shall be entered at the earliest possible time. Notice of intention to appeal, and copies of the appeal itself, shall be given to both lower judicatories, and the clerks of those judicatories shall submit the relevant papers to the clerk of the general assembly. Reasons may be appended to the appeal. These reasons may include alleged delinquencies in the presbytery's handling of the case and other matters germane to the issues of the case as constituted by the complaint against the session.

6. A complaint, carried by appeal to a higher judicatory, may be sustained; or, denied; or, remanded, with grounds, to the next lower judicatory. A decision to remand shall state whether jurisdiction in the matter is being returned to the lower judicatory, or retained by the higher judicatory.

7. If a judicatory is adjudged delinquent or in error by a higher judicatory, the higher judicatory shall determine what amends are to be made.

[Suggested forms to use when filing a complaint or for an appeal are located on pages 146–47.]

THE
DIRECTORY FOR THE
PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD

Chapter I
The Sanctification of the Lord's Day

1. It is the duty of every one to remember the Lord's Day and to prepare for it before its approach. On the preceding day all worldly business should be so ordered by each person and seasonably laid aside that he may not be hindered thereby from sanctifying the Sabbath, as the Holy Scriptures require.

2. God commanded his Old Testament people to keep holy the last day of the week, but he sanctified the first day as the Sabbath by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. For this reason the church of the new dispensation has from the time of the apostles kept holy the first day of the week as the Lord's Day.

3. The whole day is to be kept holy to the Lord, and is to be employed primarily in the public and private exercises of religion. Therefore it is requisite that there be a holy resting all the day from such labors and an abstaining from such thoughts, conversations and recreations as are not consonant with this end.

4. Let works of necessity on that day be so ordered that servants or others be not improperly detained from the public wor-

ship of God, nor otherwise hindered from sanctifying the Sabbath.

5. It is well for each family to prepare at the family altar for communion with God in his public ordinances by reading the Scriptures, by holy meditation and by prayer, especially for a blessing upon the ministry of the Word.

6. Although it is fitting and proper that the members of Christ's church meet for worship on other occasions also, which are left to the discretion of the particular churches, it is the sacred duty and high privilege of God's people everywhere to convene for public worship on the Lord's Day. God has expressly enjoined them in his holy Word not to forsake the assembling of themselves together.

Chapter II

The Principles of Public Worship

1. Since the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the principles of public worship must be derived from the Bible, and from no other source.

2. A service of public worship is not merely a gathering of God's children with each other but before all else a meeting of the triune God with his chosen people. God is present in public worship not only by virtue of the divine omnipresence but, much more intimately, as the faithful covenant Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

3. The end of public worship is the glory of God. His people should engage in all its several parts with an eye single to his glory. Public worship has as its aim the building of Christ's church by the perfecting of the saints and the addition to its membership of such as are being saved—all to the glory of God. Through public worship on the Lord's Day Christians should learn to serve God all the days of the week in their every activity, remembering, whether they eat or drink or whatever they do, to do all to the glory of God.

4. Public worship is rightly said to be divine because God is its beginning and its end. It is of him and through him and unto him.

5. Public worship is Christian when the worshipers recognize that Christ is the Mediator by whom alone they can come unto God, when they honor Christ as the Head of the church, who rules over public worship, and when their worship is an expression of their faith in Christ and of their love for him.

6. Public worship must be performed in spirit and in truth.

Externalism and hypocrisy stand condemned. The forms of public worship have value only when they serve to express the inner reverence of the worshiper and his sincere devotion to the true and living God. And only those whose hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit are capable of such reverence and devotion.

7. The Lord Jesus Christ has prescribed no fixed forms for public worship but, in the interest of life and power in worship, has given his church a large measure of liberty in this matter. It may not be forgotten, however, that there is true liberty only where the rules of God's Word are observed and the Spirit of the Lord is, that all things must be done decently and in order, and that God's people should serve him with reverence and in the beauty of holiness. From its beginning to its end a service of public worship should be characterized by that simplicity which is an evidence of sincerity and by that beauty and dignity which are a manifestation of holiness.

8. Public worship differs from private worship in that in public worship God is served by his saints unitedly as his covenant people, the body of Christ. For this reason the covenant children should be present so far as possible as well as adults. For the same reason no favoritism may be shown to any who attend. Nor may any member of the church presume to exalt himself above others as though he were more spiritual, but each shall esteem others better than himself.

9. It behooves God's people not only to come into his presence with a deep sense of awe at the thought of his perfect holiness and their own exceeding sinfulness, but also to enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise for the great salvation which he has so graciously wrought for them through his only begotten Son and applied to them by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter III

The Usual Parts of Public Worship

1. As a service of public worship is in its essence a meeting of God and his people, the parts of the service are of two kinds: those which are performed on behalf of God, and those which are performed by the congregation. In the former the worshippers are receptive, in the latter they are active. It is reasonable that these two elements be made to alternate as far as possible.

2. The public reading of the Holy Scriptures is performed by the minister as God's servant. Through it God speaks most directly to the congregation, even more directly than through the interpretation of Holy Writ in the sermon. For this reason the minister does well to refrain from interspersing the reading of God's Word with human comments, and the congregation should attend to the reading with deepest reverence. The reading of the Scriptures by the minister is to be distinguished from the responsive reading of certain portions of Scripture by the minister and the congregation. In the former God addresses his people; in the latter God's people give expression in the words of Scripture to their contrition, adoration, gratitude and other holy sentiments. The psalms of Scripture are especially appropriate for responsive reading.

3. In the sermon God addresses the congregation by the mouth of his servant. It is a matter of supreme importance that the minister preach only the Word of God, not the wisdom of man, that he declare the whole counsel of God, and that he handle aright the Word of truth. To these ends the sermon must be prepared with the utmost care. Let the session give diligence that no person enter the pulpit concerning whose doctrinal soundness or knowledge of Scripture there is reasonable doubt. A text may not be used merely to introduce a sermon but must be painstakingly expounded. In the sermon the minister should explain the

Word of God for the instruction of his hearers and then apply it for their exhortation. Care should be taken in preaching that Christian duty be not divorced from Christian truth. That minister fails to perform his task as a God-appointed watchman on Zion's walls who neglects to warn the congregation of prevalent soul-destroying teachings by enemies of the gospel. The minister should seek to perfect the saints by building them up in the most holy faith and in Christ's stead should beseech the unconverted that they be reconciled to God. Nothing is more necessary than that the gospel of salvation by grace be proclaimed without any adulteration or compromise, in order that the unsaved may rely for salvation on the grace of God only, to the exclusion of their own works or character, and that the saints may ascribe glory for their salvation to God alone.

4. It is proper that the minister at the beginning of the service extend a welcome in God's name to the congregation by the use of the apostolic salutation, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." At the conclusion of the service the minister may pronounce in God's name either the high-priestly benediction, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace," or the apostolic benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." If, however, the minister deem another scriptural benediction more fitting for a particular occasion, he may use it. The salutation and benediction, as pronounced in God's name, are properly used only by an ordained minister and in a gathering of Christ's church.

5. It is altogether fitting that, before the service, each person in the congregation engage in silent prayer. In public prayer the minister is the voice of the congregation. He should pray in such a way that the whole assembly of God's people may pray with him, and the members of the congregation not only are bound to listen

as he prays but should themselves pray in their hearts. To these ends it is desirable that the minister prepare himself for public prayers by previous meditation. Early in the service he shall offer a brief invocation, humbly imploring for the congregation and himself the guidance of the Holy Spirit in worship. At some point before the sermon there shall be a comprehensive prayer comprising adoration of God's perfections, thanksgiving for his mercies, confession of sins, supplication for the pardon of sins through the blood of the atonement and for renewal by the Holy Spirit, intercession for the poor, the sick, the dying, the mourning, the persecuted, the erring, the rising generation, the aged, the churches of the denomination, Christian missions at home and abroad, Christian education and other Christian activities, the church universal, the civil rulers, the community, human society in general, or whatever causes may be particularly worthy. The prayer after the sermon ought usually to have a relation to the subject that has been treated in the discourse. Public prayer must be offered with deep humility and holy reverence and be free from vain repetition or display of words.

6. As it is the aim of public worship to glorify God, prayer and praise should predominate in congregational singing. Let every member of the church take part in this act of worship. It should be performed not merely with the lips but with the spirit and the understanding. Since the metrical versions of the Psalms are based upon the Word of God, they ought to be used frequently in public worship. Great care must be taken that all the materials of song are in perfect accord with the teaching of Holy Scripture. Let the tunes as well as the words be dignified and elevated. The stately rhythm of the choral is especially appropriate for public worship. No person shall take a special part in the musical service unless he is a professing Christian and adorns his profession with a godly walk.

7. The bringing of offerings into God's house is a solemn act of thanksgiving to almighty God. In order that the receiving of the

offering may stand out as a specific act of worship it is well that the minister either precede or immediately follow it with a brief prayer, invoking the blessing of God upon the offering and devoting it to his service. It is the duty of the minister to cultivate the grace of liberal giving in the members of the church by reminding them of the scriptural admonition that every one should give as the Lord has prospered him, of the assurance of Scripture that God loves a cheerful giver, and of the blessed example of the Lord Jesus Christ who, though he was rich, became poor in order that poor sinners through his poverty might become rich. The session shall take care that the offerings of the congregation are used only for the maintenance of public worship, the preaching of the gospel throughout the world, and other Christian objects. If a member of the church designated his gift to a particular cause, the session shall respect his wish unless it is convinced that the specified cause is unworthy, in which case the gift shall be returned to the donor.

8. Nothing in the preceding sections shall be understood so as to prohibit ruling elders from leading in public prayer, reading the Scriptures, leading responsive readings, or, on occasion, exhorting the congregation as part of public worship.

Chapter IV The Celebration of the Sacraments

A. General Provisions

1. In order that the sacraments, as occasional elements of the public worship of God, may be celebrated with discernment and understanding, it is necessary that adequate preparation be made prior to their administration. It is imperative that believers meditate beforehand upon the teaching of the Word of God relative to their meaning in order that they may participate in a worthy manner. Such preparation may well include the study of that summary of this teaching which is found in the Confession of Faith. To avoid ignorance and superstition suitable preparatory sermons should be preached from time to time, and the celebration of the sacraments should be accompanied by the preaching of the Word. Moreover, in connection with the administration of the sacraments, a summary of the teaching of the Word of God as to their meaning shall be set forth.

2. The baptism of infants is not to be unnecessarily delayed. Notice of intention to present a child for baptism must be given to the session by a parent who is a believer. The baptism of adults must await their public profession of faith in Christ. The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated frequently, but the frequency may be determined by each session as it may judge most conducive to edification.

3. Since the sacraments are ordinances of the visible church, they are not to be administered except under the oversight of the government of the church. Moreover, in ordinary circumstances they are properly administered only in a gathering of the congregation for the public worship of God, baptism signifying solemn admission into the visible church, and the Lord's Supper constituting the communion of believers with Christ and with each

other as members of his mystical body. Nevertheless, if a session judge that very unusual circumstances obtain in a particular instance, the sacraments may be administered elsewhere; but, in any event, the church must be represented in the service.

4. Although the efficacy of the sacraments does not depend upon the piety or intention of the minister, they are not to be administered by any private person but only by a minister of Christ, called to be a steward of the mysteries of God.

5. In the administration of the sacraments, the minister shall follow the directions prescribed in the subsequent divisions of this chapter, but he is not required to use the exact language of the indented forms, which are suggested as appropriate. He may employ these or similar forms, using his own liberty and godly wisdom as the edification of the people shall require.

B. Holy Baptism

1. Before the administration of the sacrament of baptism, the minister shall give instruction as to the institution and nature of the sacrament:

Baptism is a sacrament ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sign and seal of the inclusion of the person who is baptized in the covenant of grace. Teaching that we and our children are conceived and born in sin, it witnesses and seals unto us the remission of sins and the bestowal of all the gifts of salvation through union with Christ. Baptism with water signifies and seals cleansing from sin by the blood and the Spirit of Christ, together with our death unto sin and our resurrection unto newness of life by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ. Since these gifts of salvation are the gracious provision of the triune God, who is pleased to claim us as his very own, we are baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And since baptized persons are called upon

to assume the obligations of the covenant, baptism summons us to renounce the devil, the world and the flesh and to walk humbly with our God in devotion to his commandments.

2. When an infant is to be baptized, the minister shall proceed to give instruction as to the ground of infant baptism:

Although our young children do not yet understand these things, they are nevertheless to be baptized. For the promise of the covenant is made to believers and to their seed, as God declared unto Abraham: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." In the new dispensation no less than in the old, the seed of the faithful, born within the church, have, by virtue of their birth, interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it and to the outward privileges of the church. For the covenant of grace is the same in substance under both dispensations, and the grace of God for the consolation of believers is even more fully manifested in the new dispensation. Moreover, our Savior admitted little children into his presence, embracing and blessing them, and saying, "Of such is the kingdom of God." So the children of the covenant are by baptism distinguished from the world and solemnly received into the visible church.

3. When an adult is to be baptized, the minister shall follow the opening statement on the institution and nature of the sacrament of baptism with instruction as to the distinctive basis of the baptism of adults:

Although the children of believers are to be baptized as members of the covenant, the baptism of adults must await their own profession of faith in Christ. Having come to years of discretion, they become the heirs of salvation and members of the visible church only by way of personal belief in and accep-

tance of Christ as Savior and Lord. So our Lord Jesus Christ commanded his church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

4. Before the baptism of an infant, the minister shall require that the parents acknowledge the duty of believers to present their children for holy baptism and that they assume publicly their responsibility for the Christian nurture of their children:

Do you acknowledge that, although our children are conceived and born in sin and therefore are subject to condemnation, they are holy in Christ, and as members of his church ought to be baptized?

Do you promise to instruct your child in the principles of our holy religion as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as summarized in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church; and do you promise to pray with and for your child, to set an example of piety and godliness before him, and to endeavor by all the means of God's appointment to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

5. Prior to the baptism of an adult, the person to be baptized, having previously made profession of faith before the session, shall be required to confess his faith publicly before the congregation, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter V of this Directory.

6. After prayer for the presence and blessing of the triune God that the grace signified and sealed by holy baptism may be abundantly realized, the minister, calling the person by name, shall say:

I baptize thee into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

As he pronounces these words, he is to baptize with water, without adding any other ceremony, and the whole service of baptism shall be concluded with prayer.

C. The Lord's Supper

1. Before the administration of the Lord's Supper, the minister shall read the words of the institution of the sacrament from one of the evangelists or from I Corinthians 11. Thereupon he shall give instruction as to its institution and nature:

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Until his coming again it is to be observed for a perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death. The physical elements, representing the broken body and the shed blood of the Savior, are received by true believers as signs and seals of all the benefits of his sacrifice upon the cross. They signify and seal remission of sins and nourishment and growth in Christ, and are a bond and pledge of communion of believers with him and with each other as members of his mystical body. As signs and seals of the covenant of grace they not only declare that God is faithful and true to fulfill the promises of the covenant but they also summon us to all the duties of the children of God, and call us to renewed consecration in gratitude for his salvation.

2. The minister shall then declare who may come to the Lord's table and who are excluded, according to the Word of God:

It is my solemn duty to warn the uninstructed, the profane, the scandalous, and those who secretly and impenitently live in any sin, not to approach the holy table lest they partake unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body, and so eat and drink condemnation to themselves. Nevertheless, this warning is not designed to keep the humble and contrite from the table of the Lord, as if the supper were for those who might be free from

sin. On the contrary, we who are invited to the supper, coming as guilty and polluted sinners and without hope of eternal life apart from the grace of God in Christ, confess our dependence for pardon and cleansing upon the perfect sacrifice of Christ, base our hope of eternal life upon his perfect obedience and righteousness, and humbly resolve to deny ourselves, crucify our old natures, and follow Christ as becomes those who bear his name. Let us therefore, in accordance with the admonition of the apostle Paul, examine our minds and hearts to determine whether such discernment is ours, to the end that we may partake to the glory of God and to our growth in the grace of Christ.

3. After prayer and thanksgiving the minister shall take the bread and, having broken it, give it to the people saying:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, having taken bread and blessed and broken it, gave it to his disciples—as I, ministering in his name, give this bread unto you—saying: “Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me.”

Having given the bread, the minister shall take the cup and give it to the people saying:

Our Savior also took the cup and having given thanks—as has been done in his name—he gave it to his disciples, saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins; drink ye all of it.”

After a prayer of thanksgiving, an offering may be taken for the relief of the poor or for some other sacred purpose.

A psalm or hymn should then be sung, and the congregation dismissed with the following or some other benediction:

“Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Chapter V

Public Profession of Faith in Christ

1. In order to aid those who contemplate making public profession of faith in Christ to understand the implication of this significant act and to perform it intelligently, the pastor shall conduct classes in Christian doctrine both for the covenant youth and for any others who may manifest an interest in the way of salvation.

2. Before permitting any one to make profession of his faith in the presence of the congregation, the session shall examine him in order to assure itself so far as possible that he possesses the doctrinal knowledge requisite for active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation on the merits of Christ alone, and is determined by the grace of God to lead a Christian life.

3. When the session is satisfied that any one is qualified to make public profession of faith in Christ, his name shall be publicly announced to the church at least one week before the day chosen for this solemn event, in order that the members of the church may have opportunity to acquaint the session with such facts concerning him as may appear to be irreconcilable with a sincere profession. The session shall weigh such evidence and determine its validity.

4. No one shall be allowed to take part in the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper who has not first made public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord.

5. On the occasion of public profession of faith in Christ, the minister shall address the candidate in these or like words, using the form which the circumstances require:

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, we thank our God for the grace which was given you, in that, having come to years of

discretion, you have accepted God's covenant promise which was signified and sealed unto you in your infancy by holy baptism.

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, we thank our God for the grace which was given you, in that, although you have not been privileged to receive the sacrament of baptism in your infancy, nevertheless, through faith you have become a partaker of the covenant of grace.

Thereupon the minister shall ask these, or equivalent, questions:

1. Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?

2. Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in Jesus Christ alone?

3. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and to lead a godly life?

4. Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?

When any one has publicly professed his faith by answering these questions in the affirmative, the minister shall address him in the following or like words:

Beloved, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I welcome you to all the privileges of full communion with God's people, and in particular to participation in the sacrament of the holy supper. I charge you that by the faithful use of the means of grace—the Word of God, the sacraments and prayer—and in humble reliance upon the grace of God, you continue steadfastly in the

confession which you have made. Rest assured that if you confess Christ before men, he will confess you before his Father who is in heaven. May the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, and strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

This part of the service shall be concluded with an appropriate prayer.

Chapter VI Ordinations and Installations

A. Ministers

1. The ordination or installation of a minister shall be performed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XXIII of the Form of Government.

2. When a minister is to be ordained or installed, the moderator of the presbytery or another member appointed to preside in his stead shall state, in the following or similar language, the warrant and nature of the office of minister:

The Word of God clearly teaches that the office of minister was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul declares that our Lord “gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.”

The duties of the minister of Christ may briefly be set forth under the following heads: the faithful exposition of the Word of God and its application to the needs of the hearers, in order that the unconverted may be reconciled to God and that the saints may be built up in their most holy faith; the offering of prayer to the Lord on behalf of the congregation; the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and the exercise, in conjunction with the ruling elders, of the government and discipline of the church.

The office of the minister is the first in the church for dignity and usefulness. The person who fills this office is designated in Scripture by different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed

minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house of God, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. As he is commanded to warn the house of Israel against the enemies of God and his Word, he is termed watchman. And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.

B. Ruling Elders

1. The ordination or installation of ruling elders shall be performed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XXV of the Form of Government.

2. When ruling elders are to be ordained or installed, the minister shall state, in the following or similar language, the warrant and nature of the office:

The office of ruling elder is based upon the kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ, who provided for his church officers who should rule in his name. Paul and Barnabas “appointed ... elders in every church”; and Paul commanded that those who “rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching.” In this passage the Scriptures distinguish between elders who labor particularly in the Word and in doctrine—usually called ministers or pastors—and elders who join with the minister in the government and discipline of the church—generally called ruling elders.

It is the duty and privilege of ruling elders, in the name and by the authority of our ascended king, to rule over particular churches, and, as servants of our great shepherd, to care for his flock. Holy Scripture enjoins them: “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he purchased

with his own blood.” As a consequence, ruling elders must be zealous in maintaining the purity of the ministration of the Word and sacraments. They must conscientiously exercise discipline and uphold the good order and peace of the church. With love and humility they should promote faithfulness on the part of both elders and deacons in the discharge of their duties. Moreover, they should have particular regard to the doctrine and conduct of the minister of the Word, in order that the church may be edified, and may manifest itself as the pillar and ground of the truth.

If they are to fill worthily so sacred an office, ruling elders must adorn sound doctrine by holy living, setting an example of godliness in all their relations with men. Let them walk with exemplary piety and diligently discharge the obligations of their office; and “when the chief shepherd shall be manifested,” they “shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

C. Deacons

1. The ordination or installation of deacons shall be performed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XXV of the Form of Government.

2. When deacons are to be ordained or installed, the minister shall state, in the following or similar language, the warrant and nature of the office:

The office of deacon is based upon the solicitude and love of Christ for his own people. So tender is our Lord’s interest in their temporal needs that he considers what is done unto one of the least of his brethren as done unto him. For he will say to those who have ministered to his little ones: “I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

In the beginning the apostles themselves ministered to the

poor, but subsequently, in order that they might be able to devote themselves wholly to prayer and the ministry of the Word, they committed that responsibility to others, having directed the people to choose men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. Since the days of the apostles the church has recognized the care of the poor as a distinct ministry of the church committed to deacons.

The duties of deacons consist of encouraging members of the church to provide for those who are in want, seeking to prevent poverty, making discreet and cheerful distribution to the needy, praying with the distressed and reminding them of the consolations of Holy Scripture.

If they are to fill worthily so sacred an office, deacons must adorn sound doctrine by holy living, setting an example of godliness in all their relations with men. Let them walk with exemplary piety and diligently discharge the obligations of their office; and “when the chief shepherd shall be manifested,” they “shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

SUGGESTED FORMS

FOR USE IN CONNECTION WITH

THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

I

CHARGE AND SPECIFICATIONS

_____ [here insert the title of the trial judicatory] of
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church charges _____ with
_____ [here name the alleged offense]: _____ [here
give references to applicable portions of the Word of God, and,
where pertinent, to relevant provisions of the constitution].

Specifications: That on or about _____ the said _____
did _____ [here set forth briefly the place and circumstances
of the alleged offense].

Witnesses and/or Documents: _____ [here set forth
the names of witnesses and/or the titles of documents to be pro-
duced in support of the charge and specifications].

_____ [Moderator]

_____ [Clerk]

Date: _____

II

CITATION OF ACCUSED

To _____:

You are hereby cited to appear before _____, meeting on _____ at _____ o'clock at _____, then and there to hear and receive certain charges and specifications which have been preferred against you by _____ [here insert the title of the trial judicatory] of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

[In the case of a second citation, add the appropriate warning prescribed by Chapter IV, Section A.1.e, of the Book of Discipline.]

By order of _____ [here insert the title of the trial judicatory] of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

_____ [Moderator]

_____ [Clerk]

Date: _____

III

CITATION OF WITNESS

To _____:

You are hereby cited to appear before _____, meeting on _____ at _____ o'clock, at _____, then and there to give evidence in the trial of _____ [here insert the name of the accused].

[In the case of a second citation of a witness who has failed to appear after a first citation, add the warning prescribed in Chapter IV, Section A.4.e, of the Book of Discipline.]

By order of _____ [here insert the title of the trial judicatory] of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

_____ [Moderator]

_____ [Clerk]

Date: _____

IV

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPEAL
(in Judicial Cases)

To _____, Clerk [or Moderator] of _____
[here insert the title of the judicatory from which the appeal is to
be taken] of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church:

And now, this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____,
comes _____ and gives notice of intention to appeal to
_____ from the judgment of _____ in the case of
_____ [here insert the name of the accused].

_____, Appellant
Date: _____

V

APPEAL
(in Judicial Cases)

To _____, Clerk [or Moderator] of _____
[here insert the title of the judicatory to which the appeal is taken]
of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church:

And now, this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____,
comes _____ and appeals from the judgment of
_____ in the case of _____ [here insert the name of
the accused], and in support of said appeal sets forth the following
specifications of error:

_____ [here insert the title of the judicatory from
which the appeal is taken] of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church
erred in _____ [here state concisely the error alleged to
have been made].

[Additional specifications of error may be filed.]

_____, Appellant
Date: _____

VI

COMPLAINT

To _____, Clerk [or Moderator] of _____
[here insert the title of the judicatory to which the complaint is
taken] of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church:

And now, this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____, comes
_____ and complains against the action [or delinquency]
of _____ in connection with _____ [here state
briefly the matter of which complaint is made].

In bringing this complaint I affirm that I believe that the
session [or presbytery] has erred [or has been delinquent] and that
this error [or delinquency] is serious; that I have tried to under-
stand the session's [or presbytery's] point of view; that I have
seriously examined, in prayer before the Lord, my willingness to
be in subjection to my brothers in Christ; and that I have made a
serious effort to correct the error [or delinquency] short of enter-
ing a complaint.

In support of this complaint I set forth the following grounds:

[Here set forth concisely in numbered paragraphs the grounds
of fact, circumstance and law in support of the complaint.]

_____, Complainant

Date: _____

VII

APPEAL
(in Administrative Cases)

To _____, Clerk of _____: And now, this
_____ day of _____, A.D. _____, comes
_____ and appeals from the decision of the
_____ on the enclosed complaint of _____
against actions of the _____, in order to bring that
complaint to _____ for adjudication.

_____, Appellant

Date: _____

SUGGESTED FORMS

FOR

PARTICULAR SERVICES

I

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

At the time and place appointed for the solemnization of matrimony, the persons to be married shall take their places before the minister, the man having the woman at his left hand, and all present reverently standing.

The minister shall say:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the presence of God to join this man and this woman in holy matrimony.

Marriage was instituted by God himself in the time of man's innocency and uprightness. The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him." Thereupon God created woman of man's own substance and brought her unto the man. Our Lord Jesus Christ honored marriage by his presence at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. And he confirmed it as a divine ordinance and a union not to be severed when he declared, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Moreover, the apostle Paul set forth the sacred and exalted nature of marriage when he likened it to the mystical union that subsists between Christ and his church.

The purpose of marriage is the enrichment of the lives of those who enter into this estate, the propagation of the race, and the

extension of Christ's church to the glory of the covenant God.

Let us reverently hear what the Holy Scriptures teach concerning the duty of husbands to their wives and of wives to their husbands:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies."

"Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the savior of the body."

These two persons are come to be joined in this holy estate of marriage. If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be wedded, let him now declare it, or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

I require and charge you both that, if either of you knows any cause why you may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, you do now confess it.

Let us pray:

Most holy and most merciful Father, at once the God of nature and of grace, creator, preserver and redeemer of mankind, fill these, thy servant and thy handmaiden, with a sense of the solemnity of the vows they are about to make. May they look to thee for thine assistance, and enter into these sacred obligations in humble dependence upon thine enabling grace. Grant this, O Father, with the forgiveness of our sins, through Jesus Christ, thy Son. Amen.

After prayer the minister shall say:

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

The father of the woman, or someone in his stead, shall place her right hand in that of the minister, and the minister shall cause the man to take with his right hand the woman's right hand.

The minister shall then say:

M—, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live with her after God's commandments in the holy estate of marriage? And wilt thou love her, honor and cherish her, so long as ye both shall live?

The man shall answer:

I will.

Then the minister shall say:

N—, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live with him after God's commandments in the holy estate of marriage? And wilt thou love him, cherish and obey him, so long as ye both shall live?

The woman shall answer:

I will.

The man shall say:

I, M—, take thee, N—, to be my wedded wife, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be thy loving and faithful husband in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, as long as we both shall live.

The woman shall say:

I, N—, take thee, M—, to be my wedded husband, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be thy loving and faithful wife in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, as long as we both shall live.

MARRIAGE SERVICE

*The man shall then put the ring on the third finger of the woman's left hand,
and shall say after the minister:*

This ring I give thee as a symbol and pledge of constant faith
and abiding love.

The minister shall say to the woman:

Dost thou, N—, receive this ring as a token of thy pledge to
keep this covenant and perform these vows?

The woman shall say:

I do.

The minister shall say:

Let us pray.

After prayer the minister shall say:

By virtue of the authority committed unto me by the church of
Christ and the law of the state, I now pronounce you, M— and
N—, husband and wife, in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*The minister shall cause the husband and wife to join their right hands,
and shall say:*

“What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.”

The Lord our God fill you with his grace, and grant that you
may long live together in all godliness and holiness. Amen.

II

THE BURIAL SERVICE

(It should be observed that the Scriptures and the prayers in the following service have been arranged with the burial of believers or their children primarily in mind. When other persons are to be buried, the service should be modified accordingly.)

(From the references to the minister in this service it is not to be inferred that only a minister may officiate.)

When the people have assembled, the minister shall begin the service with several of these sentences from the Holy Scriptures:

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Ps. 124:8).

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Ps. 103:13–14).

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Tim. 6:7).

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

“But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at last he will stand up upon the earth: and after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God; whom I, even I, shall see, on my side, and mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger” (Job 19:25–27).

“I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25–26).

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are

comforted of God” (2 Cor. 1:3–4).

Then the minister shall lead the people in the invocation, using the following or a similar, prayer, and ending, if desired, with the Lord’s Prayer.

Almighty and gracious God, our Father in heaven, thou art our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Lead us, we pray, to put our trust entirely in thee. We come to thee in the name of thine only begotten and well beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, who died for our sins and rose again. Grant us, we beseech thee, through his precious blood, peace and pardon, and joy in the Holy Spirit. And seeing that we have in him an high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, may we come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in this time of need.

We thank thee for the precious promises of thy Word. We praise thee for the light of the gospel. We acknowledge thy sovereign will and thine infinite compassion. Be pleased, therefore, to look upon our sorrow, and for the sake of thy dear Son, enable us to hear thy holy Word, so that through patience and comfort of the scriptures we may have hope. Grant us the consolation of thy Holy Spirit. May we hold fast our confidence in thy forgiving mercy and the blessed assurance of eternal life, through him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree and rose from the dead and is exalted at thy right hand, even Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Then a hymn may be read by the minister, or sung by the people.

Then let the minister read one or more of the following Psalms:

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod

and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 23).

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it" (Ps. 90).

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord

is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Ps. 103:13–18).

(Ps. 39:4–13 and Ps. 130 may also be found appropriate.)

Then let the minister read one or more of these, or similar, passages presenting the gospel message of salvation through Christ:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John 10:9–11, 27–30).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love

toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Rom. 5:1–11).

(Rom. 8:1–11 may also be found appropriate.)

Then, if it is deemed fitting, the minister may read these or similar, passages, concerning a notably useful and fruitful Christian life:

“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18).

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not” (Mal. 3:16–18).

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised; and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:23–25).

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an

hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:34–40).

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jas. 5:19, 20).

Then another hymn may be read or sung.

Then let the minister read one or more of these Scripture passages giving the gospel promise of the resurrection and the life everlasting:

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou

sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:20–28, 35–58).

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them” (Mark 10:13–16).

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:10).

“While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth” (Mark 5:35–39).

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,

whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:1–3, 15–20, 25–27).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:3–9).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And

the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:1-4, 22-27).

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Rev. 22:1-7).

(2 Cor. 4:16-18, 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11, and Rev. 7:13-17 may also be found appropriate.)

If it is desired, an address may here be given.

Then another hymn may be read or sung.

Then shall the minister lead the people in this, or other, fitting prayer:

Almighty and most merciful God, we come again to thee in prayer, acknowledging thy sovereign power and right both to give and to take away as seemeth good unto thee. We remember all thy mercies, and thy saving grace revealed to us in Christ, thy Son, our Redeemer. We thank thee for thy favor shown to our beloved friend in bringing him to a knowledge of thy redeeming love,

granting him faith in Christ, the Savior.

We humbly pray for thy bereaved servants that thou wilt give to them meek and trustful submission to thy will. May they have divine comfort through the joy of Christ's risen presence and the illumination of thy Holy Spirit. Fill their sorrowing hearts with thy love, that they may wholly rest in thee, who dost bring eternal joy out of grief, and life from death, through the power of the resurrection of thy Son.

Grant to us who remain grace to imitate the righteous dead in faith and in loving service. Give us, we pray, perseverance to continue faithful unto the end, following Christ our Lord, so that we may finally be received unto heaven through his vicarious sacrifice, and, with all thine elect, adore thee the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

At the place of burial, if it seems desirable, let the minister say:

“I am the resurrection and the life,” saith the Lord; “he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.”

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.”

Then, if it seems desirable, earth or flowers may be scattered upon the casket, while the minister shall say:

Forasmuch as it hath pleased almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of this world the soul of our brother, we therefore commit his body to the ground, looking for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose coming in glorious majesty the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the mortal bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed, and made like unto his own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

Then the minister may say:

“I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”

Then the minister shall offer the following, or a similar prayer:

O almighty and merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, grant that we may realize the shortness and uncertainty of human life, that we may live before thee in godly fear all our days, looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

We humbly beseech thee to comfort the sorrowing, and to support them in their grief. Raise us up each one, we pray thee, from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, so that we too, when we depart this life, may rest in Christ, and at the resurrection be found acceptable in thy sight, through the mediation of him who died on the cross and rose again. Amen.

III

THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

The congregation shall stand, and the following portions from the Psalter shall be read by the presiding minister and the people responsively, or, if desired, by the minister alone.

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting and his truth endureth to all generations” (Ps. 100).

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto his name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companion’s sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good” (Ps. 122).

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (Ps. 84:1–4, 10).

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein: for he hath founded it upon the seas, and

established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory" (Ps. 24).

The minister shall say:

Beloved in the Lord, we are gathered to consecrate and set apart this house for the worship of the one living and true God. Let us therefore dedicate this place to its proper and sacred uses.

Then the minister and the people shall say responsively:

To thee, God and Father of Jesus Christ, our Lord:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

To thee, eternal Son of God, Redeemer of thy people and Head of thy church:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

To thee, Spirit of God, lord and giver of life, our teacher, sanctifier and comforter:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

For the worship of God in praise and prayer;
For the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God;

CHURCH DEDICATION

For the celebration of the holy sacraments:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

For the diffusion of sacred knowledge;
For the promotion of righteousness;
For the extension of the kingdom of God:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

For release to the captives;
For recovering of sight to the blind;
For rest to the heavy laden:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

For comfort to those who mourn;
For strength to those who are tempted;
For assurance to those of little faith:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

For the sanctifying of the family;
For the nurture of the young;
For the perfecting of believers:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

In gratitude for the gracious keeping of the divine covenant
throughout past generations;

In reliance upon the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail
against the church;

In the hope of the eternal glory of the church triumphant:

WE DEDICATE THIS HOUSE.

Then the minister shall say:

Beloved in the Lord, seeing that it has pleased almighty God to prosper us in our undertaking to build (or secure) a house for his worship, let us now invoke upon it his abiding blessing, to the end that pure apostolic doctrine and order may be maintained herein, and that the Holy Spirit may make his own ordinances effectual. In so doing let us reverently set this house apart for these sacred uses with prayer and supplication.

Let us pray:

Almighty and everlasting God, maker of heaven and earth, who dwellest in the high and holy place, with him also who is of contrite and humble spirit, we adore thee for thy manifold perfections, for the infinite majesty and glorious beauty of thy being, and for the truthfulness and sanctity of thy divine revelation.

We give thanks unto thee for thine infinite mercies to us, and, in particular, for the gift of thy Son to be our Savior. We praise thee for the church of God, of which he is the only Head and King and of which we are humble and unfaithful members. We acknowledge that we are not worthy to receive from thine hand the blessings of thy common grace; and especially do we recognize the abundance of thy great goodness in granting to us, through thy particular grace, membership in the church universal, the mystical body of Christ.

Thou hast put it into our hearts to prepare this house of worship where men may gather in thy service. We earnestly beseech thee that thou wilt watch over and protect this place which we have dedicated in thy name. We ask that here may be preached only the pure gospel of the free grace of God. May all that is proclaimed be firmly grounded upon the unchanging foundation of Holy Scripture. Grant that no portion of thy sacred revelation to man may be neglected but that thy servants who minister here shall give to all its parts that due regard which will exhibit its majesty and scope. We pray that by the favor of the Spirit sinners may in this house be converted unto thee, and that the saints of God, the members of thy holy body, may be built up and edified by the proclamation of thy matchless Word.

CHURCH DEDICATION

May the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the blessed Trinity, ever be present to guide, illumine and inform those who teach here. May he prepare the hearts of the hearers to receive with meekness the instruction which is presented, so that their lives may show forth the wonders of his grace and truly adorn the doctrine of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Bless this thy house that it may serve without surcease the extension of the kingdom of God. Teach us so to look for the return of the Lord of glory that we shall be quickened day by day in our present service of him, and shall be always prepared to greet him and to enter in with him to the marriage supper of the Lamb, forever to dwell in that holy city where there is no candle neither light of the sun for the Lamb is the light thereof.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

An offering to the Lord may then be received.

After the singing of an appropriate psalm or hymn, a sermon shall be preached.

THE
RECOMMENDED
CURRICULUM
FOR
MINISTERIAL
PREPARATION
IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

This Recommended Curriculum was approved by the Fifty-fourth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to serve as a guideline to ministerial candidates, presbyteries, and seminaries (FG, XXIII, 3). The elements in the Curriculum are not to be understood as additions to the constitutional requirements stated in FG (XXI, 3, 4; XXIII, 3, 6) regarding the preparation and evaluation of qualifications of candidates for the ministry of the Word. Seminary course work by itself may not ensure fulfillment of the Recommended Curriculum for candidates whose presbyteries use the Curriculum as a guideline; therefore presbyteries may expect supplementation of a candidate's seminary course work through individual guided study, supervised ministry experience, or other means.

SCRIPTURE

I. Bible Content

A. Study of the English Bible

1. The candidate should be required to read through the Bible in English.
2. Course work should include areas such as archaeology, history and geography, emphasizing the significance of these disciplines for the grammatico-historical interpretation of Scripture.

B. Required comprehensive examination on Bible content

Goal: The candidate should have a thorough knowledge of the content of the English Bible and an ability to communicate it.

II. Biblical Languages

A. Hebrew

1. Grammatical forms
2. Syntactical principles
3. Exegetical procedures
4. Required readings in the Hebrew scriptures

B. Greek

1. Grammatical forms
2. Syntactical principles
3. Exegetical procedures
4. Required readings in the Greek New Testament

Goal: The candidate should be able to exegete the Scriptures from the original languages in the preparation of sermons and Bible lessons, using lexical and grammatical tools.

III. Hermeneutics (or, Principles and Methods of Interpretation)

A. Principles of Interpretation

- B. Biblical Theology
- C. History of and Issues in Biblical Criticism (Higher and Textual)
- D. Special Hermeneutical Issues
 1. Old Testament
 2. New Testament

Goal: The candidate should understand the principles, procedures and problems involved in the interpretation of God's Word, and should demonstrate a growing proficiency in the faithful exposition of Scripture. He shall be able to read the Bible as God intended it, in its organic unity and its historical diversity. The centrality of Christ, the covenant and the kingdom in the Scriptures determines our understanding of the Scriptures as a whole and as individual texts. The Bible is the progressively unfolding history of the redemptive acts and words of God, climaxing in the coming of Christ and his kingdom, ushering in the new age, the last days.

Christ has accomplished this through his death and resurrection, and the sending of his Spirit to the church on the day of Pentecost. The Bible also holds out the blessed hope to Christ's church that this new covenant kingdom, which is not yet consummated, will appear in the fulness of God's glory with Christ's return on the last day.

IV. Use of the Bible in Ministry

- A. The candidate should be required to prepare advanced exegetical papers on assigned Old Testament and New Testament passages.
- B. The candidate should be required to use his interpretive skills and tools in the preparation of sermons and Bible lessons/courses.

Goal: The candidate should be able to faithfully explain Scripture for the building up of God's people, moving from a careful study in the original languages through the interpre-

tive process, and arriving at a clear exposition of the text's meaning and application for the church today.

DOCTRINE

I. Church History

A study of the history of the church since the New Testament period, in all eras, with particular emphasis on the heritage and uniqueness of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Goal: The candidate should understand the flow of history, the historical development of Christian theology and the influence upon it of secular history and philosophy, and the progress of ecclesiastical development; and he should have an awareness of the relation of the cultural context to the history of the church.

II. Apologetics

A. Introduction to Apologetic Methodology and Practice including (1) the school of Van Tilian presuppositionalism as the most biblically faithful expression of Reformed apologetics, and (2) a survey of positions held by other Reformed apologists

B. Survey of Non-Christian Thought (including the history of humanistic thought and its contemporary manifestation in various worldviews and spheres of intellectual and aesthetic activity—philosophy, literature, drama, popular arts, scientific methodology—as well as a survey of non-Christian religions and cults)

C. Survey of Contemporary Theology (including the old liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, liberation theology, etc.)

Goal: The candidate should gain a sound intellectual basis for the positive presentation of the Christian faith from a Reformed perspective, and should be equipped to deal with

anti-Christian systems of thought in their various contemporary manifestations.

III. Theology and Ethics

- A. Systematic Theology: Study of the whole system of doctrine revealed in Scripture as one organic body of truth, basic to all theological disciplines, with emphasis upon the centrality of doctrine in the proclamation of the Word in all the witness and work of the church: prolegomena, theology proper, anthropology, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology, including a specific study of the secondary doctrinal standards of the OPC, the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms
- B. Ethics: Study of the goal, motive and standard of the Christian way of life set forth in God's Word (the two "great commandments," the ten commandments, the sermon on the mount, etc.)

Goal: The candidate should obtain a knowledge of and commitment to the Reformed faith (including such distinctives as the inerrancy of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, covenant theology, the five points of Calvinism, etc.); and he should become proficient in communicating this faith. He should manifest an understanding of and commitment to a biblical lifestyle in both personal and social ethics.

IV. Polity

- A. Biblical Church Government: Study of the biblical foundations of the principles and practice of presbyterian church government
- B. OPC Church Order and Parliamentary Procedure

Goal: The candidate should gain an understanding of the biblical teaching on the nature and structure of the church, as well as a working knowledge of the contents and application of *The Book of Church Order of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*

(containing the standards of government, discipline, and worship) and *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

I. The Pastor's Personal Life

A. Spiritual Life

1. Growth in godliness
2. Call to the ministry of the Word

B. Communication and Interpersonal Relations

1. With his family
2. With the church
3. With the community

Goal: The candidate should learn how to develop his personal relationship to God through the study of Scripture and through prayer, and how to express his devotion to God through developing and maintaining godly relationships with those of his own household, with others in the household of faith and with those outside the faith. Growing out of this, the candidate should be guided in determining the genuineness of his sense of call to the gospel ministry.

II. Worship

A. Biblical Principles of Public Worship: Study of the biblical standards which should govern the public worship of God and of their implementation in the worship life of a congregation, including special attention to the Directory for the Public Worship of God of the OPC

B. The Preaching of God's Word

1. Theology of preaching
2. Principles and practices of preaching

C. The Sacraments

Goal: The candidate should understand the regulative principle of public worship and its application to the specific elements of a congregation's worship services, and the centrality of preaching within the biblical pattern of public worship. He should demonstrate increasing proficiency in preaching the Word and in leading a congregation in public worship.

III. Evangelism

A. Theology of Reformed Evangelism

B. The Pastor's Role in the Practice of Evangelism

Goal: The candidate should be able to express the bearing of the Reformed faith on the practice of announcing the gospel to non-Christians. He should develop methods for bringing the message of Christ to others and should implement those methods by engaging in evangelism and by training others to do so.

IV. Missiology

A. Reformed Theology of Missions

B. Strategy of Missions, both within one's own culture and cross-culturally

Goal: The candidate should gain an understanding of the issues and practices involved in the planting and extension of the church both within a single culture and cross-culturally, including such areas as linguistics, indigenization, the use of anthropological perspectives, the use of printed and electronic media, and the relation of missions to political and social reforms.

V. Pastoral Care

A. Theology of Pastoral Care and Counseling

B. Practice of Pastoral Counseling

Goal: The candidate should understand the biblical principles which govern his shepherding of God's people and should gain practical experience in counseling (e.g., through the use of case studies and through the observation of and/or participation in actual counseling sessions).

VI. Christian Education

A. Theology of Christian Education

B. History of Christian Education

C. Practice of Christian Education

Goal: The candidate should understand the biblical basis of Christian education and its historical development. He should gain proficiency in the development of a plan for Christian education in the home and in the church, in the training of Bible teachers for church-related ministries, and in the discerning and developing of spiritual gifts within the church.

VII. Pastoral Administration

A. Theology of Administration

B. Practice of Administration

Goal: The candidate should understand the biblical principles of administration and leadership, such as planning and evaluation, strategy and oversight, the stewardship of time, the delegation of authority/responsibility and the harmonious employment of the spiritual gifts of the members of Christ's body (Eph. 4:11-16).

*This Recommended Curriculum
may be amended by a majority vote of a general assembly.*

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