

CREC Council Book of Procedures

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PROCEDURES OF COUNCIL

ARTICLE I PREFACE

THE CREC COUNCIL BOOK OF PROCEDURES PROVIDES STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR BOTH THE COUNCIL AND THE PRESBYTERIES. EACH PRESBYTERY MUST ADOPT THE CURRENT VERSION OF THE CREC COUNCIL BOOK OF PROCEDURES AS THE FOUNDATION FOR ITS OWN BOOK OF PROCEDURES, AND MAY ADD ADDITIONAL PROCEDURAL STANDARDS TO ITS OWN BOOK OF PROCEDURES PROVIDED THE ADDITIONAL STANDARDS ARE NOT IN CONFLICT WITH THE CREC COUNCIL BOOK OF PROCEDURES OR THE CREC CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS. IF THERE IS GOOD CAUSE FOR NOT FOLLOWING THESE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES IN A GIVEN SITUATION, THE REASON FOR THE DEVIATION MUST BE STATED IN WRITING AND APPROVED BY THE RELEVANT BROADER ASSEMBLY.

ARTICLE II DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply with regard to terms used in the Constitution and this Book of Procedures:

1. Adopt
When the assembly wishes to approve and endorse assembly minutes or the factual findings or opinions of a committee as set forth in a report, or when the assembly wishes to implement the recommendations or resolutions of a committee as set forth in a report, the proper motion is to "adopt" the minutes or specified portion(s) of the report. If a committee report contains statements of fact or opinion which are only for the assembly's information, the assembly may simply "receive" the report, unless the assembly wishes to endorse and assume responsibility for the statements, in which case the assembly should "adopt" them. (Based on Robert's Rules ¶¶ 33, 54.)
2. Mediation
The attempt to settle a dispute through the active participation of a third party (the "mediator") who works with disputing parties to clear up misunderstandings, heal offenses, find points of agreement, and persuade them to agree on a fair and just resolution. The role of mediator may be performed by an individual or a committee.
3. Non-Binding Arbitration
An informal mini-trial conducted by a third party or panel in an attempt to assist disputing parties to more objectively assess the

respective merit of their positions and the likely outcome of a formal trial. The outcome of non-binding arbitration is advisory only.

4. Present

An item (e.g., committee report, correspondence, etc) is “presented” to the assembly when a delegate reads or, as appropriate, summarizes or describes the item to the assembly and hands it to the presiding officer or secretary. (Based on Robert’s Rules ¶153.)

5. Ratify

When the assembly wishes to confirm the action(s) of a minister under paragraph IV. J., or to make valid a past action by an officer, committee, or delegate which requires prior approval of the assembly, the proper motion is to “ratify” the action. By definition, the assembly may ratify only such actions of its ministers, officers, committees, or delegates as it had the right to authorize in advance. (Based on Robert’s Rules ¶ 39.)

6. Receive

A report or other item is “received” by the assembly when it is presented it to the assembly as specified in these definitions. (Based on Robert’s Rules ¶¶ 53-54). It is not necessary to move to “receive” a presented item, for it has already been “received.” (Ibid.) “Receiving” an item does not indicate approval, endorsement, or adoption by the assembly.

ARTICLE III ORDINATION EXAMINATION

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- a. The pattern established in the scriptures (2 Tim. 2:1-2) is that Timothy was to commit the things that he had learned to those faithful men who would be able to teach others. Having established elders in every city, it further was the pattern that this process of succession was perpetuated by those already established in the office. This task clearly requires that a determination be made as to whether a man is characterized by a faithful life and whether he is skilled in teaching others.
- b. Our purposes are therefore twofold, first we must examine a Teaching Elder candidate’s manner of life and doctrine and secondly his ability to teach scripturally. We believe that it is the local session that primarily carries the burden of this critical determination.
- c. As a Presbytery, our purpose is to provide assistance to the local session in this examination, while recognizing the limitations of a

presbytery to review a pastoral candidate. First, it is the session that is preeminently qualified to examine a candidate's manner of faithful life and ability to teach. Secondly, it is prudent for the session to seek the accountability of the broader church as a protection to the flock, and it is a good testimony when they do so. Thirdly, the broader church, as represented by the Presbytery, is generally better able to examine a candidate's doctrinal preparedness, ability to use the original languages, and his exegetical abilities, and knowledge of English bible.

- d. Ultimately, the session is charged with faithfully considering the wisdom of the broader church and is responsible before God for the ordination of a candidate.

2. Ordination Examination Process

- a. The examination process and related matters is described fully in the document Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters of Ordination available from the Minister.
- b. The examination process for ordination to the office of pastor (teaching elder) is divided into three phases: a) Preliminary written exam from the Minister administered in the context of the local church; b) A second written examination overseen by an Ordination Committee from the Presbytery appointed by the Minister, and c), An oral examination administered at Presbytery by the Ordination Committee.

3. Recommendation Procedures

- a. At the end of the (c) oral examination (phase three), the Evaluation Committee will, by majority vote, recommend or not recommend the candidate for ordination at that time. The Committee will report their decision and any other recommendations to the Minister of the Presbytery and to the elders of the local congregation. If the Committee does not recommend ordination and the session determines to proceed with ordination against the recommendation of the Committee, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Minister their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Minister will, in that case, evaluate the criteria of the session to determine if there is egregious sin involved on the part of the session, and then proceed as per article 3(R) of the constitution.

4. Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC

- a. While we believe in the holy catholic Church and therefore accept the ordination of ministers outside of the CREC, it is both wise and

proper for their credentials to be examined. It is recommended, though not obligatory, that CREC churches seek the wisdom of the broader church in assessing these credentials. Assessing the credentials and views of an ordained minister is not the same process as an ordination examination and is not to be as comprehensive. The aim in examining a transferring minister is to assist the local congregation in confirming orthodoxy and competency.

- i When the church desires to call a man to the office of pastor one who was ordained outside of the CREC or who is not a minister in the CREC, the elders of the church shall inform the Minister.
 - ii The Minister will facilitate the ministerial credentials examination by appointing a committee composed of three CREC presbyters. This may take place at a time determined by the Minister, in coordination with the local church elders.
 - iii The Committee will provide a report of their decision and any other recommendations to the Minister of the Presbytery and to the elders of the local congregation. If the Committee recommends the call of the minister, the church may proceed with the call. At the next Presbytery, the minister will then be received into the CREC as an ordained minister with a report from the Committee and an opportunity for a brief examination on the floor of the Presbytery. If the session determines to proceed with the call against the recommendation of the Committee, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Minister their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Minister will, in that case, evaluate the criteria of the session to determine if there is egregious sin involved on the part of the session, and may proceed as per article 3(R) of the constitution.
- b. This process of assessing the credentials of a minister being called to a CRE church is described fully in the document Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters of Ordination available from the Minister.
5. The Ordination of Elders Not Recognized in the CREC as Pastors (“Ruling Elders”)
- a. The Presbytery is not involved in the process of a “ruling elder's” examination or ordination. Nevertheless, since all elders are required to perform the same primary function of ruling and

overseeing the church as do pastors, a similar standard of Biblical and doctrinal knowledge should be encouraged.

ARTICLE IV Recognition of Ordained Ministers

1. Any CREC member church that wishes to have her minister(s) ordination formally recognized by the CREC shall submit such a request to the minister (in writing).
2. Ordained ministers who are members of a CREC church and duly installed as a minister of that church shall be added to the list of recognized ordained men under one of the following conditions:
 - a. A previously ordained man, upon entering the CREC along with his church, was received by the presbytery and thus had his ordination formally recognized by the presbytery.
 - b. Any man who sat for a CREC ordination exam and was recommended by the examining committee, ordained by his local CREC church, and installed as a minister.
 - c. Any previously ordained man who was called by a CREC member church to be their minister, and is duly installed; subject to final approval at the next presbytery meeting.
3. The minister shall establish and maintain a list of recognized ordained ministers in the CREC. Upon request, the minister may issue a letter to an inquiring body stating that the minister in question has been formally recognized by the CREC as a lawfully ordained minister of the gospel.

ARTICLE V Procedures for Conducting a Presbyterial Trial

1. Establishment of Judicatory
 - a. All presbyters are voting members of the judicatory with the exception of those who, to set aside conflicts of interest, are removed from the judicatory by a three-fourths majority of presbytery. Should the minister be removed in this way, presbytery will elect a minister pro tempore to moderate the hearing.
2. Introduction to the case
 - a. A written complaint (including any charges or specifications), provided by the Complainant, is published to each member of the judicatory and read by the Minister.
 - b. Here or at any later point in the introduction to the case, any member of the judicatory may interject a motion to dismiss the

case. If the motion carries by a three-fourths majority, the hearing will not proceed and the matter will be regarded as settled. The presbytery will not hear frivolous matters.

- c. The Minister invites the Complainant to introduce the matter.
- d. The Minister invites the Respondent to introduce the matter.
3. The Minister (or his designee) charges the parties, witnesses, and the judicatory from the Scriptures, and then opens the hearing with prayer.
4. Presentation of Complainant's Case
 - a. The Complainant calls a witness, directs him by questioning, and the judicatory may follow up with questions of their own.
 - b. The witness may then be examined by the respondent, followed by another invitation to questions from the judicatory.
 - c. If the Complainant wishes to redirect the witness, he may do so, but the same opportunities for follow-up questions must be provided.
 - d. The Complainant may present any documentary or physical evidence during the course of his presentation. When the Complainant concludes his presentation, the judicatory may again pose final questions to the Complainant or to any of his witnesses.
5. At this point, any member of the judicatory may interject a motion to dismiss the case. If the motion carries by a three-fourths majority, the hearing will end and the matter will be regarded as settled.
6. Presentation of Respondent's Case
 - a. Respondent's presentation is patterned after the Complainant's presentation as described above.
7. The Minister invites judicatory to ask any further questions of any available witness.
8. Deliberation and Judgment
 - a. Deliberation begins with prayer. Judgment requires a simple majority of the judicatory. Minority opinions, if formally offered, must be received into the record.
9. Closing prayer offered by the Minister or his designee.

ARTICLE VI Procedure for Receiving New Members into Presbytery

1. The voting status of new member churches shall begin the next presbytery meeting following their acceptance into membership. The delegates can make motions but cannot vote.
2. Delegates about to become new members shall normally provide to the presbytery a one-page summary of their church (membership, elders, confessional standards, other useful descriptions, etc.)
3. When admitting a new church into membership in the CREC, the Minister will ask the following questions of the church's delegation.
 - a. Do you, with all the officers of our church, commit yourselves in the sight of God and before Christ Jesus to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed the good confession before many witnesses?
 - b. Do you, with all the officers of your church, sincerely receive and adopt the Doctrinal Standards of this Confederation, subscribing to those standards with honesty and in full submission to the Word of God, which is the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
 - c. Do you, with all the officers of your church, take heed unto yourself, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you presbyter, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood?
 - d. Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in faithfulness to the churches in this Confederation: to keep with them the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to pray for them, to comfort them, to encourage them, to admonish them, and to rule with them in accordance with the Constitution of this Confederation and in full submission to the Word of God?
4. When affirmative answers have been given, the minister will then read the following statement, and then ask the delegates of all member churches to signify their agreement with a corporate "amen":
 - a. Together with all the officers of our churches, we receive you and welcome you, our brethren, into membership in this Confederation. To you we commit our blessings, our prayers, and the right hand of fellowship as you join with us in the rule of the church.

ARTICLE VII Votes at Presbytery

1. At votes of presbytery, each delegate has one vote. The minister may not vote, and so in those cases when a church has only one vote because one of its delegates has been elected minister, the church

may put forth a new delegate to take the place of the minister. If the church cannot put forth a replacement, the remaining delegate has two votes.

ARTICLE VIII Procedure for Appeal

1. Amidst any appeals procedure within the CREC, reconciliation between parties will remain a central objective. Such reconciliation may render it unnecessary to press this procedure through to completion.
2. The minister of the appropriate judicatory will determine whether a party is qualified to bring an appeal.
3. Appellant will notify both the respondent and the minister of the appropriate judicatory of his intent to appeal within four weeks of the decision he is appealing.
4. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the minister per his instructions, and the appellant must supply to the respondent a copy of all materials relevant to his appeal.
5. Once an appeal is submitted, it cannot be withdrawn without the approval of the minister.
6. The minister may seek the counsel of other presbyters to assist in his decision to hear or dismiss the case.
7. If the minister chooses to allow the case to move forward, he shall appoint a court of at least three presbyters (representing at least three different CRE churches, excluding conflicts of interest, with no more than two from any one church) to hear the appeal and to render a decision. The court's decision will be regarded as the decision of presbytery, unless it is nullified by the full presbytery.
8. The court shall report their findings to the full presbytery. By vote, the presbytery will either sustain or, if there is cause, nullify the court's decision.

ARTICLE IX Formal, Non-Binding Fraternal Relations

1. The CREC welcomes and encourages formal, non-binding, fraternal relations with likeminded churches, presbyteries and denominations. By "fraternal relations," we mean to declare our mutual respect and acceptance of one another as members of the body of Christ. We expect to be able to speak to, encourage, and admonish one another. Moreover, such fraternal relations would allow us to share pulpits, transfer members and commune with one another.

2. The following procedures should be followed to establish formal, fraternal relations between the C.R.E. and other churches, presbyteries or denominations:
 - a. Any church, presbytery or denomination that desires formal, fraternal relations with the CREC may make such a request by submitting a letter to the Minister of the CREC Presbytery or Church Council.
 - b. The Minister of the Presbytery or Church Council will present the request prior to the next presbytery or council meeting to her member churches.
 - c. The member churches will vote to enter or not enter into formal, fraternal relations with the requesting church, presbytery or denomination. A two-thirds vote of Presbytery or Council shall be required.
 - d. Upon the vote, the Minister shall send a letter to the requesting church, presbytery or denomination, which shall state our formal acceptance or rejection of their request for formal fraternal relations.
 - e. All such actions shall be recorded in the minutes.
3. CREC Presbyteries or Church Council may likewise submit requests for formal, fraternal relations to other churches, presbyteries or denominations
 - a. At the request of the Presbytery or Church Council (two-thirds vote required), the Minister of the Presbytery or Church Council will send a letter to the church, presbytery or denomination, requesting formal, fraternal relations and ask for a written affirmative or negative reply.
 - b. Upon receipt of the written reply, the Minister shall inform the CREC member churches of the response.
 - c. All such actions shall be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Presbytery or Council.

ARTICLE X Mission Churches

1. PURPOSE
 - a. To provide guidelines for the establishment of a relationship between a sponsoring church (i.e., mother church) and a mission work (i.e., daughter church), and to set for the conditions for the particularization of that mission church.
2. DEFINITIONS

- a. Mission church: A constituted body of Christians under the oversight of a particularized church whose intent is to establish a new particularized church.
- b. Particularized church: A constituted body of Christians who have met all the criteria established by this policy to become a separate church governed by its own session.

3. PROCEDURE

- a. Mission Church: A church shall be considered a mission church of a member CREC church when the following conditions have been met:

- i. A constitution has been written to define and govern the mission work.
 - 1. The mother church approves the constitution and doctrinal standards of the mission church (which may or may not be identical to mother churches).
 - 2. The mother church appoints a session pro tempore over the mission church.
 - 3. These actions put the mission church into existence.
- ii. Under this constitution and session pro tempore:
 - 1. New members can be received.
 - 2. The mission's constitution may be modified by its own amendment process.
 - 3. New officers may be examined, ordained and installed.

- b. The Session

- i. The session pro tempore of the mission church shall be comprised of all or some designated part of the session of the mother church along with any duly elected and installed pastors/elders of the mission church until the rest of the conditions for particularization have been fulfilled.
- ii. This session pro tempore shall not be the session of the mother church, but only the session of the mission church.
- iii. Upon the particularization of a church, the pastors/elders from the mother church who had been assigned to serve pro tempore on the mission church's session shall no longer be members of the new session. However, should

the new church deem it useful, these former session members may continue to serve in an ex officio capacity for a season.

- iv. Acts of session pro tempore must be appealed first to the regular session of the mother church, whose acts may in turn be appealed to the CREC, as per Constitutional procedure.

c. Conditions for Particularization:

- i. The mission church shall have its own constitution and bylaws.
- ii. The mission church shall have been formally constituted for not less than two years.
- iii. The mission church shall have at least two member pastors/elders, not including pastors/elders of the mother church who have been assigned to serve pro tempore on the mission church's session.
- iv. The mother church may require other conditions.
- v. The session of the mother church has formally acknowledged that conditions for particularization (a-d above) have been met.
- vi. Presbytery acknowledges that conditions a-e above have been met, and does so by receiving the mission church into presbytery membership.
- vii. Existing churches that have been constituted for at least two years, have two or more local elders, and can sustain themselves financially may come under the care of a member CREC church as a "Mission Church," and may be considered for full Member status at the next meeting of the Presbytery.

d. Relationship to the CREC.

- i. All mission churches of CREC member churches shall automatically have mission status in the CREC.
- ii. This mission status may be maintained until the mission is particularized.
- iii. Once conditions are met for particularization, the mission church shall be eligible for full CREC membership at the next CREC presbytery meeting.

- iv. d. As extensions of a member CRE church, all mission churches shall meet the constitutional and doctrinal requirements of the CREC.
- v. As extensions of a member CREC church, all mission churches shall have the protection of the CREC courts and other CREC constitutional protections and requirements.
- e. Ordination of Teaching and Ruling Elders.
 - i. As the daughter church is under the oversight of the mother church (a CREC member), all ordination exams shall be conducted under the oversight of the mother church and according to CREC guidelines.
 - ii. The actual ordination and installation of officers shall be conducted under the oversight of the mission church session pro tempore.
- f. Termination of Relationship
 - i. Termination of the relationship between mother and daughter church can happen in two ways:
 - 1. The daughter church becomes particularized, defined by being received into CREC membership;
 - 2. A unanimous vote of mother church's session to terminate the relationship.
- g. Visits:
 - i. It is recommended that representatives of the mother church visit the mission church on a regular basis (perhaps quarterly), sometimes to conduct meetings or worship, and sometimes to observe.
 - ii. It is also recommended that the mission church cover the expenses of the mother church e.g., travel and honorarium.

ARTICLE XI CONDUCTING AN ELECTION FOR MINISTER/MINISTER PRO TEMPORE OF PRESBYTERY OR COUNCIL.

1. All nominations for the position of Minister should be pre-posted on the agenda. Churches wishing to nominate candidates for the position of Minister or Minister pro tempore shall submit their nominations to the Minister at least thirty days in advance of the opening of the meeting.

2. Following the election of Minister, the delegates may nominate candidates for the office of Minister pro tempore. The nominees need not be limited to the delegates nominated for the office of Minister.
3. The Minister and Minister pro tempore shall be elected according to the procedure delineated in Article IV.F. of the CREC Constitution and By-laws.
4. Election of Minister and Minister pro tempore
 - a. If there are no nominations pre-posted on the agenda, the Minister shall receive nominations from the floor from any delegate in order to create a roster of candidates.
 - b. In order for a nominee to be recognized as a candidate his nomination must be seconded on the floor and the nominee must express his consent to be a candidate. The nomination and second may not come from two delegates representing the same church.
 - c. In due time, the Minister will close the nominations and identify the candidates. A motion from the floor to close nominations shall require a two-thirds vote.
 - d. The Minister will invite open discussion about the candidates. Delegates may use this time to ask questions of the candidates or elicit statements from them. Delegates also may speak for or against any candidate.
 - e. A roll call vote will be taken unless by majority vote or at the Minister's discretion, a vote by ballot is requested. The candidate receiving a majority of votes will be elected Minister. The outgoing Minister will tally the votes and then shall declare the results of the election.
 - f. If there is only one candidate, he must receive at least a two-thirds majority of the assembled delegate votes to fill the position of Minister. In elections with more than one candidate, a candidate must receive the votes of more than 50% of the delegates present and voting to become Minister-elect. If no candidate meets this requirement, the candidate receiving the fewest votes is eliminated and another vote taken. In the event of a tie vote between two candidates, the Minister will break the tie, if necessary, to elect a Minister or eliminate a candidate from the ballot.

ARTICLE XII CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

1. The official language of the broader assemblies of the CREC will be English.

2. All meetings will be conducted in English.
3. Any delegates to Presbytery or Church Council must be accompanied by an interpreter.
4. Robert's Rules of Order exists to facilitate the decision-making process at meetings. They help ensure that discussion is clear and that the rights of both the majority and the minority are protected. The Minister before each meeting shall distribute the following summary of some of the basic rules, redacted from Robert's Rules, which will familiarize all attendees with them and help our meetings run more smoothly and keep discussion on track.

ARTICLE XIII Miscellaneous Items

1. CREC Logo
 - a. The emblem below is the only one approved for use as graphic representation of the CREC. It can be presented in varying colors, as appropriate and tasteful for its intended use. No other emblem may be used in this regard.



2. Harmony of Books of Procedure
 - a. Presbytery Ministers shall submit to the Council Minister, at least six months prior to the next regular Council meeting, a list of any changes to their Presbytery Book of Procedures to be presented for adoption and harmonization with the CREC Council Book of Procedures. These should include items that the presbyteries wish to see standardized for all presbyteries. Items peculiar to a particular presbytery do not need to be presented but may be maintained by that presbytery in their Book of Procedures, provided that such procedures are not in conflict with the Council Book of Procedures or the CREC Constitution and By-laws. Once

approved by the Council Minister, the proposed changes shall be presented in the form of motions for adoption at the next regular meeting of the Council. If a motion does not pass, it may be presented again to the delegates of Council for approval to be retained in that presbytery's Book of Procedures.

3. Formation of New Presbyteries

- b. Future proposals to form new presbyteries in the CREC shall, to the greatest extent feasible, conform to these Guidelines:
- c. The optimum size of a presbytery in the CREC shall be ten churches;
- d. When a presbytery exceeds a membership of twenty churches, it shall begin taking steps to propose to Council the formation of a new presbytery, except as, after giving due consideration to the existing condition and strength of its constituent churches, the presbytery deems it unwise to propose division at that time. In this case, presbytery shall report said decision to Council;
- e. The factors to be considered in forming new presbyteries shall include the following:
 - i. to the extent feasible, each new presbytery should contain at least ten churches;
 - ii. each new presbytery should include members that have long ministerial experience (graybeards);
 - iii. each new presbytery should contain members that have a good working acquaintance with CREC culture;
 - iv. each new presbytery should contain some churches of significant size (not all small churches);
 - v. the churches of each new presbytery should share geographic proximity, and have historic connections to one another;
 - vi. the preference of international churches (and domestic churches if circumstances warrant), should be given significant weight when assigning them to a particular presbytery.
- f. Newly-formed presbyteries will be named on the model of Anselm and Augustine—after figures from Church history.
- g. Each new presbytery shall, within one year of its formation, publish on its web page, a brief biography of the saint for which it is named.

4. Translation of Documents

- h. CREC churches in non-English speaking countries may use dynamic equivalence in pastoral translations of CREC documents, materials and names.