

Tyndale Presbytery Agenda
Lake Tahoe, Nevada
Zephyr Point Conference Center

October 7, 2014

Location: Tahoe Center, Morning Star conference room

1. Welcome and Exhortation (9:30 a.m.)

- A. Welcome
- B. Invocation
- C. Psalm Singing
- D. Exhortation from the Presiding Minister, Eric Sauder

2. Session One: Church Reports (10:30 a.m.)

A. Call the Meeting to Order (hand out copies of Robert's Rules)

B. Calling of the Roll/Establishment of a Quorum (2/3 representation of member churches)

C. Establish agenda

D. Member Church Reports (Note: Mission/Candidate churches will report with their sponsoring church—all reports five to ten minutes each; Prayer to be done briefly after each church report)

- i. Christ Church of Livingston County, Howell, MI
- ii. Christ Church Twin Cities, Minnetonka, MN
- iii. Christ Covenant Church of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- iv. Christ the King Church, New Era, MI
- v. Christ the King Church, Springfield, MO
- vi. Christ the Redeemer Church, Pella, IA
- vii. Cornerstone Reformed Church, Carbondale, IL
- viii. Providence Church, Caro, MI
- ix. Reformed Presbyterian Church, Tyumen, Russia
- x. Trinity Covenant Church, Wichita, KS
- xi. Trinity Evangelical Church, Larwill, IN

E. Recognition of Guests and Visiting Delegations

Lunch Break: 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Reconvene: 1:30 p.m.

3. Session Two: Minister's, and Mission's Reports

A. Minister's Reports

- i. Council Minister report
- ii. Presbytery Minister report

B. Mission Reports

- i. SRS report
- ii. JEEP

4. Session Three: Other Business

A. Old Business:

- i. Report on Tyndale West Family Camp (Rob Davis and Brian Nolder).
- ii. Discussion of camp next summer, location, costs, encouraging participation, etc.

B. New Business

- i. consideration of an Overture on Child Sexual Abuse (from the session of Christ the Redeemer Church, Pella, IA)
- ii. Proposed Overture to Council Regarding Several Questions on the Written Exam for Ordination (from the session of Trinity Evangelical Church, Syracuse, IN, see text of overture below)
- iii. Discussion of Council Motions

C. Place of meeting for next year: (Cornerstone Reformed Church, Carbondale, IL?)

5. Motion of Gratitude for Organizers: Church of the King, Sacramento; Rev. John Stoos, Calvin Presbytery.

6. Adjourn: 5:00 p.m., with Prayer

[all time blocks opened with Psalm singing, and Presbytery ends with singing, led by Tim Bushong]

For events and activities preceding and following the Tyndale Presbytery

meeting, please see the CREC Triennial Council event schedule.

Overture to Council Regarding Several Questions of the Written Exam for Ordination

A Request for Clarification.

We, the session of elders of Trinity Evangelical Church, Tyndale Presbytery, are asking Council to clarify whether or not an ordination candidate's answers to the questions below must conform to certain statements of our recognized confessions pertinent to those questions. We are offering this request largely in response to current debates taking place within our Communion. Those debates have caused us to question whether or not we are in accord with CREC standards, specifically in regard to the doctrinal concerns reflected in the questions below. It is our hope that Council's response to our request will lead to greater unity and like-mindedness with our brethren.

The questions under consideration are recorded on page thirty-six of Appendix B in the CREC Book of Procedures and are written as follows:

41. What does Scripture teach concerning the value, sufficiency, efficacy, and extent of application of the atonement?

42. What does Scripture teach concerning the efficacy of God's work in calling and drawing sinners to Christ for salvation?

46. What does Scripture teach concerning the preservation and perseverance of the saints?

The Rationale for Our Request.

1. Since the churches in Council have prescribed these questions for all ordination candidates in the CREC, in that they may not be removed from the written exam (see App. B, Sec.3, Phase Two.1, p. 29, CREC BOP), it is reasonable to expect Council to be willing and able to provide clarity as to what qualifies as satisfactory answers to the questions they have prescribed. Therefore, we are asking Council to provide such clarification in regard to the questions under consideration for the reasons stated below.

2. According to Article VII.B. of the CREC Constitution, the CREC "holds generally to the system of doctrine reflected in the great creeds, catechisms, and confessions of the Reformation." Since that general system of doctrine arises from our recognized

confessional standards (Art. III.C., CREC Const.), any amendment or exception made to a statement of one of those confessions must be examined in order to determine whether or not it is “at odds” with CREC standards (Art. III.E., CREC Const.). Thus, it follows that there are specific statements made by our confessions that are essential to CREC standards and the system of doctrine from which those standards arise, and that no member church or her ministers may therefore amend or take exception to them.

3. It is not clear to us whether or not certain confessional statements pertaining to the above mentioned questions are indeed essential to CREC standards, or if they are to some extent non-essential and are thus open to amendment or exception. Examples of such statements are WCF, LBCF, and Savoy 10:1, 4; 11:1, 5; 17:1; as well as the Canons of Dordt II:8; V:8; V: rejections I, III, and VII (see below). If these statements are essential to CREC standards, then to be “at odds” with them is to be “at odds” with CREC standards, and no satisfactory answer to the written exam will contradict them. However, this determination should not be left up to the consciences of ordination committees, as they do not determine what is essential or non-essential to CREC standards. Thus, we are asking Council to provide clarification by simply answering questions 41, 42, and 46 according to CREC standards.
4. Should Council determine that satisfactory answers to questions 41, 42, and 46 may amend, take exception to, or otherwise contradict the aforementioned statements, we would ask Council to identify those specific confessional statements which are essential, as written, to satisfactory answers to the listed questions.

In summary, we are asking whether or not it is in accord with CREC standards to contradict the confessional statements above in answering exam questions 41, 42, and 46.

Respectfully Submitted,

The elders of Trinity Evangelical Church

Nate Harlan, Tim Bushong, and John Mergy

Confessional Statements

I. The Westminster Confession of Faith

- X.1. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace. (See also Savoy 10:1.)
- X.4. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the laws of that religion they do profess. And to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested. (See also LBCF 10:4; Savoy 10:4.)
- XI.1. Those whom God effectually calls, He also freely justifies; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God. (See also LBCF 11:1; Savoy 11:1.)
- XI.5. God does continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance. (See also LBCF 11:5; Savoy 11:5.)
- XVII.1. They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. (See also LBCF 17:1; Savoy 17:1.)

II. The Canons of Dordt.

Head II, Article 8: The Saving Effectiveness of Christ's Death

For it was the entirely free plan and very gracious will and intention of God the Father that the enlivening and saving effectiveness of his Son's costly death should work itself out in all his chosen ones, in order that he might grant justifying faith to them only and thereby lead them without fail to salvation. In other words, it was God's will that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which he confirmed the new covenant) should effectively redeem from every people, tribe, nation, and language all those and only those who were chosen from eternity to salvation and given to him by the Father; that he should grant them faith (which, like the Holy Spirit's other saving gifts, he acquired for them by his death); that he should cleanse them by his blood from all their sins, both original and actual, whether committed before or after their coming to faith; that he should faithfully preserve them to the very end; and that he should finally present them to himself, a glorious people, without spot or wrinkle.

Head V, Article 8: The Certainty of This Preservation

So it is not by their own merits or strength but by God's undeserved mercy that they neither forfeit faith and grace totally nor remain in their downfalls to the end and are lost. With respect to themselves this not only easily could happen, but also undoubtedly would happen; but with respect to God it cannot possibly happen, since his plan cannot be changed, his promise cannot fail, the calling according to his purpose cannot be revoked, the merit of Christ as well as his interceding and preserving cannot be nullified, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be invalidated nor wiped out.

Head V, Rejections

Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those...

Rejection I

Who teach that the perseverance of true believers is not an effect of election or a gift of God produced by Christ's death, but a condition of the new covenant which man, before what they call his "peremptory" election and justification, must fulfill by his free will.

For Holy Scripture testifies that perseverance follows from election and is granted to the chosen by virtue of Christ's death, resurrection, and intercession: The chosen obtained it; the others were hardened (Rom. 11:7); likewise, He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not, along with him, grant us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised--who also sits at the right hand of God, and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom. 8:32-35).

Rejection III

Who teach that those who truly believe and have been born again not only can forfeit justifying faith as well as grace and salvation totally and to the end, but also in actual fact do often forfeit them and are lost forever.

For this opinion nullifies the very grace of justification and regeneration as well as the continual preservation by Christ, contrary to the plain words of the apostle Paul: If Christ died for us while we were still sinners, we will therefore much more be saved from God's wrath through him, since we have now been justified by his blood (Rom. 5:8-9); and contrary to the apostle John: No one who is born of God is intent on sin, because God's seed remains in him, nor can he sin, because he has been born of God (1 John 3:9); also contrary to the words of Jesus Christ: I give eternal life to my sheep, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand (John 10: 28-29).

Rejection VII

Who teach that the faith of those who believe only temporarily does not differ from justifying and saving faith except in duration alone.

For Christ himself in Matthew 13:20ff. and Luke 8:13ff. clearly defines these further differences between temporary and true believers: he says that the former receive the seed on rocky ground, and the latter receive it in good ground, or a good heart; the former have no root, and the latter are firmly rooted; the former have no fruit, and the latter produce fruit in varying measure, with steadfastness, or perseverance.