

**AUGUST 2009
EXAMINATION IN CHURCH POLITY**

OPEN BOOK

MAXIMUM TIME: 3 HOURS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

This examination is intended to “assess the candidate’s working knowledge of the constitutional structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the method by which differences are properly resolved and programs to fulfill the mission of the church are determined.”

The intent of this examination is to test readiness for ministry, which includes using the *Book of Order* effectively. Candidates will utilize a clean, unmarked, printed copy of the 2009–2011 *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in responding to the questions. No additional books, notes, outlines, or other resources may be used. Questions will be from the Form of Government, the Directory for Worship, and the Rules of Discipline.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

THREE HOURS

OPEN BOOK

The examination consists of three sections. Sections I and II are required. Section III has two options. Select one option. Each section is designed to be completed in one hour.

The final grade for the examination will be the average of the grades received on all three sections, with rounding up or down to be determined by the reader on the basis of the examination’s overall merit. However, the paper must receive a grade of 3 or higher on at least two of the three sections in order to be considered Satisfactory.

You may use a computer. You may bring your own equipment or, at some exam sites, you may use equipment provided by the proctor. If you use one of these means:

- **You may not consult or copy from personal notes or any other source on the computer or a network during the exam.**
- **Since a printed copy of the exam must be turned in before you leave the exam area (not doing so will result in failure of the exam), you are strongly urged to make sure that all the necessary equipment (computer, printer, font and printer software, etc.) is properly working and coordinated.**
- **Number the pages.**
- **Include your candidate number on each page of the exam.**
- **Print responses using double spacing and 12-point font size.**
- **When finished, staple the printed copy to the first few pages of the exam booklet.**

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Be advised that exams written in pencil and illegible papers will be returned ungraded. Also, papers that cannot be understood by the readers because of poor syntax or grammar will be graded accordingly.

The readers, in grading the examination, will use the following criteria to assess readiness for ministry:

- Recognition and knowledge of the polity issues applicable to the question, and ability to cite relevant sections of the *Book of Order*;
- Ability to relate the polity issue to the situation, considering both the letter and the spirit of the constitution;
- Ability to express concern for the individual(s) involved in the situation and for the welfare of the church as a whole;
- Knowledge of the process by which programs to fulfill the mission of the church are determined; and
- Ability to be coherent in expressing thoughts.

IMPORTANT: READ THE ENTIRE QUESTION
BEFORE BEGINNING TO WRITE YOUR ANSWER.

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SECTION I. CONSTITUTIONAL HERITAGE

ONE HOUR

OPEN BOOK

REQUIRED

One of the great themes of the Reformed tradition is

the recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by *seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God*. (emphasis added)

(G-2.0500a [4])

REQUIRED RESPONSES

1. Excluding Chapters G-1 through G-4, cite and explain the significance of at least three (3) references from the *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000) that are expressions of “*seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God*.”
2. Informed by your answer in Required Response 1, write an article for a church newsletter about the call for “*seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God*.”

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SECTION II. CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER FOR THE PARTICULAR CHURCH

ONE HOUR

OPEN BOOK

REQUIRED

During your first year in a new pastorate, the treasurer for a neighboring PC(U.S.A.) church, who serves on its session, schedules time to meet with you. In your office she says,

While our pastor was away on vacation, I received in my box two credit card account statements that I had never seen before. They both had names of mission projects we support as well as the church's name. When I opened the statements, I telephoned the bank and discovered that the pastor was the only person authorized to sign. I could find no record of the accounts in any session document for the last two years. When I asked our pastor about them, I found her to be defensive, vague, and evasive. I am frustrated and confused about what to do. Can you help me?

REQUIRED RESPONSES

1. Identify at least three (3) issues raised by the scenario. Cite and briefly discuss at least one (1) *Book of Order* reference (e.g., X-0.0000) for each issue identified.
2. Informed by your answer in Required Response 1, suggest a course of action for the elder. What action, if any, would you, as the new pastor, take?

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SECTION III. CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER AS A TOOL FOR MINISTRY

ONE HOUR

OPEN BOOK

REQUIRED

(CHOOSE ONE: A or B)

A.

While serving as pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, you are visited by a woman who says,

Pastor, I have been attending Sunday services for the last few months and have found the worship very meaningful. I would like to know if I can become a member. Is that possible? What would I have to do? Please explain membership to me.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Citing at least one (1) relevant *Book of Order* passage (e.g., X-0.0000) for each of the following, explain to the woman

- (a) the requirements for membership;
- (b) the responsibilities of membership; and
- (c) the steps to become a member.

OR

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SECTION III. CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER AS A TOOL FOR MINISTRY
(continued)

ONE HOUR

OPEN BOOK

REQUIRED

(CHOOSE ONE: A or B)

B.

You are pastor of The Stained Glass Church in the City, where you have served for two years. One Friday afternoon, you receive a call from the previous pastor of the church asking if the sanctuary will be open that evening for the wedding rehearsal. You are not aware of a wedding scheduled for this weekend. After further inquiry, you are told that he had been asked by a couple who are members of your church to officiate at their wedding. He had agreed.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

1. Identify at least three (3) issues raised by this scenario. Cite and briefly discuss at least one (1) *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000) reference for each issue.
2. Informed by your answer in Required Response 1, outline the correct procedures that should have been followed by all involved.