

Christ Covenant Officer Candidate Training

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INTRODUCTION

You have been nominated to a holy office in the Church of Christ as either a Ruling Elder or a Deacon, a privilege not to be taken lightly but one about which to be joyful. This class on Leadership Development concerns the doctrine and duty of an officer in the church: The Competency of a Godly Leader. Those who complete this training will enrich our church body in two ways. Those elected to office will strengthen the Session and the Diaconate theologically and ecclesiastically, i.e., in doctrine and in church government. Those not elected will be better prepared to teach, witness and serve the church as well-rounded and better-informed reformed men. In either case, the body of Christ will be better equipped for ministry and mission.

In an age of church decline and doctrinal deviation, it is of paramount importance for PCA men to know what they believe and why they believe it. For our church to govern by Biblical, Reformed principles, our officers must know the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Book of Church Order* well. Hence the need for this training.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDY

Much of this study will be done at home, on your own, independently. Class discussions will serve to review materials, discuss selected subjects, and answer questions. Using the enclosed material in the sessions that follow, you will be asked to:

- Read through your *Confession of Faith* and *Book of Church Order*, answering specific questions in preparation for the final examination.
- Read R. C. Sproul's book titled What is the Reformed Faith?
- Elder candidates will read Timothy Z. Witmer's book titled, The Shepherd Leader. Deacon candidates will read Cornelis Van Dam's book titled, The Deacon – Biblical Foundations for Today's Ministry of Mercy.
- Use the study aids and outlines in the course material to help you in this process.
- Please complete the Officer Biography within the first month of class.
- Schedule, Biography, Training Materials, and online book may be found at www.christcovenant.org/officer-candidate-training/

Suggested Reading:

1. *Biblical Church Discipline*, by Daniel E. Wray: a good survey of the issues and importance of church discipline. (online book)
2. *Why We Baptize Infants*, by Bryan Chapell. A good overview of infant baptism.

PART ONE: THE CHARACTER AND DOCTRINE OF A GODLY LEADER

- Session One:** **The Call to Office and Ministry**
- Session Two:** **God, Man, and the Covenant of Grace**
Read Introduction: “Reformed Theology Is a Theology”
& Chapter 1: “Centered on God” (*Soli Deo Gloria*)
- Session Three:** **Christ, Mediator, and Salvation**
Read Chapter 2: “Based on God’s Word Alone” (*Sola Scriptura*) &
Chapter 3: “Committed to Faith Alone” (*Sola Fide*)
- Session Four:** **The Christian Life and the Church**
Read Chapter 4: “Devoted to Prophet, Priest & King”
- Session Five:** **The Sacraments and the End Times**
Read Chapter 5: “Nicknamed Covenant Theology” &
Chapter 6: “Humanity’s Radical Corruption”
- Session Six** **A Month in the Life of an Elder or Deacon**
Read Chapter 7: “God’s Sovereign Choice”

Chapters above refer to the book,
What is Reformed Theology? Understanding the Basics
By R.C. Sproul

SESSION ONE

THE CALL TO OFFICE AND MINISTRY

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

The Apostle Paul reminded the younger Timothy of the importance of godliness for the Elder when he said, “Watch your life and doctrine closely” (I Timothy 4: 16). As essential as theological accuracy, sound exegesis, and practical preaching and teaching are in the ministry, a godly life stands equally as important. In fact, of the fourteen requirements for the office of Elder listed in I Timothy 3: 1-7, only one deals with the ability to teach. This in no way minimizes the demand for sound instruction, but it does serve as a reminder of a natural tendency we face as young theologians. We tend to concentrate on the exegesis, the teaching, and the scrutinizing of theological positions and church-wide programs, while our very lives seldom come under the scrutiny of a healthy, biblical self-examination. As John Calvin reminds us, “you will find it to be of advantage to call yourself to account day by day, and while acknowledging your faults to groan within yourself and mourn over them before God so that your displeasure against whatsoever is evil may grow more intense” (Letters of John Calvin, Jan. 8, 1549).

Before we begin the sections on knowledge of the English Bible, theology proper, the sacraments, church history and church government, it is only appropriate that we begin where the Apostle began, “Watch your life...” May God by the sanctifying power of His Holy Spirit make us godly men, called and equipped to do the work of the ministry which He has set before us.

Included in this section is an outline for a personal testimony, a personal review questionnaire, a challenge to personal accountability, and a few recommended books.

CALL TO MINISTRY

As a potential elder you will be asked to give an account concerning your call to ministry. The Apostle Paul in instructing Timothy concerning this office gave several criteria upon which we should base this call. Paul’s criteria have become known as the internal call and the external call.

The Internal Call

In I Timothy 3: 1 Paul says, “Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.” This inward desire must be examined in light of motivation, giftedness, character and sense of God’s calling in your life.

Is your motivation God’s glory or your own? Is it to preach Christ and not yourself? Is it to serve and not to be served? Are you motivated by grace or propelled by a sense of guilt? These questions must not be taken lightly because improper motivation will eventually surface in ministry.

Your calling must also be viewed in light of your gifts. While all believers are called to serve and to minister to others, not all believers should teach (Jas. 3:1). Not all believers should shepherd the flock. How have you seen God use your teaching and shepherding abilities? Who are the people whose lives have been impacted by your ministry? In what ways have their lives been changed? The

elder must be “able to teach” (I Tim 3:2), and shepherd with care those whom God has entrusted to him (I Peter 5:1-4).

As important as the ability to teach is in regard to this calling the majority of Paul’s emphasis is upon character. How do you see yourself growing in the areas he mentions in I Tim 3:1-7? In what ways is God changing you? The old saying, “Actions speak louder than words” says something about the Apostle’s emphasis upon character. While the gospel itself is indeed the power of God unto salvation, those who herald this message must pursue holiness and godliness, lest God’s name be blasphemed among unbelievers because of us! By God’s grace may our lives reflect the marks of the life-changing message we proclaim. May our character reflect the graciousness, justice and integrity of our lord, as we conform more and more into His image and likeness.

Finally, this call to the ministry must flow from a sense that it is God calling you to the task. That is why Paul could introduce his first letter to Timothy by saying. “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God” (I Tim. 1:1), or as he states in his second letter, “by the will of God” (II Tim 2:1). Obviously, your calling by God may not be as dramatic as the Apostle’s given his place in redemptive history, but nevertheless, your calling must be no less from God. Each believer has been given gifts to fulfill the calling which God has purposed for us (Eph 2:10). In what ways do you believe God is calling you into this ministry? Describe your devotional life and how God has directed you through His Word. Are you convinced that it is God calling you and not merely personal preference?

Jeremiah reflected the sense of inward calling when he cried out, “But if I say, ‘I will not mention or speak any more in His Name,’ His word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot” (Jer. 20:9). Do you have a resemblance to that inward burning desire? Have you seriously considered this inward call, considering your motivation, giftedness, character and sense of God’s calling? This I believe is in part what the Apostle may have had in mind when he spoke of that inward desire and calling.

The External Call

The Apostle Paul not only emphasizes the internal call to the ministry in I Timothy 3, but he also emphasizes the external call. This list of qualifications (cf. Titus 1 :5ff.) was given not merely for personal reflection, but also for corporate examination. In whose eyes must the elder must be above reproach? Not only in his own eyes but also in the eyes of the congregation and even in the eyes of outsiders (vs. 7). In other words, this internal calling from God must be recognized by the church, and to some degree, by the watching world.

Has the church recognized your gifts and encouraged you to pursue this calling? How have your pastor and Session encouraged you to pursue this call? What reasons have they given? What opportunities have you had to use your gifts under the church’s oversight? It is very important that you have received encouragement from the body of believers because “the way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice” (Prov.12:15), and “plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed (Prov. 15:22).

Your reputation among “outsiders” must be considered regarding your call as well. What would your employers or employees say about your character? What about your neighbors? Your non-Christian friends and relatives? Would they describe you as not quarrelsome, not resentful, but kind, gentle and

respectful (II Tim. 2:24; I Peter 3:15)? Would they describe you as a man of integrity and compassion? How you are viewed by others, both within and without the church, are important aspects of the external call.

As you prepare to give a good account of your call to this ministry, keep in mind the internal and external aspects of this call.

Recommended Reading:

Edmund Clowney, *Called to the Ministry*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1964.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Briefly describe how you came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Also include both the inward and outward call to the ministry, i.e., why you desire to pursue this office and why others have encouraged you to do so as well. You may find it helpful to use the following outline based upon Paul's testimony before Agrippa in Acts chapter 26.

- I. General background information (vs. 4-8)
- II. Brief description of attitudes and actions prior to conversion (vs. 9-11)
- III. Circumstances leading up to conversion (vs. 12-14)
- IV. Conversion (vs. 15-18)
- V. Brief description of changes in attitudes and actions (vs. 19-23). Also include inward and outward call to the ministry

Book of Church Order

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Election, Ordination and Installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons

Election

24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall be examined in:

- a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and Titus 1 :6-9),
- b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III, *The Constitution Defined*),
- d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO* 24-6).

In the examination of the nominee's personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103 :2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1 :3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the nominee must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Notwithstanding the above, the Session may render a decision on Christian experience at any point in the process, and based on that decision, may judge him ineligible for that election.

Book of Church Order

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Church Orders - The Doctrine of Vocation

16-1. Ordinary vocation to office in the Church is the calling of God by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God's people, and the concurring judgment of a lawful court of the Church.

16-2. The government of the Church is by officers gifted to represent Christ, and the right of God's people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or at least the consent of that church.

16-3. Upon those whom God calls to bear office in His Church He bestows suitable gifts for the discharge of their various duties. And it is indispensable that, besides possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, everyone admitted to an office should be sound in the faith, and his life be according to godliness. Wherefore every candidate for office is to be approved by the court by which he is to be ordained.

16-4. Officers in the Presbyterian Church in America must be above reproach in their walk and Christlike in their character. While office bearers will see spiritual perfection only in glory, they will continue in this life to confess and to mortify remaining sins in light of God's work of progressive sanctification. Therefore, to be qualified for office, they must affirm the sinfulness of fallen desires, the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, and be committed to the pursuit of Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Doctrine of Ordination

17-1. Those who have been called to office in the Church are to be inducted by the ordination of a court.

17-2. Ordination is the authoritative admission of one duly called to an office in the Church of God, accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands, to which it is proper to add the giving of the right hand of fellowship.

17-3. As every ecclesiastical office, according to the Scriptures, is a special charge, no man shall be ordained unless it be to the performance of a definite work.

THE BIBLICAL PROCESS FOR ELECTING CHURCH OFFICERS

The most important decision the congregation of the church can ever make is in the selection of their church officers: their teaching elders or ministers, their ruling elders, and their deacons. The Bible is very clear about **the process** and **principles pertaining** to officer elections. Our *Book of Church Order* likewise details these principles and procedures in chapters 16 through 24. In summary, these teachings of Scripture can be grouped into four subtitles: General Principles of Polity, The Doctrine of Vocation, the Procedures for Election, and the Doctrine of Ordination.

I. GENERAL THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITY

- A. Officers are to be **elected** by God's people.
 - 1. Acts 1:23; Acts 6:3; Titus 1:5; I Timothy 5:22
 - 2. No one can "rule" over the church unless elected by the people to do so.
 - 3. No man is to be required to rule over a people who will not willingly submit to him.
- B. Officers are to **meet Biblical qualifications**. (I Timothy 3; Titus 1)
- C. Officers never exercise **authority** singularly, but always in a **joint manner**. (The Plurality of Godly Leaders)
- D. There are only **two offices** given to the church:
 - 1. The Elder: A bishop, a pastor, an overseer or "ruler"
 - 2. The Deacon: A servant, a minister, a helper
- E. Officers are a **gift from God** to his church for the building up of the body of believers for ministry. (Ephesians 4:11,12)
- F. **The responsibility of the congregation** is to love, encourage, honor and esteem, submit to, obey, and cooperate with the men they elect as officers. (Hebrews 13: 17; I Corinthians 16: 10- 18; I Peter 5:5)

“Though the character, qualifications and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of officer investiture, the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society.” (The Book of Church Order, the preface; preliminary principle #6)

“The government of the church is by officers gifted **to represent Christ** and the right of God’s people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore, no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election or at least consent of that church.” (*The Book of Church Order* 16-2)

II. THE DOCTRINE OF VOCATION

- A. The summary of the Scriptures teaching on the calling or “vocation” to sacred office is summarized in *The Book of Church Order* 16-1 which states:
 “Ordinary vocation to office in the church is the **calling of God** by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God’s people, and the concurring judgment of a lawful court of the church.”
- B. Notice that **three parties** take part in calling a man to the ministry of church office.

1. **God:** He gives spiritual gifts and calls men to ministry.
 - a) By an inward call in this man’s conscience. (desire)
 - b) By an outward call through the desire of the congregation to submit to the man’s ministry. (election)
2. **The congregation:** They give “manifest approbation” or open approval of their willingness to submit to the man’s ministry by nominating him and electing him to office.
3. **The Session of Elders** (“a lawful court of the church”): they train, examine and determine who is ready and qualified to be elected to office and thus submit to the congregation those “eligible” for election. They then ordain and install elected officers. (*The Book of Church Order*, 16-3)

C. **Notice then this process and how it flows:**



- D. Therefore, every man must pass through **four stages of preparation** in order to become a Teaching Elder, a Ruling Elder, or a Deacon of the church:
1. **Stage One:** The **calling** to office (**vocation**)
 2. **Stage Two:** The **character** for office (**qualification**)
 3. **Stage Three:** The **competency** for office (**training**)
 4. **Stage Four:** The **commission** to office (**ordination**)

III. THE PROCEDURE FOR ELECTION

- A. *The Book of Church Order*, chapter 24, sets forth the **procedure for choosing** or electing officers.

- B. The procedure, **chronologically**, is as follows (*The Book of Church Order*, 24 -1):
1. **First** . . . Nominations are received from the congregation.
 2. **Second** . . . The Session shall train and attempt to help qualify those nominees in five areas of preparation.
 - a) The qualifications of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 (character)
 - b) His Christian experience (calling)
 - c) His knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the standards (competency)
 - d) The duties of the office to which he has been nominated (competency)
 - e) His willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination (commission)
 3. **Third** . . . The Session shall examine those nominated and then report to the congregation before election day those eligible for election.
 4. **Fourth** ... The congregation, in a duly called and conducted congregational meeting, shall elect their officers. They shall determine the number to be elected after having heard the Session's recommendation.
 5. **Fifth** ... The Session shall then ordain and install the newly elected officers in a separate meeting that includes both worship and the preaching of God's Word.
- C. No congregation member eligible to vote is ever **required to vote** for a man that he or she believes is not qualified for office.
- D. A **simple majority** of those present and voting is required to elect a man to office (i.e., 51%) (*The Book of Church Order*, 24-3, 4 and 20-4)

The procedure for electing officers **protects the various parties** of the church from being forced to receive unqualified or unwanted men for office, and to protect men from being forced into church office against their will. This procedure allows the Session to set the timing and the pace for officer nominations, training, and elections, while preserving the people's right to choose their own leaders.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF ORDINATION

- A. **Ordination to sacred office is perpetual:** It is an ordination for life. A man, once ordained, may be "inactive" in his office. But, once ordained, only a few reasons are acceptable for the removal of that ordination:
1. **Deposition:** due to moral failure or theological heresy, a man may be "deposed" or taken out of office by the congregation, through discipline by the Session.
 2. **Demitting:** a man may see in himself reasons for why he is not qualified for office and may voluntarily relinquish or "step down from" office.
 3. **An Elder or Deacon who cannot or does not for a period of one year** perform the duties of that office, his official relationship shall be dissolved by the Session and such dissolution reported to the congregation.
 4. *The Book of Church Order*, 24-6-8 explains this process.
- B. Once an Elder or Deacon reaches the age of 70 or becomes infirmed, he may, at his request be designated as Elder or Deacon **Emeritus**.

1. A title of honor
 2. He may attend meetings of the officers.
 3. He may participate in discussions.
 4. He may not vote in Session or Diaconate meetings.
 5. He may continue to perform specific duties delegated to him by the Session.
- C. **“Ordination** is an authoritative admission of one duly called to an office in the Church of God, accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands, to which it is proper to give the right hand of fellowship.” (*The Book of Church Order*, 17-2)
1. **Authority:** that authority commensurate with the specific office to which elected
 2. **Prayer** that sets aside a man for sacred work (Acts 6:6)
 3. **“Laying on of hands”** (Acts 6:6; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6; Hebrews 6:2, etc.) denotes an action that certifies that a man is officially and perpetually an officer in Christ’s Church.
 4. **“Right hand of fellowship”** is the act on the part of other officers in receiving and accepting newly ordained men to the office of the church. *The Book of Church Order*, 24:5 - “We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with us.”
- D. A man is ordained only to a **specific** ministry: as a Ruling Elder or Deacon at Christ Covenant Church, as a minister of the Gospel at a church, as an evangelist for a presbytery, as a professor at a seminary, etc.

Ordination symbolizes **four truths** about the men we elect to office within the Church:

1. They are **set aside** for holy work and deserve our respect.
2. They are **delegated authority** over us and deserve our obedience.
3. They are accepted into **team ministry** and deserve cooperation.
4. They are **called and gifted by God**, chosen by His people, and deserve our prayers and affection.

A **synopsis of the qualifications** for office as given in First and Second Timothy and Titus.

A man of godly example (I Timothy 4:12)

A teachable and trustworthy man (II Timothy 2:2)

A spiritual man (I Timothy 6:11)

A biblical man (II Timothy 2:16,17)

A family man to his children (I Timothy 3:4,5,12 and Titus 1:6)

A faithful man to his wife (I Timothy 3:2,12 and Titus 1:6)

A man of humble character (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1)

A man of self-control (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1)

A man of inner courage (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1)

A team player (one of a plurality of godly leaders; Philippians 1:1)

A man of diligence (II Timothy 2: 15)

A man of sincere faith (II Timothy 2:15)

A man of sterling reputation (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1)



OFFICER STANDARDS Christ Covenant CHURCH

“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.” I Timothy 4:12

The Session of Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church has considered the Biblical qualifications for church officers set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 by delineating the twelve areas in which a nominee should model maturity in order to be nominated and elected to church office.

1. **Attest** that he has been a member of Christ Covenant Church for at least 24 months (I Timothy 3:6, 10 and 4:12).
2. **Attest** to the basis of his assurance of salvation (I Timothy 3:9; Titus 1:9).
3. **Attest** to Christian maturity and minimum age standards (I Timothy 3:6, 10).
 - **Elder:** A convert and member of an evangelical church for at least 5 years and normally 30 years old at ordination or installation.
 - **Deacon:** A convert and member of an evangelical church for at least 3 years and normally 24 years old at ordination or installation.
4. **Attest** to involvement in one or more ministries of the church in which he has exhibited both gifted and servant leadership in areas such as small groups, evangelism, compassion, discipleship, teaching or music (I Timothy 3:10; 4:12).
5. **Attest** that his character, personal integrity, and spiritual leadership in regard to his family, the church, the world is becoming to a Christian, a church member, and an officer of the church. That he has the support of his wife in pursuit of ordained office. (I Timothy 3:2, 7; Titus 1:6).
6. **Attest** that he is consistent in his efforts to have a regular devotional life that includes prayer and Bible study as a pattern (I Timothy 4:12, 3:11; Titus 1:8, 9).
7. **Attest** that he has the time, willingness, schedule, and gifts to perform the duties required of the office, including regular attendance at the stated meetings of the Session or Diaconate, and meetings of Departments to which he may be assigned (I Timothy 3:10,11).
8. **Attest** to a consistent pattern of participation in Sunday School, Sunday morning and evening worship services, and the support and concern for other major church-wide services and ministries (I Timothy 4:12, 3:10, 11).
9. **Attest** to a consistent pattern of willfully and joyfully tithing his first fruits to the church (I Timothy 3:3-5, 12; Titus 1:7).
10. **Attest** that he is in accord with the direction of the church and that he can serve in harmony with others (I Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7).
11. **Attest** that he has a heart of pastoral concern for the congregation and his fellow church officers (I Timothy 3:3, 5 4:12).
12. **Attest** that he is not a member of any secret organization (e.g. Masons, Knights of Columbus, etc.).

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS BASED ON I TIMOTHY 3:1-7

The following is a list of questions designed to help you think through the biblical qualifications for the office of an Elder. Hopefully these questions will spur you on toward continued dependence upon the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

1. What are your motives for desiring this office?
2. Do you consider yourself above reproach? Explain.
3. How are you doing in your thought life in regards to sexuality?
4. If married, how would you describe your relationship with your wife? How would she describe your relationship?
5. Is she supportive of your desire to pursue this office?
6. If single, are you content with your status, or would you like to pursue marriage? Why?
7. What could be some of the ramifications if you were to fall in the area of sexual sin?
8. Have you been divorced? On what grounds could this possibly disqualify you from this office?
8. Do you consider yourself to be well-balanced, or are you given to extremes in regard to your temperament?
10. Are you self-controlled in your thought life?
11. Are you able to discern things readily?
12. Are you willing to learn from others?
13. Are you disciplined in regards to your eating habits? Exercise? Explain.
14. Would you consider your character as godly and your priorities reflecting true godliness?
15. Do you love strangers and find yourself drawn to them?
16. Are you able to teach others? Give several examples of how God has used your teaching in the lives of others.
17. How true is the saying, "Things are more often caught than taught"? How does this statement apply to this passage?
18. Are you teachable? Explain.
19. In order to be a faithful teacher, you must devote yourself to the study of God's Word and to prayer. Describe your devotional life. How has God used your devotions to change your life in the past year?
20. Describe your Bible study habits.

SESSION TWO

GOD, MAN, AND THE COVENANT OF GRACE

(Soli Deo Gloria)

Read: Introduction: “Reformed Theology Is a Theology” & Chapter 1: “Centered on God”

The first seven chapters of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* deal primarily with what theologians call “Theology Proper” — the doctrine of God the Father and the Trinity. The *Confession of Faith* flows in a logical format, basically following the major divisions of systematic theology as they are set forth by theologians and studied by pastors and church leaders.

- Bibliology
- Theology Proper
- Anthropology
- Christology
- Soteriology
- Ecclesiology
- Eschatology

Chapter one addresses the issue of the Bible (the Holy Scriptures). Chapter two is about God the Triune One. Chapters three, four and five concern the works of God the Father: the Decree, creation and providence. Chapters six and seven have to do with man (Anthropology) and his sin, as well as the covenants God has made with man.

The Reformed Faith begins with God and His Word and His sovereign will expressed in that Word. A biblical understanding of the nature of God, the Decree, man, and the Covenant of Grace are essential to proper understanding of the Christian life and the Christian ministry.

SESSION TWO
GOD, MEN, AND THE COVENANT OF GRACE
(WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CHAPTERS 1-7)

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before class)

Chapter 1. The Holy Scriptures (WSC 1-3; WLC 1-6)

1. What are the two types of revelation? How are they different?
2. What does the *Confession* mean when it asserts that God's former ways of revelation have ceased?
3. Explain the difference between "inspiration" and "illumination."
4. What is the fundamental and infallible rule for interpreting Scripture?
5. Does God "speak" to men in any other way but Scripture?

Chapter II. God and the Holy Trinity (WSC 4-6; WLC 7-11)

1. What does the *Confession* say about God's nature? (Summarize WCF 1-1)

2. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons who are of one substance, power and eternity. Define these terms:
 - Substance
 - Power
 - Eternity
3. What is true of each person of the Trinity that is not true of the other persons of the Trinity? (WCF 2-3; WLC 10)
 - The Father:
 - The Son:
 - The Holy Spirit:
4. Explain, as best you can, why we believe in three persons (Trinity) but not in three Gods (Tri-theism).

Chapter III. The Decree of God (WSC 7; WLC 12-13)

1. Define God's eternal decree.
2. Answer this question: "Is it true that God predestines what He sees will come about anyway?" (What is the basis for God's decree?)
3. Define the difference in these related but distinct terms:
 - Predestination:

- Election:

 - Foreknowledge:

 - Foreordination:
4. Although God predestines all things, what three qualifications must be made concerning His decree? (WCF 3-1)
- 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.
5. What caution and wise exhortation does the *Confession* give concerning “the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination”? How should this practically manifest itself in our ministries?

Chapter IV. Creation (WSC 8-10; WLC 14-17)

1. The *Confession* explains three fundamental truths that define the Biblical doctrine of creation. (WCF 4-1) Explain these truths.
 1. God created “out of nothing” -

 2. God created “in six days” -

 3. God created “all very good” -

2. Define what man was like when God first created him.

3. What does it mean that “man is created in the image of God.”
(Hint: see Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10)

4. How practically important is the Biblical doctrine of Creation? Give three examples of how it might change our modern society and culture:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

Chapter V. Providence (WSC 11-12; WLC 18-20)

1. Define what “providence” means.

2. How is providence related to predestination?

3. The *Confession* speaks of providence in these two categories: General Providence and Special Providence. Explain the difference:
 - General Providence

 - Special Providence

4. God is in control of all things, even man’s sin. Explain how God’s sovereign providence is involved in:
 - The Fall of man (WCF 5-4)

- Temptation and corruption (WCF 5-5)
 - Hardening of hearts (WCF 5-6)
5. How do the truths of the previous question affect our ministry as church officers, parents and witnesses?
 6. The special providence of God is specifically aimed at whom?

Chapter VI. Man and the Fall (WSC 13-19; WLC 2 1-29)

1. What parts did God, Satan and man play in the Fall?
2. What was the result of the Fall upon the nature and the condition of man?
3. Concerning our doctrines of the Fall and sin, define the following terms:
 1. imputed sin
 2. total depravity
 3. original sin
 4. Explain this truth: We sin because we are sinners and not, sinners because we sin.
 5. What are the “miseries spiritual, temporal and eternal” that result from the Fall and sin? (WCF 6-6)

Chapter VII. God’s Covenant with Man (WSC 20; WLC 30-35)

1. Define the covenant of works.
2. Define the covenant of grace.
3. Explain the differences between the administration of the covenant of grace in the Old Testament and the New Testament:

Old Testament (WCF 7-5)

New Testament (WCF 7-6)



4. With whom is the covenant of grace made? (WLC 31)

SESSION THREE CHRIST, MEDIATOR, AND SALVATION

Read Chapter 2: “Based on God’s Word Alone” & Chapter 3: “Committed to Faith Alone” (*Sola Fide*)

The Reformed Faith holds a very definite and distinctive view of salvation, from beginning to end. This view, commonly referred to as “Calvinism,” is really a faithful exposition of the teachings of Paul and the Apostles rooted in what are called “The Doctrines of Grace.”

Man is saved, sanctified, and glorified by grace alone. God is the initiator and the finisher of this redemptive work. Man is helpless, corrupted, and ignorant in these matters of new life and holy living, and apart from the sovereign work of God, man is hopelessly lost.

Chapter eight of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* begins this discussion of man’s salvation where it should: with Christ and the study of Christology. Following that chapter about the objective work of Christ in our redemption, the *Confession* works through the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) one aspect at a time: Free Will, Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Saving Faith, Repentance, Good Works, Perseverance and Assurance.

This study of Soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) can best be summarized in what is popularly known as “The Five Points of Calvinism.”

SESSION THREE
CHRIST, MEDIATOR, AND SALVATION
(Sola Scriptura)

(WESTMINSTER CONFESSIOIN OF FAITH, CHAPTERS 8-18)

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before class)

Chapter VIII. Christ the Mediator (WSC 21-28; WLC 36-56)

1. John Gerstner refers to Christ as presented in chapter 8 as “The Hero of it all!” What does it mean for Christ to be our mediator?

2. What do the three “offices of Christ” (Prophet, Priest and King) tell us that Christ does for His Church? (WLC 43-45)
 - Prophet
 - Priest
 - King

3. Why was it necessary for Christ to become a man?

4. What does the *Confession* mean when referring to Christ’s two natures as “without conversion, composition or confusion.” Explain each term.

5. For whom did Christ die? Is it correct to say that “Jesus died for everybody”?

6. Define "limited atonement."

7. What is true about the benefits and application of Christ's atonement according to WCF 8-6?

8. WCF 8-8 mentions aspects of Christ's ministry to the elect. Enumerate and briefly explain each.
 - 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.

 - 4.

 - 5.

Chapter IX. Free Will

1. What does Scripture mean by "free will"?

2. What happened to our will in the Fall?

3. WCF 9 enumerates the "four states" of man. List and explain one.
 - 1.

 - 2.

3.

4.

4. What do we mean by “total inability”? (WCF 9-3)

5. When will our “free will” be perfectly and totally restored?

Chapter X. Effectual Calling (WSC 29-32; WLC 57-60,67-68)

1. Define “effectual calling.”

2. What is man’s part in the effectual calling?

3. Can people be saved without “professing the Christian religion”? Give reasons for your answer. (WCF 10-4)

4. What does the *Confession* teach about infants and mentally handicapped people who die without the outward calling of God’s Word?

Chapter XI. Justification (WSC 33; WLC 70-71)

1. Define “justification.”

2. On what grounds can a person be justified?
3. What is “imputed” to a sinner that justifies him?
4. What part does each person of the Trinity play in a sinner’s justification?
5. What is the difference between Protestant and Catholic views of justification? (WCF 11-1)
6. What do we mean by “justification by faith alone”? (WCF 11-2)

Chapter XII. Adoption (WSC 34; WLC 74)

1. Define “adoption.”
2. Can we honestly say “God is the Father of all men”?

Chapter XIII. Sanctification (WSC 35-36; WLC 75,77-78)

1. Define the process of “sanctification.”

2. What is the relationship between justification and sanctification? How are they different?
3. What is man's part in justification and in sanctification?

Chapter XIV. Saving Faith

1. How does a person possess "saving faith"?
2. What two aspects of saving faith does the *Confession* speak of in WCF 14-2? Explain each.
 - 1.
 - 2.
3. Is this faith the same for everyone? Explain your answer.

Chapter XV. Repentance unto Life (WSC 87; WLC 76)

1. What do we mean by the statement "repentance unto life is an evangelical grace"?
2. Why does the *Confession* exhort ministers to preach repentance? Is there a problem here?

3. What can happen to those if they “neglect the means of their preservation”?
4. What are “the means of preservation”?

Chapter XVIII. Assurance of Grace and Salvation (WLC 80-81)

1. Describe what “assurance” is.
2. On what does assurance rest?
3. “This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith. . .” Explain this idea.
4. What is true of all genuine Christians in regard to assurance? (WCF 18-4)

SESSION FOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND THE CHURCH

Chapter 4: “Devoted to Prophet, Priest, and King”

The Reformed Faith has a very high view of the Christian life. This view is reflected in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in chapters nineteen through twenty-six. A distinctive worldview known as “the cultural mandate” is called for. The Christian is to lead a holy life, glorifying to God, and guided by the fact that he has a particular calling in life to bring all facets of culture, society and daily life under the Lordship of Christ. The believer’s life, home and work are the arenas of this cultural mandate.

The Christian is assisted in this mandate by the corporate witness, worship and work of the church. The church, and the communion of saints in it, serve to equip, empower and encourage the believer in his life-calling. The “ethical” issues of life are just as important as those considered purely “theological.” Far from being an academic and purely cerebral exercise, the Reformed Faith is practically grounded in the call to live faithfully and fruitfully for Christ.

5. How would you answer this Dispensational belief: “New Testament Christians are not under Law but under grace, so the Ten Commandments are not binding on us”?

Chapter XX. Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

1. How are Christians free? The *Confession* summarizes the answer to this question under two broad dimensions of freedom. Define each one.
 - 1.
 - 2.
2. What do we mean that “God alone is Lord of the conscience”? Why was this so important to the Reformers and the Puritans?
3. Describe the difference between Liberty and License.
4. Rephrase and summarize the gist of WCF 20-4.

Chapter XXI. Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day (WSC 98; WLC 178-185)

1. The “Regulative Principle” is set forth in WCF 21-1. What four things are prohibited in worship?
 - 1.
 - 2.

3.

4.

2. What does the “Regulative Principle” prescribe for worship?

3. What are the proper elements of biblical worship? (WCF 21-3-5)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

4. Why do we believe we must keep the Sabbath Day? (WCF 21-7)

5. How are we to keep the Sabbath Day holy? (WCF 21-8)

1.

2.

3.

4.

6. Why is Sunday, the Lord's Day, the New Testament Sabbath?

Chapter XXII. Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. Explain the difference between an "oath" and a "vow."

2. Why do we take oaths and make vows?

Chapter XXIII. Civil Magistrates

1. What is the basis of the government's power and with what have they been entrusted with to do their duty?

2. What are the Christian's duties to the government?

3. What are the limitations put on civil government?

4. Can believers be involved in politics and government?

Chapter XXIV. Marriage and Divorce

1. What are the three or four reasons for marriage?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
2. When can Christians marry?
3. What are the two grounds for Scriptural divorce?
4. Could a “same sex” marriage ever be endorsed by the *Confession* or the Scripture? Explain your answer.

Chapter XXV. The Church (WLC 61-64)

1. Define these four terms: Catholic, universal, invisible, and visible church.
 - 1.

2.

3.

4.

2. Who is the head of the Church?

3. Where is the perfect church found on earth?

Chapter XXVI. The Communion of the Saints (WLC 65-66,69,82-83,86)

1. What is the basis of our communion together as saints?

2. What is meant by “union with Christ”?

3. How is our union with Christ limited?

SESSION FIVE
SACRAMENTS AND THE END TIMES
(Sola Fide)

**Read Chapter 5: “Nicknamed Covenant Theology” &
Chapter 6: “Humanity’s Radical Corruption”**

God has given to His Church means of grace to enrich, encourage, empower and enfold the saints. These means of grace are the Word, prayer, fellowship and the sacraments (Acts 2:42). The *Westminster Confession of Faith* devotes several chapters to how the sacraments are to be understood and used by the church. The view taken by the *Confession* is the “sacramental” view – a “middle way” between Roman Catholicism’s sacerdotalism and the “memorial view” of many Protestants.

As signs and seals of God’s covenant of grace, these sacraments both signify (symbolize) and seal (guarantee) the spiritual blessings communicated by the physical elements (water, bread and wine). Faith is the key to the efficacy of these sacraments received “really but spiritually” by true believers.

Empowered and enriched by these means of grace, the church visible is organized to corporately carry out its great commission and cultural mandate. All Christians are to persevere in this work until death or the return of Christ brings this cosmic conflict and advance of the kingdom to a Christ-centered climax.

SESSION FIVE
SACRAMENTS AND THE END TIMES
(WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH, CHAPTERS 27-33)

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before class)

Chapter XXVII. The Sacraments (WSC 88-93; WLC 153-164)

1. Define what a sacrament is. (WCF 27-1)

2. What are the purposes of the Sacraments? (WCF 27-1)

3. What is present in each sacrament? (WCF 27-2)

4. How many sacraments are there? What are they? (WCF 27-4)

5. What determines the efficacy of the sacraments? (WCF 27-3)

6. The *Confession* states that the sacraments of the Old Testament were the same in substance as the sacraments of the New Testament. In what ways are these sacraments the same?
 1. Baptism and Circumcision?

 2. The Lord's Supper and the Passover?

Chapter XXVIII. Baptism (WSC 94-95; WLC 165-167)

1. What is baptism and what does it symbolize or signify?
2. What is necessary for a lawful baptism? (WCF 28-2)
3. What three modes of baptism are found in the church and which best symbolize God's grace? (WCF 28-3)
4. Who should be baptized? Why?
5. Explain in your own words what WCF 28-6 means.

Chapter XXIX. The Lord's Supper (WSC 96-97; WLC 168-177)

1. What is the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper?
2. What makes the Lord's Supper different from the Roman Catholic "Sacrifice of the Mass"? (WCF 29-2)
3. Christ is present in the sacrament in a sacramental manner. When believers receive the Supper by faith, how do they receive Christ? (WCF 29-7) Pinpoint two key words to this answer:
 - 1.
 - 2.

4. Is Christ present in the elements of bread and wine? (WCF 29-7)

5. Why would we never administer “private” communion?

Chapter XXX. Church Censures

1. Who designed our biblical form of church government?

2. What are the powers of “the keys to the kingdom”?

3. Define what a “church censure” is.

4. What are the three kinds of church censure?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

Chapter XXXI. Synods and Councils

1. What is the purpose of synods and councils?

2. Do church councils make mistakes?
3. What sort of matters should church councils deal with?
4. Does WCF 31-4 teach “separation of church and state” as now understood and applied in U.S. government?

**Chapter XXXII. The State of Man after Death and the Resurrection of the Dead
(WSC 37; WLC 84-85,87)**

1. What happens to believers at death? What happens to unbelievers after death?
2. Why do we reject the idea of purgatory? Annihilationism? Soul sleep?
3. Do the unconverted receive a resurrection? How does it differ from that of believers?
4. The resurrection affects men differently. What will the final state be for believers and unbelievers?

Chapter XXXIII. The Last Judgment (WSC 38; WLC 88-90)

1. What is meant by the Last Judgment?

SESSION SIX

A Month in the Life of an Elder or Deacon.

Elder/Deacon Panel Discussion

Read Chapter 7: “God’s Sovereign Choice”

WHAT PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE

It is frequently pointed out that the word “Presbyterian” refers to the Eldership and that Presbyterianism, as such, is a form of church government. But Presbyterianism is not only a form of government in the church. It is also a well-defined system of beliefs or doctrine. In the exaltation and interpretation of the Bible the Reformation reached its zenith in the teachings and writings of John Calvin. Thus Presbyterianism, following his interpretation of the Bible is known as Calvinism. More specifically, the Calvinism of Presbyterians is based on the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, documents which were written nearly a hundred years after Calvin died.

Presbyterians share with other evangelical churches many basic beliefs. Presbyterians also recognize that earnest Christians may follow other interpretations of the Bible in non-essential matters. But Presbyterians believe that in the Reformed system (another word for Calvinism) the teachings of the Bible are most accurately set forth. Every Presbyterian officer and minister takes a vow that he believes the Reformed faith to be that system of doctrine which the Bible teaches. Every Presbyterian officer and minister in the Presbyterian church, moreover, also vows that he will take steps to remove himself from his position should he ever find that his beliefs have taken another direction.

Now the strength of Presbyterianism lies in its central loyalty to the Scriptures. This church has always insisted that only in the Bible may we find what we must believe about God, His works and His ways. Only the Bible is a rule of faith and life and free from error-- “our infallible rule of faith and practice.” We believe that Presbyterianism agrees with what the Scriptures teach and that it contains nothing contrary to what the Scriptures teach.

I. SOVEREIGNTY

As a system of doctrine, all Presbyterian beliefs are determined by a basic thought about God: that He is sovereign in all things. The doctrine of the Sovereignty of God teaches that God governs His creation, His creatures, and all their actions. If loyalty to the Bible is the great strength of Presbyterianism, its belief in the Sovereignty of God is its very life.

By this doctrine, Presbyterians mean to say that who God is provides the key to reality, not who man is. What God does, provides the key to human experience; not what man does. And what God works, provides the key to salvation; not what man works. When we think of faith, we think first of God. Even when we think about the ordinary events in the lives of every man we think first of God.

Presbyterians believe that everything that happens takes place according to the will of God and can be fully understood only in the will of God. Nothing can come to any man that He does not allow for His own purposes and glory. He overrules the actions of evil men and brings their evil to naught. He works all things after the counsel of His own will and turns all things — even apparent evil — to ultimate good in the lives of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.

Man’s reason for living is to glorify God in doing His will and to enjoy Him forever in the practice of life’s highest privilege which is to serve the sovereign God who created him and gives him breath.

II. TOTAL DEPRAVITY

Presbyterians believe that as the result of Adam's sin all men are sinners; that sin is a stain upon us from our birth so that if left to the natural inclinations of our wills our lives would inevitably turn to evil. In the view of Presbyterians, human nature is not neutral: It is not free to move upward or downward depending on circumstances, environment or education. Neither is human nature good: capable of infinite development in goodness, needing only to be left alone or "brought out" to achieve perfection. Human nature is rather sinful and "inclined to evil as the sparks fly upward." We see undesirable behavior and sinful tendencies in the smallest infant, and we observe that without discipline and restraint human beings inevitably live selfishly. This view of human nature Presbyterians describe by the term "Original Sin" because human imperfection (sin) taints every facet of our personalities. Consequently the description of original sin to which Presbyterians subscribe is summarized in the doctrine of Total Depravity. Mankind, we say, is inevitably (originally) and altogether (totally) marked by sin on account of the Fall.

The doctrine of Total Depravity also suggests man's helplessness. Human beings are not only sinful, they are also helplessly sinful. We are spiritually dead in our sins, bound under the guilt and penalty of sin and unable to do anything to please God. None of our works are pure and therefore pleasing to God. All our righteousness is as filthy rags. We do not even have it in us to turn to Him that we may be cleansed and healed.

III. SALVATION

Presbyterians believe that God so loved us — while we were dead in trespasses and sins — that He sent forth His only begotten Son to redeem us. The Lord Jesus Christ, pre-existent with the Father, by whom He created the worlds, came to earth by being born of the Virgin Mary. He, the Eternal Son, took upon Himself our nature, lived a sinless life as a man and died on the Cross in a sacrifice which somehow paid the price of our redemption from sin we know not how but we believe it. In a victory over death and the grave our Lord rose from the dead and returned to the Father from whom He sent the Holy Spirit to apply to those who would believe the effects of His work. In the gift of the Holy Spirit — by grace through faith — the originally sinful nature of man is transfigured to become godly and possessed of the capacity to be God-like. This "new life" begins now in the hearts of those who believe in and receive Jesus Christ. It continues into and through eternity.

IV. ELECTION

In keeping with the doctrine of Sovereignty, under which God is seen to determine all things, Presbyterians believe that the knowledge of Christ and the acceptance of Christ which leads to salvation also comes from God. Our personal redemption is not due to any goodness of our own for we have none: neither is it earned by our good works for sinners cannot accumulate "credit" leading to redemption. We find Christ because He finds us. We love Him because He first loved us. We become His because He chooses us, calling us and sanctifying us after He justifies us. Presbyterians do not pretend to understand the great truth underlying the Election of God. They simply know that they did not seek God until first they were sought; they did not know Him until He enlightened their hearts; they did not believe until He gave them faith; they did not come until they felt themselves moved. The mysteries of His will we cannot fathom, but we know that had it not been for Him we would not be where we are.

The doctrine of Election is dear to Presbyterians because, on the one hand, it pays homage to the Sovereignty of God in all human affairs and, on the other, because it gives a certainty and an assurance to those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that no dependence on themselves can give. The effect of such a faith is the assurance that all things work together for good to them who ". . . are the called according to His purpose"; that nothing in this life or in the life to come can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. This assurance means, to the believer, that he can go forward boldly into whatever path he feels led because he knows that it is God who goes before. It further means that he is eternally secure in the love of God because he has been sealed — not of himself— by the Holy Spirit until the final day of fulfillment.

V. SANCTIFICATION

Presbyterians believe that as the Election of God calls men to redemption in Jesus Christ so it calls them to newness of life in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit not only makes a child of sin to become a child of God, He also leads the new believer into a new way of life which is in conformity to the will of God into holiness of life in Sanctification.

We believe that every Christian will show forth in his life the fruits of a living faith; that he will grow in spiritual maturity and in patterns of living that will increasingly conform to the will of God for him. We believe that love, joy, peace and all the other characteristics of godliness will necessarily become evident in his life as the Holy Spirit increasingly takes charge; that he will more and more "live unto righteousness" as he moves towards the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." As the love of God increases within him, love for his Christian brothers and for his human neighbors everywhere will correspondingly increase.

To this end, Presbyterians believe in the necessity for utilizing the "means of grace": prayer, worship, and most especially, the study of God's Word.

VI. THE CHURCH

Presbyterians believe in the holy catholic Church; that is, in the universal unity of Christ's Body in time and eternity. As a vine and its branches comprise a single whole, so Christ and all those in whatever place or age derive their life from Him comprise a single Body, the Church universal. This Church is not to be identified with any denomination or body on earth for it exists wherever a true child of God may be found. We believe that there are Presbyterians who belong to this Church and there are Presbyterians who do not; there are Baptists Methodists and Roman Catholics who belong to this Church and there are Baptists, Methodists and Roman Catholics who do not.

Because Presbyterians believe in the holy catholic Church, they also believe in the Communion of the Saints; the corporate practices of the Christian life. Christian living is not a solitary thing. We believe it to be the Lord's will that Christians congregate in churches for worship, for service, for growth in grace and mutual edification. The Church universal is reflected in those corporate manifestations of Christ's body in which the ministry of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, the exercise of government and discipline according to the New Testament pattern establish and enlarge the household of faith.

VII. THE SACRAMENTS

Presbyterians believe in two sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. We believe that they are genuine sacraments, that is, instituted by Christ Himself visible signs which actually confer the blessing or grace of God when appropriated in faith. We do not believe that the blessing is inherently present in the sacraments, but they are rather the signs and seals of the blessing they represent. As the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the pages of a Book, so grace does not reside intrinsically in the sacraments, but comes to the believer who receives them in faith.

BAPTISM is a sacrament which signifies, and seals God's covenant promise to be a Father to His own and to their children. It visibly represents the way this promise is carried out in the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the life of those in whom the promise is fulfilled. It is a sacrament which belongs to any in whom there is reason to assume that the promise is being fulfilled, that is on any professing their faith or setting up a household of faith. We believe that baptism belongs to the children of believers when a household of faith is set up and the conditions of prayer and worship are met. These bring evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in the hearts of their believing parents. Because we have visible as well as historical evidence that in a Christian home children may grow in the true nurture and admonition of the Lord, we believe that the sign and seal of the Lord's presence (Baptism) belongs to such children.

THE LORD'S SUPPER not only shows forth the Lord's death until He shall return but is a sacrament in which He is truly though spiritually present and truly though spiritually received. Again, as the Word conveys grace by providing the occasion for the Holy Spirit to speak to the human heart, so the Lord's Supper conveys the benefits of the death and resurrection of Christ to believers who approach the Table in faith.

Presbyterians believe that the Supper is not the possession of any person, congregation, or church. It is the Lord's Supper. It is not the Table of any sect or denomination. It is the Lord's Table. We do not minister about the table as hosts, but as guests of Him who issues the invitation to come and who distributes His benefits severally as He will. Consequently, we do not believe that we can dispense or withhold the dispensation of grace; that we can bar any believing Christian whom He would feed. For such reasons we practice "open" Communion.

VIII. THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING

Presbyterians believe in the return of Jesus Christ "to judge men and angels at the end of the world." Until He comes, we believe that the souls of those who die in Him depart to be with Him "where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies." At the last day, we believe that the dead shall be resurrected and the living shall be changed: Christ's elect "unto honor. . . and everlasting life," but the reprobates "unto dishonor. . . and punishment with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

OUTLINE OF

***THE WESTMINSTER
CONFESSION
OF FAITH***

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

TOPIC: Bibliology
Chapter One

- I. GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF CLEARLY (REVELATION)
 - A. Men have an innate knowledge of God
 1. In nature: creation & providence
 2. Render men inexcusable concerning sin and ignorance of God
 3. General Revelation: not sufficient to save
 4. Romans 1, 2 and 3
 - B. God has revealed Himself in the past in many ways
 1. Example: Prophets, angels, theophanies, voices from heaven, etc.
 2. Hebrews 1:1
 3. God wants men to know, understand, obey Him
 - C. Later, God entrusted His Revelation to permanent form
 1. Committed it to writing: Scripture (that which is Scripture) of the bible (Greek: Biblios: the book)
 2. Purpose #1: to better preserve and propagate His truth
 3. Purpose #2: to comfort, protect, and purify the church from corruption and Satan's deceit
 4. The Scriptures are therefore absolutely necessary for His church (2 Tim. 3:15-17)
 5. The Scripture is closed (Closed Canon); i.e., no new Scripture is now being written/ given by God (Heb. 1:1)
- II. THE SCRIPTURE: ENUMERATED (THE CANON)
 - A. The Word of God **written** (verbally and graphically given)
 - B. The Word of God **inspired** (God-breathed)
 - C. The Word of God the rule
 1. Of faith = what to know and to believe
 2. Of life = what to do and to become
 - D. The Bible contains **only** the 66 books of Scripture we know today as...
 1. Old Testament: Genesis – Malachi (39 books)
 - a) Pentateuch = 5 books of Moses (5 books)
 - b) History = Joshua – Esther (12 books)
 - c) Wisdom/Poetry = Job – Song of Solomon and Lamentations (6 books)
 - d) Prophets = Isaiah – Malachi (16 books)
 2. New Testament: Matthew – Revelation (27 books)
 - a) Gospels – Life of Christ (4 books)
 - b) Acts – History (1 book)
 - c) Epistles – letters to the churches (21 books)

- (i) Pauline – 13 letters)
- (ii) Petrine – 2 letters)
- (iii) Johannine – 3 letters)
- (iv) James – 1 letter) General Epistles
- (v) Jude – 1 letter)
- (vi) Unknown – Hebrews)
- d) Revelation – Apocalyptic, Prophetic, an epistle to 7 churches
- E. Apocrypha is not Scripture (see #III below)

III. APOCRYPHA: THE WORD MEANS (THE APOCRYPHA) “THE HIDDEN THINGS”

- A. These are not inspired of God: human writings only (15 books)
- B. These are not part of Canon: not officially recognized as Scripture
- C. These are not an authoritative word for the church
 - 1. Not to be used as such by church
 - 2. Read only as human writings (background, interests, etc....)
- D. Characteristics: Heretical, historically inaccurate, self-contradictory, endorsing of sin, false prophesy, mythological (are included in Roman Catholic Scripture)

IV. THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE (SOLA SCRIPTURA)

- A. Not resting upon man’s view or evaluation
 - 1. Testimony of any man
 - 2. The church’s endorsement
 - 3. Catholic View: the Church decides what is truth
 - 4. Protestant View: the Bible decides what is truth
- B. The Scripture is from God = who is the truth...
 - 1. God is the author
 - 2. Is to be received by men as the Word of God
 - 3. Is believed and obeyed without question

V. THE WITNESS OF SCRIPTURE (PROOF AND PERSUASION)

- A. Scripture is convincing in and of itself..
 - 1. The church’s esteem of Scripture
 - 2. The heavenliness of its subject matter (contents)
 - 3. The efficacy (i.e. effectiveness) of the doctrine
 - 4. The majestic style and perfection
 - 5. The consistency and unity of its parts
 - 6. The glory it gives to God, not men
 - 7. The salvation it yields
- B. But = Full persuasion and assurance comes from the Holy Spirit
 - 1. It’s infallible truth = it cannot err
 - 2. It’s divine authority = it is God “speaking”
 - 3. It’s inward conviction in our hearts via the Spirit
- C. There is external proof (A) and internal persuasion (B)

VI. THE SAVING NATURE OF SCRIPTURE (SPECIAL REVELATION)

- A. The Bible is the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27)

1. Concerning God's glory
 2. Concerning man's salvation
 3. What men ought to believe and how they ought to live
- B. Scripture reveals in two ways
1. Explicitly = clearly and straight-forwardly
 2. Implicitly = by inference or deduction
 3. Deduction from Scriptures is as inspired – as much God's Word – as those things clearly written as commandments
- Examples:
- a) “thou shalt not commit adultery” – explicit command
 - b) Sexual purity in all facets of life – implicit deduction
 - c) Murder (explicit) abortion (deduction)
- C. Scripture is sacred: nothing is to be added to it
- D. The illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary for a saving and true understanding of Scripture
- E. The general rules of the Word of God (principles) are valid
1. Concerning worship, church covenant, etc... .which are ordered by three things
 - a) Light of nature
 - b) Christian prudence
 - c) Principles of Scripture
 2. These are to be obeyed as precisely as commands that are explicitly mandated by the Law
 3. Reason is not necessarily opposed to Revelation

VII. THE CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE (PERPISCUITY)

A. Scripture's original language: Hebrew and Aramaic (OT) and Greek (NT)

1. Immediately inspired by God inerrancy
2. Only the original autographs (texts) were inspired
3. The English Bible is not inspired directly

B. Scripture's Reliability: the translations (English) are reliable or authentic (trustworthy) renderings of the inspired originals

1. .. “by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authenticall...”
- *2. The Holy Spirit oversaw the translation and transmission of the Hebrew! Greek to Latin to Old English to... .today's NASB/NIV/KJV, etc., such that He guarantees a reliable and an authentic or genuine Scripture in our language
3. The Holy Spirit does three things in helping us to have the Word of God...
 - a) Inspires = authors or gives revelation that is inerrant and infallible to prophets and Apostles (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
 - * b) Insures = superintends a reliable text for all peoples, all languages, at all times (reliability and authenticity) (Mt. 5: 18)
 - c) Illuminates = explains, teaches, convicts the Scripture to individuals and the church (understanding and application) (I Cor. 2:9-16)

C. The Scriptures ought to be translated into the languages of the peoples

XI. THE GREAT RULE OF INTERPRETATION (HERMENEUTICS)

A. Scripture is to be interpreted or explained by other Scripture

B. Clear Scripture explains/interprets unclear Scripture

X. THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE (RELEVANCY)

A. The Supreme judge of all religious, ethical, epistemological controversies of men

B. Scripture is the standard of truth for all...

1. Church councils (their decrees)
2. Opinions of theologians (writings)
3. Creeds of men (doctrines)
4. Private "leadership" from God ("private spirits")

C. Because the Holy Spirit speaks through Scripture in every age we are to: (Heb. 4:12)

1. Examine in the light of the Scripture all ideas of men
2. Rest in confidence of the Scriptures' truth
3. Seek no other "last word" but that of Scripture
4. Isa.40:8; Heb.4:12; Mt.5:17-20; John16:7-5; John14:16-18; Acts1:8; Romans 8:16; Isa. 55:11-14

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH OF GOD AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY

TOPIC: Theology Proper (Part I)
Chapter Two

I. GOD'S BEING, ESSENCE, ATTRIBUTES

A. His Being

1. One = unique; the only God in true existence (called the unitas singularitas)
2. Living = not abstract but real and in relationship to men
3. True = objectively a reality ("real")
4. His Being is His Essence = known only by Revelation
5. His Essence: John 4:24.. "God is a Spirit"
 - a) a most pure spirit
 - b) invisible
 - c) infinite in being and perfection

B. His Attributes

1. Definition: the essential qualities of God that inhere in His very Being and coexist with it
 - a) simplicity: God is one; not made up of "parts"
 - b) God is how He acts
 - c) attributes = God Himself as He is revealed to us
2. "Those perfections which are predicated of the Divine Being in Scripture, or are visibly exercised by Him in His works of creation, providence and redemption." (Berkhof, p. 52)
3. Two kinds of attributes
 - a) incommunicable: not shared with man (true only of God)
 - b) communicable: reflected in man (some analogy in man)

C. "Without parts or passions: i.e., God does not have a body"

D. Incommunicable Attributes

1. Infinite: free from all limitations
2. Infinite in Being: no limits on Him as a Being or Spirit
3. Infinite in perfection: no limits on His "perfectness"
4. Immutable: never changing
5. Immense: His total Being is present in every point of space at all times
6. Eternal: no reference to time – no beginning; no end (the eternal present)
7. Incomprehensible: unknown except by His own Self-revelation
8. Most free: He is independent of all; self-originating (aseity)
9. Most absolute: He is the ultimate ground of all existence. He exists without any necessary relations; self-sufficient; singular

E. The Communicable Attributes

1. Almighty (omnipotence) possessing all power
2. Most wise (wisdom)
 - a) He possesses all knowledge of Himself and all creation (knowledge)
 - b) He applies His knowledge to attain His perfect ends! His glory (wisdom)

3. Most holy: without sin (moral excellence/hatred of anything evil/demanding purity)
4. Sovereignty: “working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will for His own glory” (God causes all things for good = His glory)
5. Love: He is eternally moved to self-communication (Berkhof) i.e., God loves in the creatures His own self (Imago Dei)
6. Gracious (grace): God’s goodness to those deserving of condemnation
7. Merciful (mercy): His love and kindness to those in misery or distress
8. Long-suffering: His patience with man’s disobedience and sin
9. Goodness (general term): what causes God to deal bountifully and kindly with His creatures: It includes:
 - (a) love
 - (b) grace
 - (c) mercy
 - (d) patience
10. Truth (veracity): by virtue of His nature He fully answers to the idea of the Godhead; is perfectly reliable; sees things as they really are (i.e., God is all He should be)
11. Forgiving iniquity, transgressions and sin (grace)
12. Righteousness and Justice
 - a) Righteousness: God’s self-righteousness
 - b) Justice: His reaction to every violation of His Righteousness
 - c) Justice to good: the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him = Remunerative Justice = giving rewards to Angels and men
 - d) Justice to evil: the punishment God’s wrath brings on the guilty = He retributes = giving of penalties to sinners (Retributive Justice)
 - e) “...the rewarder of them.. .by no means clear the guilty”

II. GOD’S SUFFICIENCY (ALL-SUFFICIENT)

A. In God all things exist: life, glory, goodness, blessedness

B. God needs nothing!

1. He did not create creation out of His need
2. Creation adds nothing to God
3. He receives glory from that which can give Him no glory
4. We glorify God not because it benefits Him but because it benefits us! (WSC, Q. 1)

C. Sovereignty: complete dominion

1. God in complete, utter control of all
2. God does not “react” to anything contingent or uncertain
3. God does whatever He wants, whenever He wants, to whomever He wants, for whatever ends He desires

D. God is, nevertheless, due three things from men and angels

1. Worship: for who He is; what He's done
2. Service: for His pleasure and glory
3. Obedience: to His will and His word (Law)

III. The Triune God (Trinity: Tri-unity)

A. The unity of the Godhead

1. Monotheism - one God (Deut. 6:4)
2. God is one God
3. Not three Gods in one being but one God in three persons
4. This Tri-unity is "The Godhead" - the one God

B. The Three Persons

1. Distinct persons:
 - a) not 3 separate modes of existence of one person
 - b) not 3 separate phases of existence of one person
 - c) not 3 forces in one personal God
 - d) not 3 actions in one personal God
2. Three distinct persons yet in one God
 - a) larger catechism, Q. 9
 - b) the same in substance (being, essence = God-ness)
 - c) equal in both power and glory (attributes)
 - d) distinguished by their personal properties

C. The Father (Theology Proper)

1. Is of none: not begotten or proceeding
2. He is the Leader of the Trinity
3. The other two persons are in relation to Him
4. His personhood is not superior in being or attribute by only in position and economically (i.e., what He does)

D. The Son (Christology)

1. Equally God like the Father (no essential subordination)
2. Eternally begotten of the Father ("only begotten Son")
3. The Father "generates" the relationship but does not generate or create the person of the Son (filiation)
4. The Son is eternally God; never created

E. The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

1. Equally God like the Father and the Son (no essential subordination)
2. Proceeds from the Father and the Son; i.e., He proceeds in that He is "sent" by Father and Son to do their bidding (Spiration)
3. The Holy Spirit is eternally God; never created
4. The Holy Spirit is a person and not a mere force

F. The Economic Trinity (What each person does)

1. All God's works are accomplished jointly by the Trinity
2. Yet some works of God are ascribed primarily to each of the three Persons
3. This order of Divine operations follows the essential order of the Persons of the Trinity

- a) Father: Creation, Providence, Predestination (Plans God's work)
- b) Son: Redemption, Building the Church, Judgment of all men (Accomplishes God's work)
- c) Spirit: Sanctification, Inspiration, and Empowering, Teaching and Guiding the Church (Applies God's work)

- G. *The church confesses that the Trinity is a mystery beyond the comprehension of man and only known through Revelation in Scriptures. It is a cardinal belief necessary for salvation and the grossest of heresies in its denial or modification.*

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

THE DECREE OF GOD

TOPIC: Theology Proper (Part II): The Works of God the Father
Chapters 3, 4, and 5: The Decrees (Predestination, Creation, Providence)

I. THE DECREES OF GOD (IN GENERAL) (Chapter 3:1, 2)

A. The Decrees of God (defined)

1. Berkhof: He uses the Shorter Catechism (Q. 12)
“The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath ordained whatsoever comes to pass.”
2. Herein lies the very essence and heart of the most important doctrine in the Bible, upon which all other doctrines are founded: THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.
3. Notice the characteristics of God’s decrees:
 - a) eternally purposed/planned by God (eternal)
 - b) according to His counsel (i.e., for His own reasons)
 - c) ultimately designed to give Him glory
 - d) ordained: determined and brought about by God
 - e) includes all that ever exists or ever happens (no such thing as luck, chance, fate, “unimportant” events)
4. Really no decrees (plural) but one master plan – THE DECREE – manifested in various phases.
 - a) phase 1 = Predestination
 - b) phase 2 = Creation
 - c) phase 3 = Providence

B. WCF’s statement concerning the Decree (3:1)

1. eternal decree = forever with God
2. counsel of His will = thought out by God (Romans 11:33)
3. freely = God was coerced or encouraged to decree by nothing (Romans 9:15-18)
4. unchangeable = God’s decree is immutable as He is immutable (Numbers 23:19; Romans 11:29; Hebrews 6:17)
5. whatsoever comes to pass (Romans 8:28; Acts 2:23; 4:28)

C. Three things the Decree of God does **not** do! (3:1)

1. does not make God the author of sin so man can blame Him for the Fall (James 1:13-18; 1 John 1:5; Romans 3:4; Romans 9:19-20)
2. does not make men “puppets or robots” because it does not destroy human will (Romans 9:14-24; Acts 2:23)
 - a) God is sovereign/God decrees = ordains
 - b) Man is free/man is responsible
 - c) Why can’t God be sovereign and I be free at the same time? Can’t God ordain that?
 - d) Men carry out God’s eternal decrees of their own “free will”
 - e) A mystery? Yes. A contradiction? No!

3. does not mean that the “liberty or contingency of second causes” (science = cause and effect) are taken away. Rather, God ordains such laws of nature to accomplish His will (Prov. 16:33; John 19:11)

D. Summary: The Decrees of God are:

1. One great Master Plan
2. Founded in Divine Wisdom
3. Eternal
4. Freely ordained by God (independent of all else)
5. Efficacious: all He decrees will come to pass (in effect)
6. Unconditional and Absolute
7. Immutable
8. Universal or all-comprehensive
9. With reference to sin it is permissive not prescriptive

E. The Decrees of God in relation to God’s knowledge (3:2)

1. God knows (foreknows = knows beforehand) all things. Two choices then lie before God and His decree:
 - a) He foreknows or sees beforehand what will take place so therefore He “predestines” it (Arminian view)
 - b) He foreknows because He foreordains it to take place (Calvinistic view)
2. Foreknowledge then Foreordination: makes God (Arminian)
 - a) reactionary on His part
 - b) dependent upon the will of the creature (man)
 - c) makes “predestination” a false concept because pre-destination is really after the fact
3. Foreordination then Foreknowledge: makes God (Calvinistic)
 - a) active and not reactive (the first cause)
 - b) man’s will is dependent upon God’s will so God is the initiator (true sovereignty)
 - c) makes pre-destination truly pre-(before the fact)
 - d) protects God’s absoluteness, independence, wisdom, sovereignty, and total grace
4. Although God knows how things will turn out this is not His reason for decreeing certain things; but rather He knows how things will turn out because He has decreed them to so turn out!

II. THE DECREE OF PREDESTINATION (3:3-8)

A. Double Predestination (3:3)

1. Careful use of words here.
2. Predestined men to be saved: He interjects in some people’s lives to change their destiny. An active choice to save some.
3. Foreordained men to be damned: already damned because of Fallenness. He leaves them to their own sin and does not interfere with their free choices. A permissive decree (i.e., Let them go to hell as they wish) (WCF, Chapter 6)
4. Predestination = Election = He chooses some to save.
5. Reprobation = Non-Election = He leaves some to perish.
6. Does not mean men can’t be saved if they desire Christ and repent with faith (John 6:35- 40). But only the elect will do so.

- B. Predestination necessitates that all the elect are chosen before they are created and thus are “fixed” - all the elect are predestined to eternal life prior to creation. (3:4)
1. No one “slips by” unnoticed and is lost by accident (John 6:39; Matthew 1:21; John 17:2, 6-9, 24)
 2. God doesn’t change His mind later down the road and let in “a few extras”
 3. Read II Timothy 2:19
- C. Unconditional Election (3:5)
1. Men are predestined to salvation before the universe was ever created.
 2. They were chosen for reasons God knows but we do not know and cannot know.
 3. God chose some out of His free grace and free love.
 4. Men are not chosen on the basis of God foreseeing or foreknowing:
 - a) their faith (accepting Christ)
 - b) their perseverance in the faith
 - c) their good works (Romans 3:1 f)
 - d) any other condition or cause rooted in the creature (the man)
 5. God does it all for the praise of His glorious grace and so that man can take no credit whatsoever.
 6. Predestination is a matter of free grace (Romans 6:23 and Eph. 2:8-9) and not such that God owes man anything...except hell’s fiery judgment. It’s all of grace: unmerited favor from a loving God (100% pure grace).
- D. The Process of Predestination (3:6)
1. God not only ordains the people to be saved but also the means: how they will be saved.
 2. God decrees the following:
 - a) to permit all men to fall in Adam
 - b) to be Redeemed by Christ
 - c) to be Regenerated by the Holy Spirit
 - d) to be called to faith
 - (i) internally by the Spirit
 - (ii) externally by the Gospel! Preaching
 - (e) He then justifies, adopts, sanctifies, and keeps forever (perseverance)
 3. This happens to no one but the elect.
 4. NOTE: Predestination does not enervate or disallow or negate preaching the gospel, evangelism, missions, or witnessing. Just the opposite! These are the predestined means to the salvation of the elect; the things God uses to effectually save his chosen ones.
 5. Augustine said: “We can’t do anything without God; God won’t do anything to save without us.”
 6. The confession here alludes to the ORDO SALUTIS (order of salvation). Romans 8:28-30.

A) <u>Supralapsarian</u>	<u>Infralapsarian (WCF)</u>
1. decree of election	1. decree to create
2. decree of creation	2. decree to permit the Fall
3. decree to permit the Fall	3. decree of election
4. decree of Redemption	4. decree of Redemption
5. Ordo Salutis	5. Ordo Salutis

Regeneration
 Calling (internal and external)
 Conversion (faith and repentance)
 Justification
 Adoption
 Sanctification
 Perseverance
 Glorification

E. The Decree concerning the Reprobate = the Damned (3:7)

1. Romans 9:13-16.
2. God does not choose to save all men.
3. God is under no obligation to save anyone.
 - a) if God owes sinners salvation it is no longer grace
 - b) justice: God owes me damnation
 - c) grace/mercy: God graciously chooses to save some
4. Damnation and justice glorify God as much as grace and salvation do.
5. The gospel call is/must be given to all men.

F. The Mystery of Predestination (3:8)

1. A mystery (Romans 11:33) handled with care.
2. Easily twisted and misunderstood.
3. Not a doctrine for evangelism.
4. Rather, a doctrine for the elect.
 - a) for their assurance and comfort
 - b) to praise, revere, admire God
 - c) to make us humble
 - d) to keep us diligent to obey God out of hearts of gratitude
5. It gives us confidence in witnessing to the lost. (i.e., when we witness, the elect will be saved!)

III. THE DECREE OF CREATION (4:1-2)

A. Who creates? (4:1-2)

1. Father: principally. He plans and decrees it (Gen. 1:1).
2. Son: created through Him and for Him (John 1:2-3)
3. Holy Spirit: created by His power directly (Gen. 1:2)
4. Creation...
 - of the Father
 - for the Son
 - by the Spirit

B. How did God create? (4:1)

1. He created: made out of nothing (ex nihilo).
2. He spoke creation into existence (Heb. 11:3) (by Fiat)
3. He created all things: visible and invisible (Romans 1:18-20 Col. 1:16 Acts 27:24).
4. In six days
 - a) yom (Hebrew) = day
 - b) yom = a 24-hour period (Classic view) (WCF)
 - c) yom = a period of time (acceptable to a point)
 - d) do not pit science against Scripture
5. All very good = completely without defect, sin or corruption of any sort.
6. Directly: God does so immediately and did not use an evolutionary process of any sort. (Ps. 100:24) (“by His hand...” (“Let there be...!”)
 - a) evolution: denies the personableness of God, His sovereignty, and His relationship with man
 - b) theistic evolution: a bastard doctrine = evolution trying to marry itself to the Bible
 - c) the decree to create was a direct act of God

C. Whom did God create (4:2) (male and female)

1. Only three types of rational creatures made in God’s image.
 - a) angels (sexless)
 - b) men (male)
 - c) women (female)
2. Both man and woman are the Image of God (Gen. 1:26-27)
 - a) both Imago Dei individually
 - b) both Imago Dei together as one couple
3. The essence of “the Image of God” in us (Psalm 8)
 - a) righteousness (Eph. 4:24)
 - b) holiness (Eph. 4:24)
 - c) true knowledge (Col. 3:10)
 - d) dominion over lower creation
4. Man is a body with the spirit of God (a soul) in him/her (Gen. 2:7) (Ecc. 3:7; Mt. 10:28)
 - a) the law of God written in His heart/soul (Romans 1:25-28, 2:14-15)
 - b) free to transgress the law and sin (i.e., the Fall)
 - c) changeable (not immutable)
 - d) under a law = don’t eat the fruit = covenant of works (see WCF, chaps 6,7)
5. Happy only when in right relationship with God = when in obedience to God and without sin.

IV. THE DECREE OF PROVIDENCE (5:1-8)

A. God’s providence includes (5:1)

1. Direction (governing)
2. Sustaining
3. Disposing of what is not wanted
4. All creatures, actions, events — greatest to smallest
5. To the end of glorifying Himself (SC #1)

B. Two Causes of Providence (5:2)

1. First cause = God and His Decrees = when He causes things – all things.
2. Second causes = the means that God decrees
 - a) means to the ends
 - b) necessary second causes = laws of science! nature
 - c) free second causes = God's miraculous works
 - d) contingent second causes parallel events interrelated
3. No such thing as fate, chance, luck, etc....

C. God usually operates by second causes but can, and does, work the miraculous by suspending, counteracting, or superseding laws of nature or science. (miracles) (5:3)

D. God's Providence (control) over sin (5:4)

1. God does not just passively permit sin but somehow (?) actively was in control of the Fall of Adam and Eve.
2. His providence over sin:
 - a) bounds = He puts limits on sin to control it (Gen. 11:6-9)
 - b) orders = channels sin to accomplish His purposes (Gen. 50:20)
 - c) governs = He controls it so that He will bring good out of evil (e.g., the crucifixion of God's own Son! Acts 2:23, 4:27, etc....)
 - d) dispensation = a time or season = God will bring sin to an end
3. Jonathan Edwards = God ordains sin but is not the author of sin. Man is responsible for evil out of sin; God is responsible for good out of sin (1 John 2:15-17)

E. God's Providence over the Elects' backsliding and sin (5:5)

1. God allows the saints to:
 - a) be tempted
 - b) to sin
 - c) to suffer for sin
 - d) to recover from sin
2. He does the following in His providence over our sin:
 - a) chastise or disciplines us in love (Hebrews 12)
 - b) helps us to discover our sinful nature! weaknesses
 - c) humbles us
 - d) leads us to rely more upon Him
 - e) makes us wise unto Satan's ways and sin's foibles
3. Makes us holy over time (sanctification) via trial and error.

F. God's Providence over the Reprobates' sin and Rebellion (5:6)

1. God lets sin take its course in the unelect.
2. He hardens men's hearts and lets sin harden their hearts (e.g., Exodus 7 = Pharaoh and his sins)
3. God uses the same instruments to harden the heart of the unelect (Men of God, preaching, the Gospel, the church) as He uses to soften the hearts of the elect.
4. Evil, sin, rebellion do not thwart or frustrate God.

G. God's special Providence (5:7)

1. The apple of God's eye is His church.
2. Romans 8:28...all things happen for the good of the church of God's elect.
3. "In the last analysis the creation of the world is for the purpose of the church." (John Gerstner)

4. Scriptural proof of the preeminence of the church in God's Decree:
 - a) Romans 8:28-39
 - b) I Timothy 4:10
 - c) Amos 9:8-9
 - d) Isaiah 43:3ff
 - e) Revelation 19
 - f) Ephesians 1

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES - CALVINIST VS. ARMINIAN

ISSUE	CALVINIST POSITION	ARMINIAN POSITION
ORIGINAL SIN	Total depravity and guilt inherited from Adam	Weakness inherited from Adam
HUMAN WILL	In bondage to sin	Free to do spiritual good
GRACE OF GOD	Common grace given to all; saving grace given to elect	Enabling grace given to all; saving grace given to those who believe; persevering grace given to those who obey
PREDESTINATION	Rooted in God's decrees	Rooted in God's foreknowledge
REGENERATION	Monergistic	Synergistic
ATONEMENT	Christ's death a substitutionary penal sacrifice	Christ's death a sacrifice that God benevolently accepted in place of a penalty
EXTENT OF ATONEMENT	Intended only for the elect	Intended for all
APPLICATION OF ATONEMENT	By power of the Holy Spirit according to the will of God	By power of the Holy Spirit in response to the will of the sinner
ORDO SALUTIS	Election, predestination, union with Christ, regeneration, calling, faith, repentance, justification, perseverance, sanctification, glorification	Calling, faith, repentance, regeneration, justification, perseverance, glorification
PERSEVERANCE	Perseverance of all the elect by the grace of God	Perseverance dependent on obedience

From *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* by W. Wayne House (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1992).

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH OF MAN, SIN, THE COVENANT

TOPIC: Man and Sin (Anthropology and Hamartiology)
Chapters 6, 7, 9

I. THE FALL OF MAN/SIN/PUNISHMENT (HAMARTIOLOGY)

A. Man's Fall into Sin (6:1)

1. God permitted the Fall (and sin) as part of His Decree.
 - a) God was pleased = not happy but determined.
 - b) According to His wisdom (holy counsel).
 - c) To permit = to actively choose to allow sin.
 - d) To order all this for His ultimate glory.
2. Does not mean God's providence is limited.
3. God chose to let man "do his own thing" and thereby sin, and to sovereignly order that Fall and its results to His glory and the good of the elect.

B. Total Depravity (6:2)

1. "Wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body" (his whole being is sinful).
2. "Dead in sin" = unable to do anything...
 - a) To renew his soul = to regenerate himself.
 - b) To do any good to please God.
 - c) Spiritually unable to respond to God.
 - d) TOTAL INABILITY (Eph. 2:1) (Eph. 4:18)
3. "Fell from original righteousness and communion with God" = Total Alienation (Col. 1:21; Romans 5:10)
 - a) In need of reconciliation = peace with God
 - b) In need of justification = declared righteous

C. Federal Headship of Adam (6:3)

1. Adam was a "public person" representing the whole of mankind (the human race)
2. Adam was the Federal Head of Mankind = the "Root of All Mankind" (I Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49) (Romans 5:12-21)
3. "The guilt of this sin was imputed" = original sin (the fact that men are born in a state of guilt and with a sinful nature) (Ps. 50:5; Job 15:14)
4. "Descending from them by ordinary generation" = people inherit their sin natures from their parents.

D. The Effects of Original Sin (6:4)

1. We are "indisposed" to do good or virtue.
2. We are "disabled" to do any good or virtue.
3. We are "made opposite to do all good" = we like evil; hate good
4. We are "wholly inclined to all evil" = we have a natural bent to do evil.
5. Out of this fallen state of original sin proceed all sinful actions, thoughts, and passions.
6. Sin? WSC #14 = "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God."

- E. The Sinful Nature Remains (6:5)
 - 1. It does not leave or die once we are redeemed.
 - 2. Our sins are pardoned by Christ and slowly but surely our sinful natures are put to death (mortified) by Christ, but we shall always sin in this life.
 - 3. Sin is the same for believers and unbelievers = “Any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.”
- F. The Nature of Sin (Hamartiology) (6:6)
 - 1. Sin is transgression of God’s Law = wrong actions
 - a) Omission = not done but should have been (neglect)
 - b) Commission = done but should not have been done (rebellion)
 - 2. Sin is legal guilt = it makes us deserving of punishment (damnation) (condemnation) (unrighteousness before God).
 - 3. Sin is inner defilement = the sinful nature.
 - 4. Sin warrants: wrath of God, curse of the Law, death, suffering, and guilt (both real and psychological)
 - 5. W.G.T. Shedd: “The most important conviction a man can have is a conviction of sin.”
 - 6. Sin is therefore: an act, a disposition, and a state (Berkhof).
 - 7. Sin began when man broke the covenant of Works with God (WCF 4:2, 7:1-3) (WSC #13)

II. GOD’S COVENANT WITH MAN (COVENANT THEOLOGY) (Chapter 7)

A. Introduction

- 1. One of the distinctive features of the WCF and Reformed Theology.
 - a) Covenant teachings were in Augustine’s theology.
 - b) Covenant teachings were in Calvin’s theology.
- 2. The Covenant never became the center of theological orientation and systematic structure until a period following the Reformation.
 - a) Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669), a Dutch Theologian wrote a definitive work on the Covenants.
 - b) In 1646 the Westminster Assembly defined Covenant Theology succinctly.
- 3. There are two major divisions of theology in conservative circles.
 - a) Covenant Theology (WCF, 7) held by Reformed and Presbyterian Churches.
 - b) Dispensationalism, propagated by those who do not believe in salvation by Covenants but rather by various means in various ages (i.e., dispensations).

B. The Need for Covenants (7:1)

- 1. God is so far transcending us that He established a Covenant with us so that we could interact with Him.
- 2. “The Divine Stoop” = God condescending to a level with man in a meaningful manner of interaction.
- 3. A Covenant = an agreement between two parties with conditions, blessings, and curses.
 - a) God and man are not equals.

- b) God and man are interacting.
- c) God initiates and man responds.
- 4. A facet of God's grace is His Condescension to Covenant with man.
- C. The First Covenant (7:2) (Covenant of Works)
 - 1. A Covenant between God and Adam.
 - 2. A Covenant rooted in the work of Adam = obedience.
 - 3. God's part: the promise of life and blessing.
 - 4. Man's part: to perfectly obey God (not to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil).
 - 5. Rooted in God's grace: He did not have to promise man anything for perfect obedience (man owed God this), but chose to do so out of His grace.
 - 6. Man broke the Covenant and received "the curse" = alienation from God, condemnation, and death.
- D. The Second Covenant (7:3) (Covenant of Grace)
 - 1. A covenant between God and Christ (the 2nd Adam) (Rom. 5).
 - 2. Christ obeys the Law and "earns" the blessings of God.
 - 3. It is a Covenant of grace because the beneficiaries of the blessings (men) receive
 - such blessings as a gift (grace).
 - a) By faith (believing) in Christ.
 - b) Salvation from sin's curse.
 - c) Promise of eternal life.
 - d) Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - e) Rooted in God's election and calling ("to make them willing and able to believe").
 - 4. Salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9)
- E. Covenant of Grace in O.T. and N.T. (7:5, 6)
 - 1. A Covenant = a Testament (Synonyms)
 - a) Covenant = general idea of an agreement
 - b) Testament = a kind of agreement
 - c) A Testament = Christ's death is the testament or pledge that He wills to us in God's Covenant of Grace.
 - 2. Categorically opposed to dispensationalism.
 - a) Covenant of grace in O.T. was salvation by grace through faith and not by Law/works.
 - b) Covenant of grace in the N.T. was also a salvation by grace through faith and not by Law/works
 - c) Salvation has never been by works, Law, conscience, government, etc., but always by grace through faith.
 - d) Never a legal dispensation: "do this and you shall live" but always this pattern (Eph. 2:8-10) of grace:

Grace → Faith → Justification → Works

3. The Covenant of Grace is the same in both O.T. and N.T. but is administered in different ways: comparison...

Old Testament

Salvation by grace (election)
Through faith (Hab. 2:4)
Not by works (Jas. 2:21-26)
Rooted in the Promise (Gen. 12:3)
Faith followed by works (Jas. 2:21-26)
Covenant with Israel
(The Church in O.T.; Acts 7:3 8)
Promise
Prophecies
Sacrifices
Circumcision
Paschal Lamb (Passover)
Mosaic Laws and Ordinances
Efficacious through the Spirit
National/Physical Covenant

New Testament

Salvation by grace (election)
Through faith (Rom. 1:17)
Not by works (Gal. 3:11)
Rooted in the Promise (Heb. 6:13f)
Faith followed by works (Eph. 2:10)
Covenant with the Church
(Israel of God; Gal. 6:16)
Promise
Preaching of the Word
Sacraments
Baptism (Col. 2:11-12)
Lord's Supper (I Cor. 5:8)
The Law of Love (Gal. 6:1-5)
Efficacious through the Spirit
Universal/Spiritual Covenant

A COMPARISON OF HISTORIC COVENANT AND HISTORIC DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

ISSUE	COVENANT POSITION	DISPENSATIONAL POSITION
PATTERN OF HISTORY	Covenant of Works with Adam Covenant of Grace with Christ on behalf of elect (Some distinguish between Covenant of Redemption with Christ and Covenant of Grace with the elect.)	Divided into dispensations (usually seven); e.g. Innocence (pre-Fall), Conscience (Adam), Human Government (Noah). Promise (Abraham). Law (Moses). Grace (Christ's First Coming). Kingdom (Christ's Second Coming)
VIEW OF HISTORY	Optimistic: God is extending His kingdom.	Pessimistic: The Last Days are marked by increasingly worse wickedness in the world and by apostasy in the church.
GOD'S PURPOSE IN HISTORY	There is a unified redemptive purpose.	There are two distinct purposes. one earthly (Israel). one heavenly (church).
VIEW OF THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS	They are different administrations of the Covenant of Grace.	They mark off periods of time during which God's specific demands of man differ.
RELATIONSHIP OF OLD TESTAMENT TO NEW TESTAMENT	Acceptance of Old Testament teaching required unless specifically abrogated by New Testament.	Old Testament prescriptions are not binding unless reaffirmed in New Testament.
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH	The church is spiritual Israel, in continuity with true Israel of Old Testament.	The church is the spiritual people of God, distinct from Israel, the physical people of God.
OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY	Refers to God's people, the church	Refers to ethnic Israel
CHURCH AGE	God's redemptive purpose continued to unfold,	There is a parenthesis between past and future manifestations of the kingdom.
ROLE OF HOLY SPIRIT	The Holy Spirit indwells God's people throughout history.	The Holy Spirit indwells God's people only from Pentecost to the Rapture.
BAPTISM	Unified covenant generally used to support infant baptism	Israel/church distinction often (but not always) used to support believers' baptism
SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Emphasizes "cultural mandate"	The only way to save the world is to save individuals; therefore evangelism takes precedence over "social action."
ESCHATOLOGY	Usually amillennial; rarely post-millennial; occasionally premillennial	Premillennial, usually pretribulation
MILLENNIUM	Symbolic, often identified with present age	Literal, earthly 1000-year reign after second coming

From *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* by W. Wayne House (Zondervan; Grand Rapids, 1992)

III. FREE WILL (Chapter 9) A. A Semantic Problem

1. "Free will" - a nonsense term that people like to speak of when they want to be free of the sovereign decree of God (Arminian term).
 2. "Free will" - as a correct Biblical term applies only to man's will power prior to the Fall of Adam and Eve.
 3. This chapter of the WCF corrects this misconception.
 4. Generally speaking: Man, today, does not possess free will.
- B. What Man's Will is **Not** (9:1)
1. Man's will is not forced. It possesses liberty.
 2. Man is not driven by "instincts" or divine programming.
 3. Predestination/Predetermination by God does not force man's will. The will cannot be "forced."
 - a) God could force man's will but would then destroy it so that it is no longer a will (Gerstner).
 - b) God leaves choices to men.
 - c) Men are never "compelled" to do anything by God or man – no one can ever say, "God made me do it; the devil made me do it," etc.
 4. Calvinists/ Reformed Theologians do not believe in a forced will or the violation of man's will by God.
- C. Man's Will at Creation (9:2)
1. Prior to the Fall: state of innocency
 - a) Possessed freedom not to sin.
 - b) Possessed power not to sin.
 - c) Pasa non peccare = able not to sin.
 2. Mutable = able to change. He could Fall from innocence. (pasa peccare = able to sin)
 3. He was "programmed" by God in neither direction.
- D. Man's Will After the Fall (9:3)
1. Now a "natural man," no longer a spiritual man of freedom and innocence.
 2. Lost ability to will (want) to do anything to accompany salvation.
 - a) Can't save himself
 - b) Can't prepare himself to be saved.
 - c) Can't: no power; no freedom.
 - d) Now a slave to sin.
 3. The choice to sin or not to sin has been eradicated by the Fall. Now the only possibility for man is to commit sin.
 - a) This is his only desire as a reprobate.
 - b) Sin is attractive to him; virtue is undesirable.
 - c) His will is not really free because his innocence or neutrality is gone. He loves darkness and sin and does not (cannot) love the good! (John 3:16-21)
 4. Man's inability is not naturally, externally, compulsorily unable in choosing to not sin. Rather he is morally unable to choose not to sin.
 5. Total inability = unable to choose moral good to save self or please God.
- E. The Freeing of the Natural Man's Will (9:4)
1. When Christ converts (changes) a sinner He, by grace, frees the sinner from the bondage of sin (new nature).

2. Christ, then, by grace, enables the sinner to now choose the good! not to sin because God now gives the sinner a love for the light/virtue/goodness.
 3. Not yet perfect: a struggle within...
 - a) Loves the light of Christ but,
 - b) Still loves the darkness of sin.
 - c) Romans 7 = the holy struggle.
- F. Man's Will in Heaven (9:5)
1. The state of glory = glorification = when we go to heaven.
 2. Only in glorification is man's will free to always choose good, never to sin again.
 - a) Perfectly = without flaw or tendency to sin.
 - b) Immutably = not accurate (only God is immutable) = but means that man in heaven, will never change back to a sinful nature or sinful state.
 3. Romans 7:24-25.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

TOPIC: Of Christ the Mediator: His Offices, Natures and States
Chapter 8:1-4 (Christology: Part I)

I. THE OFFICES OF CHRIST (8:1)

A. Gerstner: "The Hero of it all!"

1. The one on whom the Covenant rests.
2. The one in whom election terminated.
3. The Alpha and Omega of our salvation.
4. The mediator of God's redemption of men.

B. The mediator between God and mankind: I Timothy 2:5

1. Mediator = the "go between."
2. The agent of God's grace.
3. The stand of man who must be punished.

C. His Role is Mediator or Redeemer.

D. His offices are three-fold:

1. Prophet: to proclaim the word, will and way of God.
2. Priest: the Eternal High Priest to offer the perfect sacrifice for sin.
3. King: to rule the elect (and someday all men) as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

E. In His offices Christ, still today, speaks, intercedes for sinners, rules His church.

F. His Position in glory:

1. Head of the church.
2. Savior of the elect.
3. Heir of all things.
4. Judge of all the world.

G. From all eternity God the Father gave the elect to Christ as His reward for obedience unto death on a cross.

H. His nature and position are indicated by parallel titles He holds in Scripture:

1. Son of God: His divinity.
2. Son of David: His royalty.
3. Son of Man: His place as Messiah and Judge of all men.
4. Son of Mary: His humanity.

II. THE NATURE OF CHRIST (8:2)

A. This doctrine is called "the hypostatic union": the union of divine nature (God) with human nature (man).

1. 100% God.
2. 100% man.
3. Only 1 person (with two natures).
4. Chronologically: the second person of the Trinity, eternally God the Son, in time, assumed to Himself human nature. God the Son became Jesus of Nazareth and now Jesus of Nazareth is God the Son at God's right hand!

B. He became man "with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet

without sin.”

1. Sin is not “essential” to human nature but foreign to it and incurred by the fall; inalienable because of the fall but it rightfully doesn’t belong to human nature.
 2. Christ took a nature not of sin but able to bear the penalty of sin; i.e., sinless humanity.
- C. How did this happen? Through the divine conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit.
1. Conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary.
 2. The parents of Jesus? The Holy Ghost and Mary of Nazareth.
 3. Missing was a human father because through the male (father) as the Federal Head (Adam), the sinfulness of man is passed on.
 4. Jesus had two natures: The nature of the Holy Ghost (God) and the nature of Mary (man) but not the sin of Adam (or Joseph) (original sin).
- D. These two natures were “inseparably” joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion:
1. Inseparably: Christ now sits as God-man in heaven with the Father and Spirit.
 2. There are not two “personalities” but one = one person with a dual nature, i.e., two natures.
 3. Without conversion: neither His divinity or humanity has been altered by the other nature.
 4. Without composition: the two natures are not in any way pieced together to make a third nature.
 5. Without confusion: the two natures do not “bleed” together or melt into one another but remain separate and distinct, yet in perfect union.
- E. Jesus is very (truly) God and very (truly) man, yet one Christ = one person known as Jesus the Messiah and Mediator.

III. THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST (8:3)

- A. This explains His subordination to the Father in His human nature.
- B. His humanity was “operative” as ours should be:
1. Sanctified: set apart by the Holy Spirit.
 2. Anointed: empowered by the Holy Spirit (in an extraordinary measure).
 3. The effect of this hypostatic union was that the human nature of Christ, although not deified, was incomparably exalted and glorified (e.g., His wisdom, knowledge, miracles, etc.).
 4. All the “fullness” dwelt in Jesus Christ.
 - a) The fullness of redemption. (Col. 1:19)
 - b) The fullness of divinity. (Col. 2:9)
 5. The end result? Christ was holy, harmless (i.e., without evil), undefiled (sinless), full of grace (power) and faith.
 6. Thus, Jesus was fully equipped to be the Redeemer of men.
 - a) Mediator: the one who acted on behalf of God and on behalf of men.
 - b) Surety: the guarantee for us of salvation.
- C. God the Father appointed God the Son, Jesus Christ, to be this Mediator-Redeemer. (Hebrews 4:4-6; John 8:42).
- D. Yet, willingly embraced as a mission by Christ (WCF 8:4).

IV. THE STATE OF CHRIST (8:4)

- A. There are two states of Christ:

1. The state of humiliation.
 2. The state of exaltation.
- B. The State of Humiliation = How Christ suffered for us.
1. He left His Father's presence in glory to come to sinful earth.
 2. He, the lawgiver, subjected Himself to the Law (O.T.) and obeyed it.
 3. He was tormented in soul: temptation, sorrow, grief, worry, rejection, etc....
 4. He was painfully tortured in body: sickness, suffering, torture.
 5. He was crucified and tasted death (the penalty for sin).
 6. He descended into hell: full experience of death and separation from God His Father due to sin.
- C. The State of His Exaltation = How Christ was rewarded.
1. He rose from the dead (resurrection in bodily form).
 2. He ascended into heaven (ascension in bodily form).
 3. He sits at the Father's right hand in power and glory (His session).
 4. He shall come again in glory to judge all men and angels (His Parousia).
- D. Where is Jesus now and what is He doing? He sits in authority at the Father's right hand making intercession for the elect, building His church through the Holy Spirit, and preparing the church for glory and the world for judgment. He continues to apply His blood atonement to each of the elect as they are saved.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

TOPIC: Of Christ the Mediator: His Work
Chapter 8:5-8 (Christology: Part II)

I. CHRIST'S REDEMPTION: ITS NATURE (8:5)

A. Christ's Obedience

1. Active obedience: He kept the entire Law. (Law)
2. Passive obedience: He let Himself be crucified. (Sacrifice)
3. Active obedience keeps the Law and earns righteousness.
4. Passive obedience atones for and pays the penalty for sin.

B. Propitiation

1. "hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father."
2. Propitiation: satisfying the just wrath of an angry God offended by sin. God's justice is propitiated.
3. Expiation: covering the guilt of specific sinners by a sacrifice. Man's guilt is expiated.
4. Thus Christ – by one perfect life and sacrifice – satisfies God's justice, covers men's guilt and brings God and man together in peace. (reconciliation)

C. Christ's Sufficiency

1. Satisfies a holy God.
2. Atones for sinful men.
3. Accomplishes reconciliation between God and men.
4. Guarantees the inheritance of the saints in heaven.

D. Limited Atonement (Particular Atonement)

1. For whom did Jesus die? For the elect.
2. For all those whom the Father bath given unto him" (see Smeaton, Five Points of Calvinism, p. 14-17.
3. See Ep. 1:4; Mt. 1:21; Jn. 17:9; Ep. 5:25; Jn. 6:37-40; Ro. 4:25; and I Tim. 4:10.
 - a) Sufficient to all men's salvation but...
 - b) Efficient to save only the elect.
4. Jesus did not die to "make possible" all men's salvation but to actually save a particular number (i.e., the elect). (Mt. 1:21)

II. CHRIST'S REDEMPTION: ITS SCOPE (8:6)

A. It spans both Old Testament and New Testament

1. The Lamb of God saves all believers.
2. The Old Testament elect looked forward in faith to the promise, rooted in prophecy, of a redeemer.
3. The New Testament elect look backward in faith to the promise, rooted in history, of a redeemer.
4. Both O.T. and NT. elect are saved:

- a) Both saved by faith in God's promise. (Gospel)
 - b) Both saved by faith in the Messiah's atonement.
 - c) Both saved by the Lord Jesus, the same yesterday (O.T.) today (NT.) and forever (eternity).
- B. Christ did not accomplish redemption until after His incarnation but nevertheless O.T. and N.T. saints benefit from:
- 1. The virtue of Christ's death (i.e., its merit, worth or value)
 - 2. The efficacy of Christ's death (i.e., its effect of atoning for the elect)
 - 3. The benefits of Christ's death (i.e., eternal life, peace with God, sonship, etc....)

III. CHRIST'S REDEMPTION: ITS MODE (8:7)

A. Redemption by a Man

- 1. Man = the New Adam, the Second Man.
- 2. Man = able to stand in place of other men (their stead).
- 3. A genuine representative of mankind (Federal Head).
- 4. Man = able to suffer sin's penalty: death.
- 5. Man = subordinate to God.

B. Redemption by God

- 1. God = perfect and without sin.
- 2. God = infinite in worth, scope, power as a sacrifice.
- 3. God = able to raise the body from the dead.
- 4. A genuine equal to the Father so that the divine sacrifice was sufficient to atone for the divine offense.

C. Theologians call this doctrine of the God-man, in which sometimes He is spoken of as a man ("the Father is greater than I") and sometimes He is spoken of as God ("the Father and I are one"), the "Community of Attributes."

IV. CHRIST'S REDEMPTION: ITS APPLICATION (8:8)

A. The elect are saved...

- 1. Certainly = because they are "in Christ" (predestination)
- 2. Effectively saved = Christ died for their sins specifically and really.
- 3. Applied redemption = Christ's work to cover sins and to give righteousness is imputed or given to specific people (the elect).
- 4. In space and time the Holy Spirit communicates (gives) the benefits of redemption to specific people chosen by God.

B. The elect are personally saved...

- 1. Intercession made for them by Christ.
- 2. His Gospel and salvation are revealed to them.
- 3. His Spirit persuades them to believe, repent, obey the Gospel.
- 4. His Spirit and Word govern and rule them under Christ's Lordship.

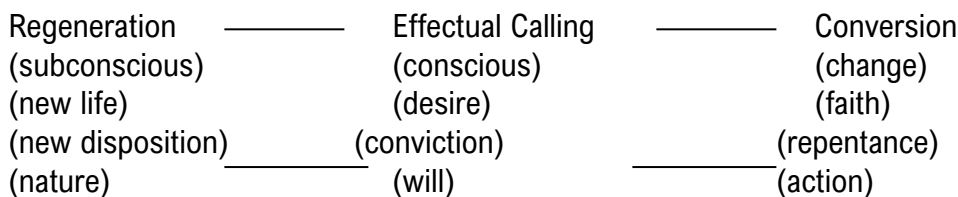
C. The elect are personally saved to be victorious...

- 1. "overcoming all their enemies..."
- 2. By His power = Resurrection power of Christ in us.
- 3. By His wisdom = the Living Word in our illumined minds.
- 4. In His dispensation = in the timing Christ determines best for us.

I. EFFECTUAL CALLING (Chapter 10)

A. Effectual calling is the response of the sinner to the message of salvation in such a way that the sinner is drawn to Christ and to conversion (i.e., faith and repentance). (10:1)

1. It begins in regeneration: that act of God by which the principle of the new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy.
2. Regeneration enables the dead and darkened sinner to hear, understand and respond to the Gospel message.
3. The regenerate sinner does this:
 - a) Externally: He hears and understands the Gospel.
 - b) Internally: He senses a deep conviction of his own sin and his need for Christ.
4. Effectual calling produces in man a hunger for God, a conviction of sin, a desire to be saved.
5. "yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."
 - a) Men are drawn to Christ by the powerful, irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) Men are not "forced" to respond but are "made willing" to freely do so by grace.
6. The Process:



B. Effectual calling (10:2, 3, 4) (Regeneration) (the New Birth)

1. Effectual calling is a work of the Holy Spirit by grace. Man cannot respond without God's grace. (10:2)
2. Elect infants who die in infancy are saved by grace. (10:3)
3. Retarded people are also saved by grace. (10:3)
4. All men may experience the outward call of the preached Word, or some sense of the inward call of conviction, but only the elect will come to Christ. (10:4)
5. Men cannot be saved without receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (10:4)

II. CONVERSION (Chapters 14 and 15)

Conversion is the act of God whereby He causes the regenerated sinner in his conscious life to turn to him from sin (repentance) and in faith (saving faith). Conversion operates on...

1. The intellectual life (mind)
2. The conscious volitional life (will)
3. The emotional life (feelings)

A. Saving Faith (Chapter 14)

1. Faith: a certain conviction, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit as to the truth of the gospel, and a hearty reliance (trust) on the promises of God in Christ.

2. Ordinarily caused by Scripture and strengthened by the other means of grace (prayer and sacraments). (14:1)
 3. Three proofs of Faith. (14:2)
 - a) Believes as true all the Word of God.
 - b) Acts in obedience upon what the Word commands or intends.
 - c) Believes, accepts, and rests upon the offer of Christ alone for salvation.
 4. Faith is a growing thing, a thing that fluctuates, and that can and should mature into full assurance of salvation in Christ. (14:3)
- B. Repentance unto Life (Chapter 15)
1. Repentance: that change wrought by God in the conscious life of a sinner whereby he turns from sin in disgust, hatred, and fear of punishment and so turning from sin flees to Christ for mercy and grace.
 2. Repentance is a doctrine of grace that should be preached by every evangelical minister of the Gospel alongside of Faith in Christ. The two are inseparable: Repentance and Faith; Faith and Repentance. (15: 1)
 3. True Repentance includes: (15:2)
 - a) Fear of punishment and wrath.
 - b) Hatred of sin's filthiness.
 - c) Grief over sin's offense to God.
 - d) Purpose to walk after God in obedience.
 - e) Effort to obey the commandments of God.
 4. No repentance = no salvation. (15:3)
 5. Repentance from any and all sin is honored by God. (15:4)
 6. Repentance is not a once-for-all event, but a continuing result of grace in a believer's life. (15:5)
 7. True Repentance includes: (15:6)
 - a) Private confession to God.
 - b) Private confession to others we offend.
 - c) Public confession of sins that scandalize the church.
 - d) Reconciliation of all parties involved (forgiveness and acceptance).

III. JUSTIFICATION (Chapter 11)

Justification is a judicial act of God, in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the Law are satisfied with respect to the sinner – Luther: “The doctrine by which the Church stands or falls.” Calvin: “The hinge of the Reformation.”

A. Justification is by Christ Alone (11:1)

1. Not infused righteousness (men are not “made” righteous).
2. Rather imputed righteousness (men are “declared” righteous).
 - a) A legal judicial act of God.
 - b) God considers the sinner “not guilty” on the basis of what Christ has done for him (“accounting and accepting the righteous.”)
3. Impute? Means to credit to their accounts/persons.
 - a) Pardon for sin.
 - b) The obedience and satisfaction of Christ.
 - c) The legal standing “not guilty” (under no condemnation)

4. The sinner is guilty and unrighteous but because he is in Christ he is considered not guilty and righteous.
- B. Justification is by Faith (11:2)
1. Faith is the sole instrument of justification.
 2. Faith does not justify, God does. He gives us the faith to believe and thus be counted as righteous.
 3. Faith is always accompanied by works in a justified person.
- C. Justification is by grace and is not "owed" to any man just because Christ died for anyone. Justification is only of free grace. (11:3)
- D. Justification is eternal and definite. (11:4)
1. Purposed by the Father in eternity (election).
 2. Procured by Christ on Calvary (redemption).
 3. Personally applied by the Spirit in due time (justification).
- E. Justification is Forever (11:5-6)
1. Once justified, always justified.
 2. O.T. and N.T. saints both justified by Christ.
 3. Justification is not sanctification: Justified sinners continue to sin, confess, and repent again and again.
 4. Justification is not perfection.

*Key Doctrine: Beware of the deviations which are heretical, pernicious, fatal errors:

Roman Catholic deviation = heresy: "Faith plus works = Justification."

The modern Protestant deviation = heresy: "Faith minus works = Justification."

The true Biblical Doctrine: "Faith = Justification plus works."

IV. ADOPTION (Chapter 12)

Regeneration... a change in nature.

Justification... a change in standing.

Sanctification... a change in character and behavior.

Adoption... a change in our position.

Adoption is God's gracious act of giving us His name and the inheritance in Christ that allows us to cease being enemies of God and to become His spiritual children complete with all the rights, privileges and blessings of sons of God.

A. Adoption: What it Brings...

1. God's name upon us.
2. Spirit of adoption (Holy Spirit individually).
3. Intimacy with God. (Sonship)
4. Care of God as Father.
5. Sealed into our inheritance forever.
6. Heirs to the promise of God for the elect in Christ.
7. Access to the throne of grace by prayer.

B. Adoption also brings the discipline of God upon disobedient sons.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

SANCTIFICATION

TOPIC: Sanctification, Perseverance and Assurance
 Chapters 13, 16, 17, 18 (Sanctification Part I)

There are four definite “works” of the Holy Spirit that are accomplished after or subsequent to salvation. These four we study in these chapters of the WCF: Sanctification, Good Works, Perseverance, and Assurance. Notice the “time line” of God’s work in us.

Eternity Past.....Presently..... Eternity Future



Predestination
Trusting Christ
Eternal Life

I. SANCTIFICATION (Chapter 13)

A. Sanctification is Essential (13:1)

1. Sanctification = being made holy or Christlike
 - a) Justification is imputed (declared) (positional)
 - b) Sanctification is imparted (developed) (experiential)
 - c) Justification = once for all (sin no longer reigns)
 - d) Sanctification = continuing (sin remains and must be put down)
2. Sanctification comes to the elect = the saved who are:
 - a) Effectually called (really saved)
 - b) Regenerated = a new heart and spirit created in them
 - c) i.e., “born again” to a new nature
3. Sanctification shows in a person
 - a) “really” = experiential and proven by change in us
 - b) “personally” = a process tailored to each individual
4. Sanctification is a direct result of salvation or regeneration = “through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, by His word and Spirit indwelling in them.”
 - a) A result of Christ in us
 - b) A result of the Word in us
 - c) A result of the Spirit in us
5. Sanctification is death to self or “mortification.”
 - a) “Dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed.” (Ro. 6:1-23)

- b) “The several lusts...more and more weakened and mortified.” (Col. 3:5-11)
- c) “More quickened and strengthened in all saving graces.” (2 Peter 3: 18; Eph. 3:16-19; Col. 1:11, etc.)
- 6. Sanctification must follow salvation! Not optional...
 - a) An essential to Christianity
 - b) No sanctification = no salvation
 - c) “the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”
 - d) Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 1 John 3:3, 5-9
 - e) Jesus: “Thy Holy One of God”; disciples like their Master.
- 7. Christians are “Saints,” i.e., “holy ones” like Christ.
- B. Sanctification is Warfare (13:2)
 - 1. The sinful nature and tendencies remain- not all powerful as before regeneration but nonetheless all present throughout our nature.
 - 2. Never will be perfect in this life. *WCF denies the Wesleyan doctrine or “holiness” doctrine of sinless perfectionism.
 - 3. The Christian is always at war with Satan, sin, and self (2 Cor. 10:35 & Romans 7).
 - 4. Spirit vs. flesh (Romans 8:1-17).
 - a) Spirit = where the Holy Spirit dwells (Christ)
 - b) Flesh = where the old nature is present (Adam)
- C. Sanctification is Progressive (13:3)
 - 1. The warfare is fierce and long-standing.
 - 2. We will ultimately be purified if we are saved:
 - a) Through the supply of the Spirit’s grace (Spirit)
 - b) Through growth in grace (Christ)
 - c) Through practicing (perfecting) holiness (God)
 - d) The Trinity’s work in us brings victory
 - 3. We are made holy “a piece at a time” – slowly but surely.
 - 4. “The regenerate part doth overcome” – the Spirit subdues the Flesh.

II. GOOD WORKS (Chapter 16)

A. Defined (16:1)

- 1. Only what the word says and not man’s idea.
- 2. Not rooted in any of these sources:
 - a) Devised by men (humanism)
 - b) Out of blind zeal (religiosity)
 - c) Any pretense of good intention (merit)
- 3. Good Works = obeying God’s will as seen in God’s Word.

B. The Results (16:2)

- 1. Proof of faith (fruits).
- 2. Thankfulness (appreciation).
- 3. Assurance (strengthening).
- 4. Edification of others.
- 5. Testimony (Adorning the Gospel).
- 6. Silence the enemies of Christ.
- 7. Glorify God.
- 8. Lead to increasing holiness.

- C. Their Source (16:3)
 - 1. The Holy Spirit's influence produces good works.
 - 2. Still, men are responsible to do the works.
 - 3. Men should "stir up the grace" to do good and not be negligent (as in "let go and let God..").
- D. Their Limit (16:4): Even the best and most mature at good works can never do more than God requires and always fall short of total duty.
- E. Their Purpose (16:5)
 - 1. Never to merit/earn pardon of sin or eternal life.
 - 2. They are an attempt to fulfill the duty of a Christian.
 - 3. Man's good works cannot please God unless they proceed from the Holy Spirit.
- F. Their Worthiness (16:6)
 - 1. Good works are only acceptable to God in Christ.
 - 2. Not worthy of acceptance except that God receives them in Christ if sincere (although imperfect).
- G. Their Rejection (16:7)
 - 1. Unsaved men's good works are rejected by God.
 - a) Even if Scripturally commanded.
 - b) Even if of good use to self and others.
 - 2. They are rejected because they do not —
 - a) Proceed from a heart purified by faith.
 - b) Proceed in the right manner or motive.
 - c) Proceed from the Word
 - d) Proceed for God's glory.
 - 3. Sinful men, unsaved, can do only sinful works and cannot please God, prepare himself to be saved or encourage God to save him.
 - 4. Yet, when not done, an unsaved soul is "doubly damned" – first, for not doing good works (disobedience), secondly, for doing works in their own merit (false religion).

III. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS (Chapter 17)

- A. Eternal Security (17:1)
 - 1. Once justified, always justified.
 - 2. Can never "fall from grace."
 - 3. Guaranteed endurance in the faith unto eternal life.
 - 4. True salvation leads to true sanctification which leads to true glorification.
- B. Perseverance of the Trinity (17:2)
 - 1. Perseverance is not by man's labor (Arminianism)
 - 2. Perseverance is rooted in God...
 - a) The unchangeableness of God's decree of election (once chosen, always chosen)
 - b) The unchanging love of God (once loved, always loved)
 - c) The merit of Christ (once atoned for, always atoned for)
 - d) The ceaseless prayers of Christ (once prayed for, always prayed for)
 - e) The indwelling Spirit (once indwelt, always indwelt)
 - f) The covenant of grace (once God promises, He keeps His promise)

- C. Security can be Doubted (17:3)
1. People – although truly regenerate – can come to doubt their salvation.
 - a) Through temptation
 - b) Through “residue” of sin’s nature in us
 - c) Through negligence = lazy spiritual living
 - d) Through falling into grievous sin
 2. Can continue for a time with these repercussions.
 - a) God’s displeasure and grief
 - b) Deprivation of some of God’s grace and comforts
 - c) Hardened hearts, wounded consciences.
 - d) Hurt and scandalize others.
 - e) Bring temporal judgment upon themselves (even death).
 3. Implied = if truly saved one of two things happen:
 - a) Renewal to a holy life and growth in grace.
 - b) Judged, killed, taken home by the Lord.
 4. Never results in “loss of salvation” (Rom. 8:1)

IV. ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION (Chapter 18)

A. Assurance is for Saints (18:1)

1. False believers can have false assurance.
2. True believers should possess true assurance by...
 - a) Truly believing and loving Christ.
 - b) Walking in good conscience before Christ.
3. Assurance brings hope, joy, confidence, security.

B. Four Pillars of Assurance (18:2)

1. Promises of God’s Inspired Word and Gospel (Covenant).
2. Inward evidence of grace in our life (Sanctification).
3. The witness of the Holy Spirit in us (Rom. 8:16) (Gal. 4:6)
4. The sealing work of the Holy Spirit (the guarantee within us!)

C. Not Automatic but Acquired (18:3)

1. Should belong to all believers but does not.
2. Should be something we grow into.
3. Assurance comes via these channels:
 - a) Obedience
 - b) Means of grace (word, prayer, sacraments)
 - c) Faith in God’s promises (word and covenant)
 - d) Seeing fruit in our lives
 - * e) instruction in the doctrines of God and grace (Calvinism)

D. True Assurance May be Shaken (18:4)

1. But. ..never to the point of being forsaken by God.
2. Can always be revived by the Holy Spirit.
3. Three things will always bring back assurance:
 - a) The Spirit indwelling us
 - b) The love of Christ and our fellow Christians
 - c) Attendance to Christian duty
4. Christians can always be kept from utter despair.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

THE LAW OF GOD

TOPIC: Sanctification (Law, Liberty, The Sabbath)
Chapters 19, 20, and 21 (Sanctification, Part II)

In the process of sanctification several issues seem to arise time and again. Caused by a system of Theology called Dispensationalism, the problems center around questions about the Law, freedom or liberty, and obligations of the Christian life. Dispensationalists typically say the following:

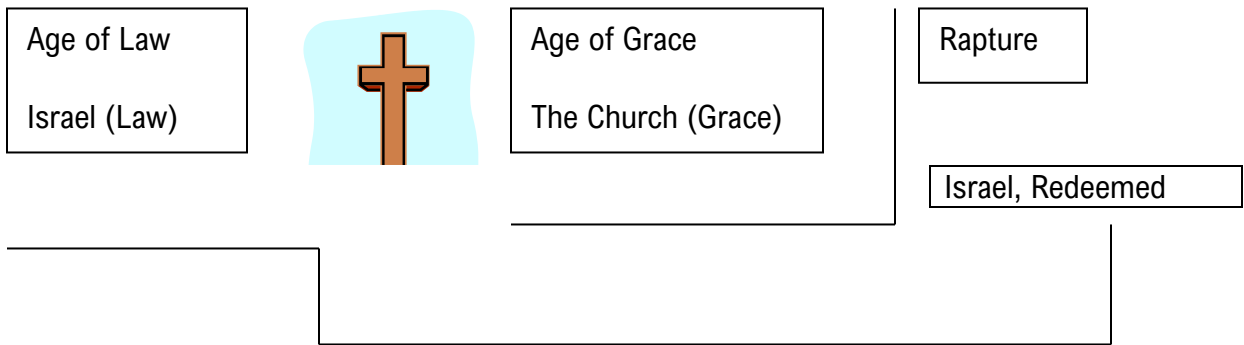
“The Old Testament was Law; the New Testament is Grace. To require people to observe the Law is legalism. Since the Law was abrogated by Christ, Christians are free from the Law. Only nine out of the Ten Commandments are still in force. The Law of the Sabbath is not repeated in the New Testament and hence we no longer have a Christian Sabbath. The Church began on Pentecost and all that is in the Old Testament is basically for Israel; the New Testament is for the church. Gospel and Law are diametrically opposed.”

Several statements are false in this system of hermeneutics called Dispensationalism. Covenant Theology, the system of doctrine taught in the Scripture and thus by the Westminster Confession of Faith, corrects these errors:

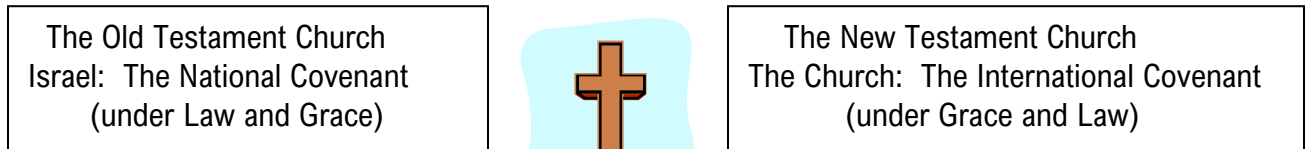
- * The church is God’s Covenant People (1 Peter 2:9-10) and thus began with Abraham and the Covenant of Grace God made with him. Israel was the Old Testament Church (Acts 7:38) and the New Testament Church is the Spiritual “Israel of God.” (Gal. 6:16)
- * “The Law” comes in three parts. The Moral Law (universal), the Mosaic Law (ordinances only for O.T. Israel), and the Civil Law (for Israel in the O.T. or for nations drawn from principles in Scripture, [e.g., Romans 13:1-7] and capital punishment). The Mosaic Law is gone along with Israel as God’s covenant people. Civil Law remains and yet is not bound in particular to what Israel was bound to be in the Old Testament. The Moral Law – the Decalogue or Ten Commandments – remain as God’s moral order for all men for as long as men live on earth: universal laws that form the bedrock of all God-centered ethics and conduct.
- * There is Grace in the Old Testament because God saved people by grace through faith and showed unmerited favor to many sinners. There is Law in the New Testament because we are to “fulfill the Law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2) and are given specific commands to follow.
- * Observing God’s Law, and requiring others to do so, is not legalism; it is holiness, obedience, and love for Christ. (John 14:15). As long as Jesus is Lord, the Lord will have Law that must be obeyed. “Legalism” is attempting to keep man’s laws as a substitute for obeying God’s Law (i.e., Phariseeism). Law is good, as the New Testament so clearly states (Romans 7:7-12; I Timothy 1:8; Gal. 3:19).

- * Just because Sabbath keeping, tithing, etc., are not repeated explicitly in the New Testament does not mean they are not valid laws for the N.T. church. Unless a Law has been clearly abrogated by God it remains in effect forever. God does not need to repeat anything. Once stated is enough! These Laws may not be stated as clear commands in the New Testament but they are observed by N.T. people including Christ and thus reinforced in precept and principle.
- * There is no discontinuity or break between O.T. Israel and N.T. church, but rather a clear continuation of God's Covenant people, the elect. Note the two views as clearly charted below.

The Dispensational View: Discontinuity in the Testaments



The Covenant View: One Continuous Covenant of Grace



Israel: The Nation (set aside)
 (Jews become redeemed by becoming
 Christians and joining the church)

The Westminster Confession of Faith follows Covenant Theology in its discussion of Law, Liberty and the Sabbath.

- I. THE LAW (CHAPTER 19)
 - A. The Law Initiated (19:1)
 1. Given to Adam = covenant of works.
 2. Covenant = promised blessings and curses
 - a) promised blessing of eternal life (obedience)
 - b) promised cursings of eternal death (sin)
 3. Law was given to all of Adam's posterity = man is never to be free from law.
 - B. The Law Recorded (19:2)
 1. Perfect rule of righteousness = reflects God's character.
 2. Delivered in written form on Mt. Sinai (Mosaic Covenant)
 - a) 10 Commandments (Decalogue)
 - b) duties to God; duties to man
 3. Universal Law = moral law (19:3)
 - C. The Law Refined (19:3) (19:4)
 1. "Law" was (1) moral (2) ceremonial (3) judicial
 2. Moral = 10 Commandments
 3. Ceremonial = ordinances of worship, diet, culture, cleanliness, etc.
 - a) pre-figurations of Christ and His atoning work
 - b) intended for separation of Israel from other nations (set apart)
 - c) completely abrogated (terminated) in N.T.
 4. Judicial Law = civil law given to O.T. Nation of Israel.
 - a) expired with the State of Israel
 - b) not obliging to any other State today
 - c) good for guidelines of "general equity"
 - D. The Law Continues (19:5-7)
 1. Forever binds all men, not just Christians.
 2. Reflects man's obligation to submit to God's Rule.
 3. Christ, Gospel, N.T. do not dissolve in any way the binding nature of the Moral Law but rather strengthen our obligation to obey it. (Mt. 5:17; James 2:8; Romans 3:31).
 4. The purpose of the Law (19:6)
 - a) not for salvation (i.e., to be justified by Law)
 - b) useful as a rule of life reflecting God's will
 - c) an aid to a sanctified walk
 - d) to help discover/convict of sin
 - e) helps us form a serious view of sin
 - f) promises the blessings of obedience
 - g) shows us our ever growing need for Christ
 5. "So, as a man's doing good and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the Law; and not under grace." (19:6) (denial of spurious Law-Grace distinction of dispensationalists)
 6. Law is not opposed to Grace/Gospel but rather "sweetly comply" with one another. (19:7)
 - a) grace = the power to obey God
 - b) law = the directions on how to obey God

II. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (The Conscience) (Chapter 20)

A. Freedom of the Christian (20:1)

1. Freedom from...
 - a) guilt of sin
 - b) condemnation of God (wrath)
 - c) curse of the moral law
 - d) the sinful world
 - e) bondage to sin and Satan
 - f) afflictions due to sin
 - g) sting of death and victory of the grave
 - h) everlasting damnation (hell)
 - i) Summary: freed from sin's punishments
2. Freedom for...
 - a) free access to God
 - b) obedience rooted in love
 - c) a willing mind to obey God
 - d) Summary: freed for doing what we ought to do
3. Freedom in N.T. includes:
 - a) freedom from ceremonial law
 - b) freedom for greater boldness in prayer and access to God's grace
 - c) freedom of fuller impartations of the Holy Spirit

B. Lord of the Conscience (20:2-4)

1. "God alone is Lord of the conscience" of men (20:2)
 - a) conscience is free of doctrine and rules of men that are unbiblical
 - b) conscience is free of extra-biblical doctrines and rules
2. To violate one's conscience for man's rules is sin.
3. The limits of conscience are clear, however. (20:3-4)
 - a) cannot sin under the guise of "free conscience" (20:3)
 - b) cannot violate another man's conscience by our "free conscience" (20:4)
 - c) cannot disobey or oppose any lawful power: church, State, parents, etc. (3\20:4)
 - d) cannot disrupt the peace and purity of the church (20:4)
4. Discipline may be taken against those who sin under the guise of "liberty of conscience." (20:4)

III. RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND SABBATH DAY (Chapter 21)

A. Religious Worship (21:6)

1. By light of nature men are to worship and serve God (21:1; Romans 1:18f)
2. God can only appropriately be worshipped as He so determines in Scripture. Other worship is false/sinful.
3. Only God is to be worshipped (not "saints," angels, or creatures) (21:2).
4. Worship may only be acceptable through Christ and only through Christ (not saints or angels).
5. The proper parts of Biblical worship are (2 1:3-5)
 - a) prayer
 - b) reading/preaching Scripture
 - c) singing of psalms

- d) proper use of the Sacraments
 - e) religious oaths and vows
 - f) solemn fastings
 - g) special seasons/times of thanksgiving
6. Worship is not sanctified by a place (i.e., any one specific place) but is to be done privately, always, at home, in public assemblies (21:6).
- B. The Lord's Day = Christian Sabbath (20:7-8)
1. Perpetual Commandment = one day in seven to be a Sabbath.
 - a) O.T. = Sabbath = Saturday
 - b) N.T. = Resurrection Day = Sunday = The Lord's Day
 2. The Lord's Day is to be, until the end of the world, the Christian Sabbath.
 3. The Sabbath Day is to be kept holy (i.e., "set apart") by...
 - a) preparation beforehand to allow Sunday to be holy
 - b) taking a holy rest from normal work
 - c) resting from thoughts, speech, and worry about work
 - d) free from exhausting, worldly recreations
 - e) to be "taken up, the whole time" in...
 - (i) public and private worship exercises
 - (ii) duties of necessity and mercy

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

A LIFE OF INTEGRITY

TOPIC: Sanctification (Integrity in Word, Government and Marriage)
Chapters 22, 23 and 24 (Sanctification, Part III)

I. LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS (Chapter 22)

A. Lawful Oaths (22:1-4)

1. Is correctly part of a religious worship.
 - a) calls God as witness to his/her oath
 - b) calls God to judge him/her if the oath is untrue or promise not fulfilled
2. Should only swear by God's name when a solemn oath or occasion so demands.
 - a) to take God's name in vain = swear without fear, reverence or sobriety of spirit
 - b) to swear by any other name or thing is sin
3. Swear to only the truth; to only what you resolve to do; to only a good and just thing imposed by a lawful authority.
4. Oaths are to be taken in plain language, without equivocation or mental reservation, with purpose to keep the oath regardless of the outcome.

B. Lawful Vows (22:5-7)

1. A vow is like an oath and carries with it a religiously binding nature.
2. Vows are made to God alone.
 - a) voluntarily (freely)
 - b) out of one's own faith
 - c) because of conscience of duty
 - d) by way of gratitude
 - e) to more strictly bind ourselves to duty
3. Vows cannot contradict God's Word, bind a man to sin, be made without the power to fulfill them, or contrary to the enabling power of God.
4. Vows do not gain for us merit toward holiness, like the Roman Catholic Church often teaches.

II. THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE (Chapter 23)

A. God-Ordained (23:1)

1. God has ordained the State to be in subjection to Him.
2. God created the State for the public good.
3. God has given the "power of the Sword" to the government.
 - a) Romans 13: 1-7 = power to wage war, punish crime, capital punishment
 - b) to reward, protect, encourage good citizens
 - c) to punish evil doers
4. The State's authority is delegated by God.

B. Christian Civil Magistrates (23:2)

1. Christians can and should hold public, civil, political offices.
2. Civil magistrates are to maintain piety, peace, and justice in all they do.
3. Wholesome laws of Commonwealth (government) are to be devised.
4. Governments may wage war upon "just and necessary occasion."

C. Separate but Equal Powers? (23:3)

1. Civil magistrates are to never assume the ministry of the church: Word, Sacrament, power of the keys, matters of faith.
 2. Civil magistrates should protect “the Church” of Christ (but not other pagan religions).
 3. Civil magistrates must protect the “Church of our common Lord” by...
 - a) giving no preference to any denomination above others
 - b) guaranteeing freedom to Christian ministers to minister
 - c) pass no laws stifling Church government or discipline
 - d) hinder freedom of religious practice by individuals
 - e) protect ecclesiastical assemblies against molestation or disturbance
 - f) force no one to abuse or be abused due to their religion
- D. The Rights of Magistrates (23:4)
1. To be prayed for by the people.
 2. To receive honor and respect from citizens.
 3. To receive tribute or dues (taxes, tariffs, etc.)
 4. To receive obedience to just laws.
 5. To have submissive citizens, as far as conscience allows.
 6. To not be removed from office, rebelled against, or ignored because of infidelity or difference in religion.
 7. No church has power over any Civil magistrate to appoint, remove, deprive of domain, or take the lives of these magistrates.

III. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE (Chapter 24)

- A. Marriage is to be Monogamous (24:1)
- B. Marriage has Four Purposes (24:1)
 1. Mutual help of husband and wife (cooperation).
 2. Propagation of the human race (procreation).
 3. Bringing forth a “holy seed” into Christ’s Church (evangelism).
 4. Preventing uncleanness; i.e. immorality (morality).
- C. Marriage is Universally Acceptable (24:3)
 1. Those of sound judgment and of consent may marry lawfully.
 2. Christians are only to marry Christians (“in the Lord”).
 - a) not infidels = apostate, nominal Christians
 - b) papists = Roman Catholic
 - c) idolaters = those of pagan religions or cults
 - d) heretics
 - e) ungodly, notoriously wicked people (even if such claim to be “Christians”)
 3. Principle of being “equally yoked.”
- D. Marriage must Follow the biblical Rules of “Consanguinity or Affinity” to avoid Incest and Civil Law must never violate these rules of Consanguinity (24:4)
- E. Two reasons for Biblically Accepted Divorce (24:5-6)
 1. Adultery/Fornication
 - a) during engagement: grounds for dissolving betrothal
 - b) after marriage: grounds for...

- (i) innocent party to sue for divorce
 - (ii) innocent party to remarry
 - (iii) guilty (adulterous) party to remain unmarried forever
- 2. Desertion by a spouse that is...
 - a) not able to be remedied by church or magistrate
 - b) when it dissolves the bonds of marriage (i.e. divorce or adultery)
 - c) arrived at by an orderly course of legal proceedings
 - d) assisted by ecclesiastical and civil counsel
- 3. The corruption of men is such that he will offer many more “reasons” for divorce, but only adultery and willful desertion allow for divorce in the eyes of God and His Holy Church.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

TOPIC: The Church and the Sacraments
Chapters 25, 26 and 27 (Ecclesiology, Part I)

I. THE CHURCH (Chapter 25)

A. The True Catholic Church (25:1) (The Invisible Church)

1. Does not mean "Roman Catholic."
2. "Catholic" means universal.
3. The Catholic/Universal Church is...
 - a) invisible = spiritual
 - b) the whole number of the elect of all times
 - c) under Christ as Lord and Head
 - d) is the spouse = Bride of Christ
 - e) is the Body of Christ (on earth)
 - f) is the fullness of Christ = the compliment to Christ
(i.e. "This is the highest honor of the church, that, until He is united to us, the Son of God, reckons Himself in some measure imperfect. What consolation it is for us to learn that, not until we are in His presence, does He possess all parts, or does He wish to be regarded as complete" - John Calvin)

B. The Visible Church (25:2)

1. Also is Catholic/Universal in the New Testament age and after.
 - a) not confined to one nation, Israel
 - b) world-wide and truly international
2. Consists of all those who profess the true religion and their children (i.e...Covenant view of the church).
 - a) wheat = true believers and their covenant children, but also...
 - b) tares = nominal Christians and their children (Covenant breakers)
3. Kingdom of Heaven = Kingdom of God = Kingdom of Christ = The Church, the House of God and of Faith).
- *4. Outside of the visible church there is no possibility of salvation.

C. The Church's Ministry (25:3)

1. The Ministry is two-fold:
 - a) gathering the saints (elect) = evangelism (Salvation)
 - b) perfecting the saints (elect) = edification (sanctification)
2. The Tools are two-fold:
 - a) oracles = the Word of God (Preaching and Teaching)
 - b) ordinances = the Sacraments (Lord's Supper and Baptism)
3. The Power is two-fold:
 - a) Christ's Presence = The Holy Spirit
 - b) Christ's Promise = to build the church (Mt. 16:18)
4. The Officers are two-fold:
 - a) Elders: teach, oversee, pray (Session)
 - b) Deacons: administer, facilitate, serve (Diaconate)

D. The Church's Purity (25:4-5)

1. There is no such thing as a perfectly pure visible church.
 - a) the true church waxes and wanes over the years of time
 - b) some churches (denominations) are purer than others
 - c) the true church will always exist in some form on earth
 - d) some churches are so degenerate that they are no longer churches of Christ but rather synagogues of Satan
 2. Purity depends upon: the Gospel, the Sacraments, and Worship.
 3. Reformed teaching from Scripture presents three marks of the True Church of Christ.
 - a) True Preaching of the Word
 - b) Proper Administration of the Sacraments
 - c) Faithful Use of Discipline
 4. Even the purest church contains some error (sin).
- E. The Church's Head (25:6)
1. The Head of the Church is Jesus Christ...alone and always.
 2. Popes of Rome can never be head of the church in any sense.

II. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS (Chapter 26)

A. Communion Defined (26:1)

1. Because of faith, true believers are united to Christ in life, death, and resurrection and are thus united to one another in this mystical union with Him and communion with one another. The basis...
 - a) Faith in Christ = Mystical Union (Faith)
 - b) Membership in the Body of Christ = Co-Union (i.e. communion) (Love)
2. Believers share in each other's gifts and graces.
3. Communion of the saints demands:
 - a) mutual ministry to one another
 - b) public and private duties to one another
4. Communion = Christian Fellowship (1 John 1:1-9)

B. Communion Obligations (26:2)

1. Purity = "maintain a holy fellowship."
2. Pure worship together (corporate worship).
3. Mutual ministry of edification.
4. Bearing one another's spiritual and temporal burdens.
5. Communion of the saints is extended to all true believers and those who call upon the name of the Lord ("professor").

C. Communion Limited (26:3)

1. Does not allow us to partake of Christ's essence = His essential divine nature "the substance of the Godhead" - i.e. contrary to the New age teaching, we are not "gods" or "a piece or part of God" (God in Christ has communion with us but remains distinct and different from us in nature).
2. We are not Christ's equals as "Sons of God."
 - a) Christ = The Son of God = God the Son (divine nature)
 - b) the Believer = a son of God = God's adopted child (divine favor)

3. Communion does not mean “commune” = private property remains and is not necessarily common property to the community of faith. Christian communes are not a Biblical concept and cannot be derived from the doctrine of the communion of saints.

III. THE SACRAMENTS (Chapter 27)

A. The Sacraments Defined (27:1)

1. Sacraments are signs and seals of God’s covenant of grace.
 - a) WSC #92 “A Sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.”
 - b) signs = symbols of the covenant of grace to believers
 - c) seals = guarantees of the covenant of grace to believers
 - d) sensible = able to be enjoyed by the senses (sight, smell, taste, touch)
 - e) ordinances = permanent, unchangeable institutions of Christ
 - f) means of grace = conveying grace through faith to believers who use them properly
2. Their definition by the WCF includes -
 - a) holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace
 - b) immediately (i.e. directly and personally) instituted by God
 - c) represent Christ and His benefits
 - d) with these four purposes in mind –
 - (i) to represent, symbolize, remind us of Christ
 - (ii) confirm our interest and portion in Him
 - (iii) separate us from unbelievers in the world
 - (iv) strengthen us for service to God in Christ

B. The Sacraments’ Nature (27:2)

1. A sacramental union exists: physical and spiritual realities are united.
2. A spiritual relationship between the sign (the physical thing) and the thing signified (spiritual reality).
 - a) bread and wine/body and blood of Christ
 - b) water/cleansing from sin and indwelling Spirit
3. The name of the one is given to the other (Example: the bread = “This is My body”) (i.e. “This is My Body” = this represents My body).
4. The effects of one are attributed to the other (e.g. when we drink the wine we receive the blood of Christ).
5. Every Sacrament has two elements:
 - a) an outward, sensible, physical sign (the elements)
 - b) an inward, spiritual grace signified by the elements
6. The Sacramental union is two-fold:
 - a) symbolical and representative = to show forth grace
 - b) instrumental = to convey grace

C. The Sacraments’ Power (27:3)

1. The Sacraments have no power in and of themselves
2. The efficacy (effect) of the Sacrament is not dependent upon the administrator, i.e. we do not need “a priest” to administer the sacraments by His power.

3. The benefit and grace of the Sacrament rests upon...
 - a) The Holy Spirit = His work of grace applied
 - b) The Word of God = authorization and instruction
 - c) The Proper Recipients: Believers exercising faith and worthily prepared
 4. Unworthy ministries do not void the grace of the Sacraments.
- D. The Sacraments' Number (27:4)
1. There are only two Sacraments instituted by Christ...
 - a) The Lord's Supper (Mt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:15-20; I Cor. 11)
 - b) Baptism (Matthew 28:19-20)
 2. The Roman Catholic Church has added 5 more Sacraments which are not biblically instituted by Christ (total of seven). They are given here in chronological order as Roman Catholics observe them:
 - a) (Baptism)
 - b) Penance = private, auricular confession to a priest
 - c) (The Lord's Supper)
 - d) Confirmation = by a bishop of the church
 - e) Holy Matrimony = marriage (or...)
 - f) Ordination = to the priesthood
 - g) Extreme Unction = anointing of the dying or dead
 3. Sacraments may not be dispensed by anyone but a lawfully ordained minister of the Word (a clergyman properly ordained) (Mt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:20, 23, I Cor. 4:1; Hebrews 5:4).
- D. The Sacraments' Continuity (27:5)
1. The same two Sacraments were present in the Old Testament as in the New Testament!
 2. Sacraments today are, in essence, what they were in the Old Testament: only the form has changed...
 - a) circumcision = Baptism (Acts 2:39; Col. 2:11-12) (I Cor. 10:1-4)
 - b) the Passover meal = The Lord's Supper (I Cor. 5:7)

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH OF BAPTISM

TOPIC: The Sacrament of Baptism

Chapter 28 (Cross Reference BCO, Chapter 56) (Ecclesiology, Part II)

I. THE CONFESSION: BAPTISM

A. The Purpose of Baptism (28; 1)

1. Ordained by Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19) (a N.T. Sacrament)
2. Two-fold purpose;
 - a) sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace (Romans 4:11; Col. 2:11-12)
 - b) solemn admission into the visible church (I Cor. 12:13)
3. A sign and seal of the four facets of the Christian life:
 - a) ingrafting into Christ (Gal. 3:27) (Romans 6:5) (Union with Christ)
 - b) regeneration (Titus 3:5) (new life)
 - c) remission of sins (Mark 1:4) (washing away of sins)
 - d) commitment to walk in new life in Christ (Romans 6:3-4)
4. This baptism is a sacrament to be continued in Christ's Church until the end of the world. (ff. Gen. 17)

B. Mode of Baptism (procedure) (28:2-3)

1. Baptism is to be with water.
2. Baptism is to be in the name of the Trinity.
3. Baptism is to be by a lawfully ordained minister of the Gospel.
4. Baptism is correctly done by sprinkling or pouring (i.e., effusion).
 - a) immersion is not necessary
 - b) "rightly administered by sprinkling or pouring"

C. Subjects of Baptism (28:4)

1. Believers should be baptized if they have not been baptized before.
2. Infants of believing parents are to be baptized.
 - a) if both parents are believers
 - b) if only one parent is a believer
 - c) unbelievers are not to have children baptized
 - d) Genesis 17:7-9; Gal. 3:9,14; Col. 2:11-12; Acts 2:38,39; Romans 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 8:15; Acts 16:31
3. Baptism is a sign and seal of God's work in families of faith.

D. Importance and Timing of Baptism (28:5-6)

1. It is a sin to neglect the ordinance of baptism: by adults not baptizing infants or by refusing to let themselves be baptized.
2. Salvation is not dependent upon baptism and baptism does not prove salvation.
3. "The efficacy (effective power or work) of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered"..
 - a) can be baptized before you believe (infants)
 - b) can be baptized at the moment you believe
 - c) can be baptized after you believe

- E. Frequency of Baptism (28:7)
 - 1. Baptism is only to be administered once to any person.
 - 2. The only instances of “re-baptism” is to those not baptized in the name of the Trinity or in a non-Christian church (e.g. a cult)
 - 3. The PCA has chosen not to require re-baptism of Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox individuals (i.e., non-protestants)

II. BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER: THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM (INFANTS AND CHILDREN) (ADULTS)

- A. Not to be Unnecessarily Delayed (BCO 56-1)
 - 1. Not to be delayed by neglect or indifference.
 - 2. Only matters of conscience can excuse parents from baptizing infants.
 - 3. Children of believers, not baptized, are nonetheless non-communing members of the visible church (BCO 2-1) by virtue of the Covenant.
- B. Procedure for Baptism (BCO 56-1,2,3,4)
 - 1. Never privately administered but always in the presence of the church under supervision of the Session.
 - 2. Previous notice must be given to the pastor (to allow for counseling of parents).
 - 3. One or both believing parents, or some other responsible believer (grandparent, stepparent, legal guardian, etc.) bring the child to be baptized.
 - 4. The minister’s duties are as follows:
 - a) instruct and counsel the parents
 - b) instruct the congregation as to baptism’s significance
 - c) explain the covenant nature of baptism
 - d) charge the parties involved concerning their responsibilities
 - e) exhort parents to duty
 - f) instruct and charge the ignorant about baptism
- C. The Vows of Baptism
 - 1. Parents: acknowledgement of the child’s need of salvation.
 - 2. Parents: claiming of God’s covenant promises for their household.
 - 3. Parents: dedication of the child to God and themselves to lead their child in the faith to Christ.
 - 4. Congregation: to assist the parents in their Christian duties.
 - 5. Infant: to live out his covenant privilege and confess faith in Christ (in time to come)
- D. Formula for Baptism: (BCO 56-6)
 - 1. Prayer for the sacrament’s efficacy by faith of the parents.
 - 2. Calling the child by name: _____, child of the covenant”
 - 3. Baptism in the name of the Trinity.
 - 4. Baptism by sprinkling or pouring water.
 - 5. Prayer for the family, child and church.
- E. Adult Baptism (BCO 57-3)
 - 1. Normal procedure is...
 - a) apply for church membership
 - b) public profession of faith
 - c) baptism (sprinkling or pouring)
 - d) admission to the Lord’s Table

2. Five vows are taken: 5 vows of membership (see BCO 57-5)

Four excellent pamphlets:

1. What Christian Parents Should Know About Infant Baptism, by John P. Sartelle (Presb. and Reformed Publishing Co.)
2. Baptism, by Francis A. Schaeffer (Trimark Publishing Co.)
3. The Baptism of Infants, by Ben Lacy Rose (Presbyterian Journal)
4. Your Baby's Baptism by W. Wilson Benton, Jr. (CEP of the PCA)

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

TOPIC: The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Chapter 29: (Cross Reference BCO, Chapters 57, 58) (Ecclesiology, Part III)

I. THE CONFESSION: THE LORD'S SUPPER (Holy Communion)

A. The Purpose of the Lord's Supper (29:1)

1. Ordained by Jesus Christ (a N.T. Sacrament) (I Cor. 11:23-26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20)
2. Two-fold purpose:
 - a) a sign: "a perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself"
 - b) a seal: "sealing all benefits" of the atonement to believers
 - c) i.e., sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace
3. Sign and seal of four facets of Union with Christ:
 - a) His spiritual nourishment for their growth (nurture)
 - b) their engagement to be Christ's completely (commitment)
 - c) a bond or pledge of Union with Him (intimacy)
 - d) a symbol of their communion with other saints (fellowship)
4. Called "communion" which means "co-union" or a shared union with Christ by all believers (I Cor. 10:16-17; 12:13).

B. The Efficacy of the Lord's Table (29:2)

1. What it is not...
 - a) not a "re-sacrifice" of Christ (Roman Catholic view)
 - b) not an act of atonement to forgive sins (Roman Catholic view)
 - c) not an act to propitiate (i.e., sooth the anger of) God (Roman Catholic view)
 - d) ". . .so that the popish sacrifice of the mass (as they call it) is most abominably injurious to Christ's one, holy sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of His elect."
2. What views others hold:
 - a) Roman Catholic: a sacrifice for sin
 - b) Zwinglian View: a mere memorial supper
 - c) Reformed View: a sacrament = a means of grace
3. WCF states "but only a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself.." does not mean WCF holds to the Memorial view (cf 27:1,3 = means of grace.)
4. WCF teaches that the Lord's Supper confers grace upon the believer, who is a worthy receiver, due to faith in Christ and obedience to the command to celebrate this supper.

C. The Administration of the Lord's Supper (29:3; cf BCO 58)

1. Appointed His ministers = only ordained clergymen may administer the supper (assisted by other church officers, the laymen).
2. The proper elements of a Communion service:
 - a) declaration of God's Word (instruction)
 - b) prayer of confession, preparation, self-dedication
 - c) prayer of setting aside the elements for sacred use

- d) to break the bread; take the cup
 - e) to distribute both elements to the people
 - f) to do so in public worship, not private situations
3. Only those present take the supper = read I Cor. 11 about the abuses of self-centered receipt of the Lord's Supper.
- D. Restrictions to the Lord's Supper (29:4)
- 1. No private communion services.
 - 2. No receiving the Lord's Supper from a Priest or Minister alone.
 - 3. No bowing down to, kissing, worshipping the bread or wine.
 - 4. No lifting up, carrying about, or mystical use of the elements.
 - 5. No saving or reserving the elements for pretended religious use.
- E. The Elements Themselves (29:5-6)
- 1. Bread and wine (fermented wine = Greek word oinos).
 - 2. The elements have such a relation to Christ, sacramentally or symbolically, and as means of grace, that they are called by that which they represent.
 - a) "This (bread) is (represents) My Body (flesh)"
 - b) "This (wine) is (represents) the cup of My Blood"
 - 3. In substance and nature they always remain mere bread and wine.
 - 4. There is no "changing" of the elements in any real or mystical sense into the actual flesh and blood of Christ: the very idea of such is "repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense, and reason."
 - a) is repugnant to revelation and reason
 - b) defeats the purpose of a sacrament (sign and seal)
 - c) leads to superstition and gross idolatry
 - 5. Four views held by churches concerning the Lord's Supper:
 - a) Transubstantiation (Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox): The elements of bread and wine "mystically" change to actually become the very flesh and blood of Jesus, even though they are "hidden" by the taste and texture of bread and wine. The Council of Trent teaches that the elements are actually "converted" into Christ's body and blood. The "properties" of the bread and wine remain, but the "substance" changes to be Christ's flesh and blood. Hence the name of this doctrine: trans (change) substantiation (of substance).
This view is idolatrously false.
 - b) Consubstantiation (Lutherans): The bread and wine do remain as such. A mysterious and miraculous "real presence" of the whole person of Jesus Christ, body and blood, is "in, under, and along with," the elements received. The physical nature of Christ is "locally" present in the elements just as magnetism is present in the magnet and the soul is present in the body of man. Thus manducatio oralis - orally receiving and eating the Lord's body and blood and not merely receiving Him by faith. This view is falsely primitive but not heretical.
 - c) Memorial View: Zwinglian View (Baptists and most evangelicals): Zwingli, a Swiss reformer and peer to Calvin and Luther, did change his view over time to hold a view closer to Calvin's. It is difficult to understand what he taught. Most credit him with teaching that the Lord's Supper is merely a bare sign or symbol, but not a seal conveying or guaranteeing anything. Thus

communion is merely a figurative representation of spiritual blessings of salvation. It is above all else a badge of the Christian's profession because it commemorates what Christ did for the elect. The weakness of this view is that it places emphasis on what the believer does in believing in Christ rather than what God does for the elect at Calvary. For Zwingli, Christ is only present in the mind of the believer and no real grace is communicated by the Supper. This view is only half true, too plain, and too reactionary against Roman Catholic teachings.

- d) The Reformed View: Sacramental View (Calvin = Reformed and Presbyterian Churches, and the original Episcopalian/Anglican view): The symbolism of the Lord's Supper points to what Christ did for us and what he continues to do. We commune with the entire person of the Redeemer (not just body and blood), and when we eat the body and blood of Christ we do merely trust in His name and rely upon His saving work; i.e., we "receive" Christ by faith, not orally or merely mentally. The body and blood of Christ, locally present only in heaven, communicates via our faith, a life-giving influence of grace to the believer, when he receives the elements. That influence comes via the Holy Spirit and not via the elements but is not separated from the act of receiving the Supper. The Holy Spirit uses the Sacraments as His instrument of grace. Thus the Sacrament is the means by which the Holy Spirit gives us grace in response to our faith and obedience. (Read 29:7) In the Lord's Supper Christ is really, but only spiritually, present in the elements.

F. What Happens to Us in the Lord's Supper (29:7)

1. We outwardly receive the elements of the supper.
2. By faith we trust in Christ and His atonement for us.
3. Inwardly we really receive Christ crucified and His benefits.
 - a) We feed upon Him = are nurtured and strengthened
 - b) We experience His presence with us in a special way
 - c) We receive Christ, not carnally (physically) but rather spiritually
4. We do this via the obedience of the Lord's Supper because Christ so commanded us to obey Him in this sacramental way.

G. The Caution (29:8)

1. Unworthy receivers eat and drink judgment to themselves if they take the supper.
2. Unworthy receivers = ignorant and ungodly.
 - a) ignorant = do not understand or appreciate the sacrament
 - b) ungodly = unconverted or those under the ban of discipline
 - c) ungodly = those in gross sin and impenitent
3. Unworthy receivers sin against Christ.
4. The church, as best it can, is not to admit unworthy receivers to the Lord's Table.
 - a) BCO, 57: 1-5 = instruct, evangelize, exam prior to admission to the table
 - b) taking of church vows and public profession of faith
 - c) discipline suspension from the sacraments (BCO, 29, 30:3)
 - d) BCO, 58:2.. "The ignorant and scandalous are not to be admitted to the Lord's Supper"
 - e) "Fencing" the table

II. THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER (Chapters 57, 58)

A. The Session Controls the Supper (58:1-3)

1. Sets the frequency, dates, time and places (58:1).
2. Controls who receives the Supper (Chapters 57 and 58:2).
3. Makes efforts to ensure that all come to the table properly, spiritually prepared (58:3).
4. Encourages non-communicants to remain for the Supper in an effort to instruct and evangelize them.
5. Sees to it that the Pastor “fences the table.”

B. The Pastor “Fences the Table: (58:4)

1. Invites only those approved by the Session (own membership).
2. Invites visitors from evangelical churches if they are approved by the church officers in their church.
3. Warns parents to control non-communicant children.
4. Warns unbelievers, those under discipline, and those out of fellowship or in gross sin to refrain from the Supper.
5. Instructs all in the sobriety and sacramental nature of the Supper.

C. The Administration of the Supper (58:5-7)

1. The elements of bread and wine are decently covered.
2. Communicants are orderly and gravely sitted around the table.
3. The Minister and the Elders are together administering the Supper.
4. The Minister speaks for the Session:
 - a) prays: before and after the Supper
 - b) instructs: ref. the sacrament; the Gospel; the privilege
 - c) uses the Words of Institution (I Cor. 11; Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22 = BCO, 58:5)
5. A time of silent prayer: meditation; thanksgiving; confession.
6. An offering of the congregation for “the poor or other sacred purpose” may be taken.
7. Hymns are to be sung.
8. A benediction is given to dismiss the congregation.

D. In the past, Presbyterians have had special preparation services, the night before the celebration of the Sacrament. This is still an acceptable and advised practice. (BCO, 58:8)

- * The Elders always distribute the Lord’s Supper because they are charged with oversight of the Sacraments (BCO 12:5).

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

THE POWERS OF THE CHURCH

TOPIC: Church Discipline and Church Order
Chapters 30 and 31 (Ecclesiology, Part IV)

I. CHURCH DISCIPLINE (Chapter 30)

A. Church Rule (30:1)

1. Distinct from civil government.
2. Ecclesiastical Powers separate from Civil Power:
 - a) Rule by elders (I Timothy 5:17) (Heb. 13:7, 17)
 - b) Gift and Appointed by Christ (Eph. 4:11-12; I Cor. 12:28)
 - c) Commissioned by Christ (Mt. 28:18-20)
 - d) Christ still head of the Church (Ep. 1:22; Col. 1:18)
3. Not “unbiblical” to be ruled by men in the Church of Jesus Christ.
4. Rule means (synonyms):
 - a) To oversee or administer
 - b) To instruct and guide
 - c) To control and discipline
 - d) To nurture, edify, care for
 - e) To protect
 - f) To serve sacrificially
5. Ruling the Church (elders assisted by deacons) brings with it three commensurate concepts:
 - a) Authority: right, power, position to act (office)
 - b) Responsibility: duty to perform (ministry)
 - c) Accountability: judgment incurred (rewards)
 - d) Read I Peter 5: 1-10 for balance of all 3 concepts.

B. Powers of the Church Officers (Authority) (30:2)

1. The “Power of the Keys”:
 - a) WCF = “the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven”
 - b) Matthew 16:18-19
 - c) Matthew 18:15-20
2. Authority/Responsibility/Accountability to administer discipline in three ways:
 - a) To retain or remit sins (bind to or release from)
 - b) Shut the kingdom against the impenitent (refuse membership or excommunicate)
 - (i) by word = preaching and teaching
 - (ii) by censures = formal steps of discipline
 - c) Open the kingdom to penitent sinners
 - (i) by Gospel = evangelism of the lost
 - (ii) by absolution from censures = church restoration

C. Necessity of Discipline (30:3)

1. To reclaim sinners from sin and to restore a brother to obedient living.
2. To deter others from sinning in the same manner.
3. To purify the Church from the leaven of sin.
4. To vindicate the honor of Christ and defend/protect His Holy name.

5. To ensure the holy profession of the Gospel (i.e., the church's reputation, testimony and witness).
6. To protect the Church from the wrath of God against the Church that allows His Name, His Son, His Covenant, His Sacraments, and His Saints to be corrupted, stained, or injured by flagrant, notorious, gross sin.
(Read: Wray, Biblical Discipline for a detailed study of these six reasons and objections to discipline.)

D. Types of Discipline (30:4)

1. Censures = formal steps of Church discipline taken by the officers of the Church against a person.
2. Follow the four steps of Matthew 18:15-20:
 - a) Individual, one-on-one counsel and rebuke
 - b) Take others with you to correct the sinner
 - c) Release matter to Church officers
 - d) Official suspension or excommunication
3. Four types of discipline (three in WCF 30:4 and one more added by BCO 30:1-5):
 - a) Admonition (oral or written reproof to warn, instruct, exhort)
 - b) Suspension (from the Lord's Supper)
 - c) Excommunication (excision from the Communion of the Church)
 - (i) for gross crime: moral or legal (purity)
 - (ii) for heresy: denial of cardinal doctrine of the faith (truth)
 - (iii) incorrigibility: contumacious, factious, disruptive behavior (peace)
 - (d) Deposition (degradation of an officer from his office)
4. For Church officers being disciplined, a suspension or excommunication includes not only suspension or removal from the sacraments but also from his office. That is...
 - a) A member suspended: can't take the Lord's Supper
An officer suspended: can't take the Lord's Supper or exercise his office
 - b) A member excommunicated: removal from both the Lord's Supper and fellowship
An officer excommunicated: removed from the Lord's Supper, fellowship and his office

E. Book of Church Order, Chapters 27-46, "Rules of Discipline"

II. CHURCH GOVERNMENT (Chapter 31)

A. Church Government Levels (31:1)

1. "For better government and edification" (Rule and growth)
2. For purposes of efficiency in ministry.
3. WCF states that the Church is a "connectional Church" (a denomination) which is rightfully, properly governed by a national or international body:
 - a) Assembly = a synod or a council
 - b) The PCA's highest court = the General Assembly

4. BCO, Chapter 10, names the three levels of Church courts:
 - a) Session = over the local church (Chapter 12)
 - b) Presbytery = regional governing body (Chapter 13)
 - c) General Assembly = national - international Synod (Chapter 14)
 5. Historical examples of Synods? Councils?
 - a) Council of Carthage, Nicea, Alexandria (early church)
 - b) The Synod of Dordt (1600's)
 - c) Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643 - 1648)
 - d) Many other examples (each year's PCA General Assembly)
 6. Biblical precedent is the Acts 15 council in Jerusalem (see esp. Acts 15:22), (I Cor. 7:17; 11:16; and 14:40).
 7. The Bible does not allow for "independent Churches (non-connectional churches).
- B. The Calling of Synods (3 1:2)
1. Magistrates = the civil government may convene a Church Synod to confer with the Church about matters of religion (cf WCF, 23:3).
 2. If Government is hostile to religion or the church, the church may convene its own assembly.
 3. Not "separation of Church and State" but rather cooperation between the two and mutual respect and care.
- C. Assemblies'/ Councils'/ Synods' Duty (31:3)
1. Determine controversies of Faith (doctrine).
 2. Decide matters of conscience (duty).
 3. Direct the church in orderly worship and government (rules).
 4. Discipline the church when necessary (correction).
 5. Decree what is agreeable, generally and specifically, to the Word of God as God's instrument to govern the church (decisions):
 - a) As true to the Word of God guarded by the Church
 - b) In consistency with their calling as the Church
 - c) By the authority given by God to the Church
 - d) With respect and submission due to the Church
- D. All Synods and Councils are Human, Fallible and Errant (31:4)
1. No infallible popes or councils.
 2. No traditions equal to Scripture.
 3. No rule of faith or practice to replace Scripture.
- E. Separation of Powers (31:5)
1. The Church is to handle authoritatively only ecclesiastical matters.
 2. The Church may interact/interface with Civil Government by...
 - a) Humble petition for government help in extraordinary issues or cases
 - b) To speak to the government morally
 - c) To advise the Magistrate when requested to do so and if the Church desires to do so

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE END TIMES

TOPIC: Eschatology (Last Things)
Chapters 32 and 33

Eschatology is the study of “last things” i.e., the last or end or final events of human history. “Eschatology” comes from the Greek word eschatos meaning “the uttermost, the last, the end, the final things.” The study of Eschatology is divided into individual Eschatology and General Eschatology.

Individual Eschatology concerns itself with the facets of life after death in reference to individuals. Death, the intermediate state of the dead (between death and the great white throne judgment), and the state of the dead (heaven or hell) are discussed in Individual Eschatology.

General Eschatology concerns itself with the study of those last events common to all men: the Tribulation, the Rapture, the Millennium, the Final Judgment, the New Heaven and earth, and so forth. The Confession discusses Individual Eschatology in Chapter 32 and General Eschatology in Chapter 33.

I. INDIVIDUAL ESCHATOLOGY (Chapter 32)

A. The Intermediate State (32:1)

1. What happens to men when they die?
2. Their bodies = are mortal
 - a) return to dust (disintegration)
 - b) see corruption (i.e., they rot)
3. Their souls = are immortal
 - a) do not die (no “annihilation”)
 - b) do not sleep (no “soul sleep”)
 - c) have an immortal substance, i.e., the soul = spirit
 - d) soul/spirit “returns to God”
4. When souls “return to God” they are judged one way or another.
 - a) The Righteous (believers)
 - (i) are made perfectly holy = sinless
 - (ii) are received into the highest heavens = where Christ is
 - (iii) behold the face of God = in God’s presence
 - (iv) are in light and glory = the bliss of God
 - (v) wait for the full redemption of their bodies = the resurrection
 - b) The Wicked (unsaved)
 - (i) cast into hell = an actual place away from God
 - (ii) torments = the pain of fire and brimstone
 - (iii) utter darkness = absolutely void of God’s presence
 - (iv) reserved for the Judgment of the great day = the Great White Throne of Judgment at the end of Time
5. There is no intermediate state for souls once they die:
 - a) no purgatory (Roman Catholic)
 - b) No “paradise” (a lower heaven for those other than the 144,000) (Mormon)

- c) annihilation (nonexistence of evil souls) (Jehovah's Witnesses)
 - d) soul sleep (waiting in a sleep, in the grave, until the resurrection)
 - e) Sheol (Idea of "place for the dead" – not heaven or hell but a place to wait for the Messiah to come) (Judaism)
 - f) Hades (realm of the dead wandering aimlessly) (Greek mythology)
- B. The Rapture and Resurrection (32:2)
- 1.. The Scripture calls this "the Great Day of the Lord" = the day of Christ's return, judgment, and ultimate victory.
 2. When Christ returns – on that day – death will cease:
 - a) no one will die
 - b) those believers who are alive will be raptured and changed (I Thess. 4:17 and I Cor. 15:51)
 - c) All those already dead shall physically rise from the dead and be united again with their souls
 - d) in the final state (final heaven and earth and hell) men shall exist with both body and soul
 - e) these bodies will be changed so that they never die or can be destroyed
 3. Key: Men receive a physical resurrection just as Christ did.
- C. The Unsaved (32:3)
1. Their bodies are raised to dishonor.
 2. They are punished by Christ.
- D. The Saved (32:4)
1. Their bodies are raised to honor.
 2. By His Spirit = The Holy Spirit
 3. Conforming their bodies to that of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:21):
 - a) glorified
 - b) sinless
 - c) eternal

II. GENERAL ESCHATOLOGY (Chapter 33)

A. The Last Judgment (33:1)

1. An appointed day.. .the day of the Lord.
2. A day to judge:
 - a) apostate angels (Satan and demons)
 - b) all men who have ever lived
3. A day in which we "give account" of all our:
 - a) thoughts
 - b) words
 - c) deeds
4. A day in which men receive their just desserts:
 - a) good: crowns and heaven (believers)
 - b) evil: condemnation and hell (unbelievers)

- B. The Glory of the Last Judgment (33:2)
1. The Last Judgment is for God's glory...
 - a) His mercy in saving the elect
 - b) His justice in punishing the reprobate
 2. Refreshing and fullness of joy for the elect (love).
 3. Torment and punishment for the reprobate (wrath)
 4. It is as Scripture states: "The great (love) and terrible (wrath) day of the Lord."
- C. The Knowledge of this Last Judgment (33:3)
1. Deters men from sin (fear).
 2. Comforts the elect in tribulation (assurance of justice).
 3. Shakes the worldly security of people (discomfort).
 4. Cause all to be alert to the imminent return of Christ (diligence and eternal perspective).
 5. A day saints look forward to and sinners dread. Amen.

- NOTICE: The Westminster Confession makes no statement concerning the Millennium, the Tribulation, or the events of popular eschatology (anti-Christ, Armageddon, etc....)
This is because:
1. Dispensationalism, that gives use to much of such speculation and debate, had not yet arisen. The general consensus of the church at the end of the 17th century (c. 1646) is expressed by the WCF.
 2. Eschatology, as a division of systematic theology, was as yet undeveloped. The rise of eschatological studies and writings is peculiar to the 20th century.
 3. The Westminster Divines had no consensus opinion (although most were probably of either a Postmillennial or an Amillennial position).

The Westminster Confession therefore allows for an Amillennial, Premillennial, or Postmillennial position, but not for a Dispensational approach.

PART TWO: THE DUTY OF A GODLY LEADER

Session Seven

The Book of Church Order

Presbyterian Polity: The Form of Government

- a. The Office of Elder
- b. The Office of Deacon

Presbyterian Polity: The Rules of Discipline

Presbyterian Polity: The Directory for Worship

- c. The Sacraments

Session Eight:

Shepherding the Flock & Christ Covenant's Structure, and How Does Women's Ministry Fit into the Church

Read Chapter 8: "Christ's Purposeful Atonement" &

Chapter 9: "The Spirit's Effective Call"

Session Nine:

Exam Review

Read Chapter 10: "God's Preservation of the Saints"

**Chapters above refer to the book,
What is Reformed Theology? Understanding the Basics
By R.C. Sproul**

SESSION SEVEN

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT (BCO 1-26) RULES OF DISCIPLINE (BCO 27-46) DIRECTORY FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD (BCO 47-63)

The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church is the manual for church polity (government) for our denomination. This subordinate standard that covers our polity divides itself into three sections as does our doctrinal standards of *The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*.

Doctrinal Standards

(The Westminster Standards)

1. The Confession of Faith
2. The Larger Catechism
3. The Shorter Catechism

Polity Standards

(The Book of Church Order)

1. The Form of Government
2. The Rules of Discipline
3. The Directory for the Worship of God

In this lesson we will review the **Form of Government** — how our local churches are organized and operated. This lesson outlines the first twenty-six chapters of *The Book of Church Order* that constitutes the Form of Government. Church membership, officers, church courts, congregational powers and responsibilities and the relationship of church officers to congregations are all covered in this first section of the *BCO*.

Officer trainees are asked to read through this first section on the Form of Government. While exhaustive in scope, this first section is more of a “working document,” to be referred to time and again, than something to be memorized. For that reason, only a few points for memory will be referenced and discussed in this session.

7. What are the three courts of the Presbyterian Church in America? (BCO 10-2)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

8. Who are the members of a Session? (BCO 12)

9. Who are the members of Presbytery? (BCO 13-1)

10. Who are the members of General Assembly? (BCO 14-2)

11. What three types of pastors are there and what is the difference in their relationship to the Session and local church? (BCO 22-1,2,3 and 4)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

12. To the congregation belong certain powers and privileges under general categories listed in BCO 25-8, BCO 16-1 and 24-1. What are these areas of congregational privilege and responsibility?

1. (BCO 25-8) _____
2. (BCO 25-8) _____
3. (BCO 25-8) _____
4. (BCO 16-1) _____
5. (BCO 24-1) _____

13. What are the two meanings of the words “church discipline”? (BCO 27-1)

1.

2.

14. Who are subject to church discipline in a congregation? (BCO 27-2)

15. What are the three primary reasons for church discipline? (BCO 27-3)

1.

2.

3.

4.

16. Who are the primary agents and administrators of church discipline?

17. According to Matthew 18:15-20 and BCO 27-5 what are the four steps (stages) of church discipline?

1.

2.

3.

4.

18. Church censures are formal reproofs of discipline inflicted by the Session (or other church court) upon an impenitent sinner. What are the four types of censure? (BCO 30-2,3,4,5)

1.

a.

b.

2.

a.

b.

3.

4.

19. What church court can discipline a minister of the Gospel (a teaching elder)? (BCO 31-1)

20. What is an “associate member”? (BCO 46-4)

21. What is true of someone who leaves the church and intends not to return? (BCO 46-2 and BCO 46-3)

22. Explain who should be “purged from the roll” according to BCO 46-2 and 38-4:

1.

2.

3.

5.

25. What should characterize the observance of the Lord's Day? (BCO 48-4 and 48-7)

26. BCO 58-4 refers to what is known as "fencing the table." What is meant by this and how is it to be done?

27. Why do we take up special offerings at the end of the Communion service? (BCO 58-7)

Follow-up Reading: *Why We Baptize Infants*
by Bryan Chapell

For a fuller, more comprehensive study refer to:

Baptism in Scripture and History
by Rowland S. Ward

PRESBYTERIAN POLITY: THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The *Book of Church Order* sets forth our form of Church government (i.e., presbyterian) and serves as an operating manual for Church administration. The *BCO* (as it is abbreviated) is divided into three sections:

- I. Form of Government (chapters 1-26)
- II. The Rules of Discipline (chapters 27-46)
- III. The Directory for Worship (chapters 47-63)

Included are a preface and several appendices. The first two sections are binding on the Church; the last section is “regulatory” (except for the chapters on the administration of the sacraments, which are binding).

We will study the *BCO* by surveying the three sections. This first lesson reviews the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in America. The next lesson covers the Rules for Discipline, and the third lesson looks at the Directory for Worship.

THE FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

This first section of the *BCO* naturally breaks itself down into five sections as follows:

1. Church Government and Membership (chapters 1-6)
2. Officers and Church Courts (chapters 7-15)
3. Vocation, Ordination and Choosing Church Officers
4. Congregational Meetings
5. Amending the Constitution of the PCA

We will outline these sections, beginning with the preface to the *BCO*, trusting that trainees will read through the *BCO* as they study these lessons.

PREFACE TO THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

- I. The King and Head of the Church:
 - A. Christ alone is head of the Church
 - B. His authority is delegated through spiritual gifts to offices/officers in the Church:
 1. To edify, build up the Church
 2. To perfect, mature the Saints
 3. Ephesians 4:10-13
 - C. Christ possesses all offices of the Church in Himself and He ministers to the Church in Word and Spirit through the ministry of men.
 - D. He has established the following for His Church, clearly set forth in His Word
 1. Officers
 2. Oracles
 3. Ordinances
 4. Organization
 - E. The Holy Spirit now guides and augments the Church

- II. Preliminary Principles (Eight of them)
 - A. God alone is Lord of the Conscience
 - 1. Right to private judgment
 - 2. No establishment of State Church
 - B. Every Church or Union of Churches is free to determine the following:
 - 1. Admission to Church membership
 - 2. Qualification of Church officers
 - 3. System of government for the Church
 - C. Officers of the Church are appointed.
 - 1. Some to preach and teach
 - 2. Others to rule and discipline
 - D. Godliness is founded on truth
 - E. Provision must be made for differences among the brethren
 - F. The Power to elect officers resides in the Church
 - G. All Church power is merely ministerial and declarative
 - 1. Churches may err but this does not invalidate their obligation to uphold Scripture
 - 2. Churches cannot bind the conscience
 - H. Ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral and spiritual in nature
- III. The Constitution Defined
 - A. The Westminster Standards (Doctrine)
 - 1. Confession of Faith
 - 2. Larger Catechism
 - 3. Smaller Catechism
 - B. The Book of Church Order (Polity)

I. CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

Chapter 1: The Doctrine of Church Government

- A. Presbyterian: Comprehended under five headings
 - 1. The Church
 - 2. Members
 - 3. Officers
 - 4. Courts
 - 5. Orders
- B. Church: The visible kingdom of Grace, erected by Christ for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, one and the same in all ages
- C. Members of the visible Church: persons together with their children who:
 - 1. Profess faith in Christ
 - 2. Promise submission to His Laws
- D. Officers: Teaching Elders (clergy), Ruling Elders, Deacons
- E. Courts: Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is a joint power to be exercised by courts in the Church
 - 1. Different courts
 - 2. Mutual relations
 - 3. Maintaining unity in the Church

- F. Orders: ordination to a court:
 1. To a local Church session or presbytery
 2. Exception: presbytery evangelist

Chapter 2: The Visible Church Defined

- A. All those who make professions of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, together with their children
- B. Denominations do not “divide” the True Church, but all who maintain Word and Sacrament in their fundamental integrity are recognized as Branches of the True Church (e.g. Baptist Lutherans, etc.)
- C. Scripture teaches that the Church should be divided into many congregations

Chapter 3: The Nature and Extent of Church Power

- A. Church power resides in the whole body of the Church and includes their choice of officers
- B. Officers exercise spiritual power (authority) in two ways:
 1. Singularly: Preaching, teaching, reproving, pastoring, etc.
 2. Jointly: The power of jurisdiction of a court
- C. Sole function of the Church: To proclaim, administer and enforce the Law of Christ
- D. Church and State powers are separate, equal, and complimentary
 1. Church: spiritual and declarative
 2. State: temporal and forceful
- E. The Church is the agency by which Christ will edify and govern the Saints, propagate the faith, evangelize the world

Chapter 4: A Particular Church

- A. Membership: Professing adults and their children
- B. Officers: Teaching and Ruling Elders and Deacons
- C. Jurisdiction: Joint power lodged in the Session
- D. Ordinances: Prayer, Hymns, Word, Sacraments, Fasting, and Thanksgiving, Catechizing, Offerings, Discipline, Vows, and Ordination

Chapter 5: The Organization of a Particular Church

- A. Mission Churches
 1. Mission Church: one with no session and overseen by another court
 2. Responsibility for starting Mission Churches lies with the Presbytery (ordinarily)
 3. Mission Churches need a temporary form of Government (three options)
 - a) An Evangelist (BCO 8-6)
 - b) Another Church Session (mother Church)
 - c) A Presbytery Commission
 4. Same status as organized churches in relation to the civil government
- B. Organizing Mission Churches
 1. Can be organized only by Presbytery

2. Follow Procedures for:
 - a) Organizing (BCO 5-8)
 - b) Selecting Elders (BCO 5-9)
 - c) Selecting Deacons (BCO 5-10)
 - d) Selecting a Pastor (BCO 5-11)

Chapter 6: Church Members

- A. Non-Communing: Children of believers who have professed faith and joined the Church
 1. Entitled to Baptism (covenant)
 2. Entitled to pastoral oversight
 3. Not entitled to the Lord's Supper, Church office or the right to vote
- B. Communing Members: Those persons who have been baptized, professed faith, and been admitted by the Session to the Lord's Supper
 1. Entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Church
 2. Does not include associate members (See BCO 46-4)

II. OFFICERS AND CHURCH COURTS

Chapter 7. Church Officers - General Classification

- A. Extraordinary officers, in the Apostolic age, have ceased (Eph. 4:11)
- B. Ordinary officers of the Church
 1. Elders (teach and rule)
 2. Deacons (service)
- C. Officers open to men only

Chapter 8. The Elder

- A. Biblical Titles for the office of Elder
 1. Bishop or Pastor (oversight)
 2. Presbyter or Elder (government)
 3. Teacher (instruction)
- B. Qualifications in Summary
 1. Competency in learning
 2. Blameless in Life
 3. Sound in Faith
 4. Apt to Teach
 5. Sobriety and holiness
 6. Ruling own household well
 7. Good report outside the Church
- C. The Duties of the Elders, both severally and jointly, can be summarized in:
 1. Watch over the flock
 2. Govern and Discipline the Church
 3. Oversee the Church
 4. Visit the people

5. Instruct the ignorant
 6. Comfort the mourner
 7. Nourish and Guard the children
 8. Set a worthy example to the flock
 9. Evangelize the unconverted
 10. Make disciples
 11. Discharge official duties
 12. Seek the fruit of the preached word
- D. Some men are selected, called and ordained to devote themselves to the preaching and teaching of the Word (Teaching Elders)
1. Ambassadors (The Will of God)
 2. Evangelists (Glad tidings of salvation)
 3. Preachers (Gospel)
 4. Stewards (Mysteries of God)
- E. An Evangelist: appointed, for 12-month periods, by a presbytery, to start, rule and organize churches until a session can be organized and installed
- F. Teaching and Ruling Elders share three things in common:
1. One and the same class of office: eldership
 2. One and the same authority
 3. One and the same eligibility to Church courts

Chapter 9: The Deacon

- A. The office of Deacon is.
1. Set forth in Scripture
 2. Ordinary
 3. Perpetual
 4. Spiritual in nature
 5. Service and sympathy
- B. Duties of the Board of Deacons (Diaconate)
1. Minister to needy, sick, friendless, distressed (mercy)
 2. Develop the grace of liberality (stewardship)
 3. Care of the property (management)
 4. Assist the elders in their duties (pastoring)
 5. Serve as advisory members to higher courts (advice)
 6. Employ men and women to assist them in their duties (recruitment)
- C. Qualifications of Deacons
1. Spiritual character
 2. Honest repute
 3. Exemplary lives
 4. Brotherly spirit
 5. Warm sympathies
 6. Sound judgment
- D. The Diaconate is under the authority of the Session and is organized as follows:
1. Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer
 2. Meets at least quarterly (and when convened by Session)

3. Keeps records of minutes (submitted to Session)
4. “Desirable” for Session and Diaconate to meet jointly once per quarter “to confer on matters of mutual interest.”
5. The pastor (s) is an advisory member

Chapter 10: Church Courts in General

- A. Regular gradation of Church courts made up of elders (presbyters)
 1. Session: the local Church
 2. Presbytery: A regional area
 3. General Assembly: The Denomination
- B. Each court shall have.
 1. A clerk
 2. Set of minutes
 3. Regularly stated meetings
 4. Ruling and Teaching elders as members

Chapter 11: Jurisdiction of Church Courts

- A. Distinct from Civil Magisteries or Courts
 1. No jurisdiction in political or civil affairs
 2. No power to inflict temporal pains or penalties
 3. Merely moral and spiritual authority
- B. “The Jurisdiction of Church Courts is only ministerial and declarative, and relates to the doctrines and precepts of Christ, to the order of the Church, and to the exercise of discipline”
 1. Cannot --- bind the conscience
But Can --- frame symbols of faith, refute errors, and decide cases of conscience
 2. Cannot --- contradict Scripture
But Can --- establish rules for the government, discipline, extension, and worship of the Church agreeable to the word
 3. Cannot --- penalize others in civil courts
But Can --- require obedience to the laws of Christ: includes admission, dismissal and censure of Church members
- C. The Jurisdiction of each Church Court
 1. Session: jurisdiction over a single Church
 2. Presbytery: jurisdiction over what is common to ministries, Sessions, and Churches within a prescribed district
 3. General Assembly: Jurisdiction over the whole Church

Chapter 12: The Church Session

- A. Consists of: Pastor(s), Associate Pastor(s), and Ruling Elders of the Church
- B. Assistant pastors are not members of the Session, but rather report to the Session
- C. Quorum: Several numbers
 1. No pastor, 5 or more RE's = 3 are a quorum
 2. No pastor, less than 5 elders = 2 are a quorum
 3. One RE is not a session
 4. Any Session by majority vote may set a quorum of its own (not smaller than 1 or 2 above)
- D. The Pastor is the moderator of the Session (if not present any elected Session member may serve as moderator)
 1. A ruling elder
 2. Associate or assistant pastors
 3. An invited minister from another Church
- E. Duties of the Session: Six key areas.
 1. Member care and oversight
 2. Examine, train and install officers
 3. Approve actions of special importance to the property
 4. Call, convene and control meetings and ministries of the Church
 5. Oversight of Worship
 6. Observe and carry out lawful injunctions of higher courts
- F. Meets: at least quarterly or as often as desired
- G. Must keep the records of...
 1. Session and Diaconate meetings
 2. Baptisms and deaths
 3. Receipt, Dismissals, communing and non-communing members

Chapter 13: The Presbytery

- A. Commissioners from all the churches in the Presbytery make up this court:
 1. All teaching elders
 2. Ruling elders by this formula:
 - a) One RE from each congregation
 - b) The first RE for the first 350 communing members
 - c) One more RE for each additional 500, or fraction thereof, of communing members
- B. A TE's (minister's) membership is in his presbytery and not a local Church
- C. Quorum: 3 TEs and 3 REs (But a Presbytery, by majority vote, may set its own quorum)
- D. Responsibilities of Presbyteries are in 8 areas:
 1. Examine Candidates and Ministers
 2. Review Session records
 3. Establish and dissolve pastoral relations with a Church
 4. To oversee Pastors and Evangelists
 5. To carry out General Assembly injunctions
 6. To oversee churches: to start, dissolve, divide, unite, and assist them

7. To enlarge and edify the Church within its bounds
 8. To turn over to General Assembly items of common advantage to the Church at large
- E. Must meet at least twice a year (or more often by majority vote)

Chapter 14: The General Assembly

A. Ten Organizational Privileges

1. Responsibility to carry out the Great Commission
2. Encouragement in missions for all Church courts
3. Work through GA Committees
4. Encourage support for General Assembly ministry
5. Evaluate needs and priorities for the PCA
6. Cooperate with other Christian organizations
7. Assembly committees are to serve and not rule
8. The Committees are to carry out GA assigned duties
9. Committees include proportionate representation of Presbyteries
10. Committees are comprised of equal numbers of TEs and REs

B. The Nominating Committee seeks to fill slots on Permanent Committees with GA approval

C. The GA Permanent Committees are four in number

1. Administration (AC)
2. Mission to the World (MTW)
3. Christian Education and Publication (CEP)
4. Mission to North America (MNA)

D. The Program Committees or Agencies of G.A. are five in number

1. Covenant College Board (CC)
2. Covenant Theological Seminary Board (CTS)
3. Insurance, Annuities, and Relief (IAR)
4. Ridgehaven Conference Center (RH)

E. The General Assembly Committees are of two types: Review and Business

1. Review Committees are "Committees of Commissioners" for each of the Permanent and Program Committees
 - a) Meet but once just prior to GA
 - b) Review and Report on work of Permanent or Program Committee
 - c) Example: The Committee of Commissioners of JAR Review, Report, and Recommend actions to the GA concerning IAR Program Committee
2. Special Committees have definite responsibilities delegated to them by GA, for which they meet throughout the year in order to report to GA. (Seven maximum)
 - a) Nominating Committee
 - b) Committee on Constitutional Business
 - c) Committee on Review of Presbytery Records
 - d) Ad Interim Committees (no more than 2 at one time)
 - e) Inter Church Relations Committee
 - f) Theological Examinations Committee

F. A quorum for GA is 100 commissioners, half TEs and half REs, representing 1/3 of our Presbyteries (we have 55 presbyteries)

G. Membership: All TEs and two REs for each Church with 350 or less communing

members and one additional RE for each 500 or fraction thereof over 350

- H. Responsibilities of the General Assembly
 - 1. Handle appeals, references, and complaints
 - 2. Advise and instruct in the Constitution of the Church
 - 3. Review and reinforce injunctions at Presbytery level
 - 4. Promote peace, prosperity, and enlargement of the PCA
 - 5. Erect, divide, or rearrange presbyteries and their boards
 - 6. Start and supervise PCA Institutions and Agencies
 - 7. Suppress schisms and disputes in the PCA
 - 8. Receive other denominations and merge with them (3/4 vote)
 - 9. Superintend all the affairs of the PCA
 - 10. Take under jurisdiction other ecclesiastical bodies (3/4 vote)
 - 11. Promote charity, truth, and holiness in the PCA

Chapter 15: Ecclesiastical Commissions

- A. A Committee is to study, and issue, and advise its superior court on actions to be taken
- B. A Commission is to study and issue and take action to conclude the business on behalf of the Church Court
- C. Business that may be referred to Commissions
 - 1. Examine, Ordain, and Install officers
 - 2. Conduct and conclude discipline cases
 - 3. Organize new churches
 - 4. Visit and bring peace to troubled areas of the Church

III. VOCATION, ORDINATION AND ELECTION TO CHURCH OFFICE

Chapter 16: Church Orders - The Doctrine of Vocation

Chapter 17: Doctrine of Ordination

- A. Definition: Ordinary vocation to office is the calling of God by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God's people, and the concurring judgment of a lawful court of the Church
- B. No officer can be placed over a people without election by, or consent of, that people
- C. Ordination is the authoritative admission to Church office (men only)

Chapter 18: Candidates for the Gospel Ministry (NONE)

Chapter 19: Licensure and Internship (NONE)

Chapter 20: Election of Pastors

- A. The Process of Ordination to the Gospel Ministry (Teaching Elder)
 - 1. Candidate for Ordination (Presbytery)
 - 2. Licensure (approval to preach)
 - 3. Internship (in a local Church or agency)
 - 4. A specific call to a ministry
 - 5. Examinations by Presbytery
 - 6. Ordination and Installation
- B. Congregations must elect their pastors and associate pastors in congregational meetings
- C. Presbytery must agree to the pastoral relation

Chapter 21: The Ordination and Installation of Ministers (NONE)

Chapter 22: The Pastoral Relations

- A. Three types of pastors: pastor, associate pastors, assistant pastors
 - 1. Pastors (Senior or Solo Pastors): elected by congregation, members of Presbytery, members of the Session
 - 2. Associate Pastors: Same as pastors
 - 3. Assistant Pastors: Called by the Session, member of Presbytery, not a member of the Session
- B. Temporary arrangements: Stated Supply by a Teaching Elder, or Ruling Elder Supply or Student Supply
 - 1. Preaches regularly
 - 2. No longer than one year (but renewable)

Chapter 23: Dissolution of Pastoral Relation and The Procedure for Honorable Retirement

- A. Three parties must agree to dissolve the relationship between pastor and local Church
 - 1. Pastor
 - 2. Congregation
 - 3. Presbytery
- B. Dissolution results from Five actions: Retirement, movement to another Church or ministry, demitting the ministry, discipline for immorality, heresy or contumacy or medical disability

Chapter 24: Election, Ordination and Installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons

Note: A thorough and accurate review of this chapter and the procedure is included in the training class notes entitled "The Biblical Process for Electing Officers" (Session 1)

- A. Calling to vocation and office by God

- B. Nomination by the Congregation
- C. Qualification by the Session
 - Examination in four areas:
 - his Christian experience, family, and character
 - his knowledge of the System of Government and Doctrine
 - the duties of the office assumed
 - willingness to take ordination vows
- D. Election by the Congregation (majority vote)
- E. Ordination and Installation by the Session before the Congregation
- F. Ordination is perpetual and a man can be removed from office for Four Reasons:
 1. Disciplinary reasons (deposition)
 2. Demitting the office (he quits)
 3. Neglect of duties for one year (dissolution by Session)
 4. Retirement: Elder or Deacon Emeritus (age 70)

IV. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Chapter 25: Congregational Meetings

- A. Participants: only communing members, in good standing, may vote
- B. Quorum for a Congregational meeting
 1. 1/4 of resident communing members if the Church has less than 100 members
 2. 1/6 of resident communing members if the Church has more than 100 members
- C. Calling a Congregational meeting: Three ways.
 1. When the Session deems it necessary
 2. When directed to do so by a higher court
 3. If a percentage of members ask for such a meeting
 - a) 1/4 of communing members less than 100 in number
 - b) 1/5 of communing members 100-299 in number
 - c) 1/6 of communing members 300-499 in number
 - d) 1/6 of communing members 500-699 in number
 - e) 1/7 of communing members more than 700 in number
- D. No other business that is not previously stated may be conducted at that congregational meeting
- E. Notice? Public Notice of, at least one week (7 days)
- F. Officers of the congregational meeting
 1. Pastor: usually the moderator
 2. Clerk: selected by the congregation
 3. When no pastor is available a congregation may
 - a) invite another PCA minister to moderate
 - b) elect any male member of the Church to moderate
- G. The Powers and Privileges belonging to the Congregation alone are:
 1. Buy, sell, mortgage Church property
 2. Accept and execute deeds by trustees
 3. Hold and defend titles to property
 4. Manage special funds through trustees

5. Elect and call their pastors and officers
 6. Dissolve themselves as a Church or change denominational affiliations
 7. Dispose of its own property if they dissolve (within 6 months or revert title to Presbytery)
- H. Trustees may be elected by an incorporated congregation to hold, manage, defend and invest special funds and property belonging to the Church
1. According to the wishes of the congregation
 2. Not in conflict with the duties of elders or deacons
 3. According to the BCO and Church charter and by-laws

V. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

Chapter 26: Amending the Constitution of the Church

- A. The BCO may be amended by the advice, consent, and vote of 2/3 of the Presbyteries
- B. The Westminster Standards may be amended by the advice, consent, and vote of 3/4 of the Presbyteries
- C. The process of change involves one year: Two General Assembly meetings and at least one Presbytery meeting

THE OFFICE OF ELDER

The Book of Church Order gives a thorough biblical definition and delineation of the duties and ministry of ruling and teaching elders. Chapters eight and twelve of the BCO clearly set forth four dimensions of the office of elder: its title, its competency, its duties and its organization. Let us review this office of eldership under these four categories.

I. THE TITLES OF ELDERS (BCO 8-1)

1. Bishop/Overseer (*episkopos*) . . . This title has to do with the oversight, management and leadership of the local church. This is the elder's primary **function**.
2. Pastor (*poimēn*) . . . This title has to do with the care and feeding of the flock of God. Pastors teach, preach, apply the Word, discipline and guide by Scripture. This is the elder's primary **ministry**.
3. Presbyter/Elder (*presbuteros*) . . . This title has to do with the elder's character, not in age but in maturity. He is to be a grave and godly example to the flock leading by mature wisdom. This is the elder's primary **character trait**.

II. THE COMPETENCY OF ELDERS (BCO 8-2)

The competency of an elder is summarized under seven general statements summarizing the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1:

1. Competency of human learning
2. Blamelessness in life
3. Soundness in faith
4. Ability to teach (the Word)
5. Sobriety in holiness
6. Rule over his own house
7. Good report outside the church

For a more detailed explanation of these qualifications refer to Session One: The Call to Office and Ministry.

In order to ensure that qualified and competent men are nominated and elected to office, Christ Covenant Church has compiled a leadership development manual for the discipleship and development of godly leaders. Its content and course study reflects the standards of the Scripture and the BCO for church officers – elders and deacons:

THE DUTIES OF THE ELDERS (BCO 8-3)

The duties of the elders, both severally and jointly, are summarized under the twelve responsibilities listed in BCO 8-3. These twelve aspects of ministry thoroughly present the ministry of “prayer and the Word” set forth for elders in Acts 6:4 and reinforced in the Pastoral Epistles.

1. To **watch over** the church in both its morals and doctrine.
2. To exercise both **government and discipline** over church membership.
3. To take **oversight** of the spiritual interests of the church.
4. To **visit** people in their homes, especially the sick.
5. To **instruct** the ignorant.
6. To **comfort** the mourner.
7. To **nourish and guard** the children of the church.
8. To **set a worthy example** to the flock in all Christian duties.
9. To **evangelize** the unconverted.
10. To **make disciples** of the converted.
11. To **pray** with and for the people.
12. To **seek the fruit** of the preached Word among the flock.

These duties, incumbent upon the Session of elders of the local church are also shared in by the Diaconate of the church, the deacons being an office designed to assist the elders in overall ministry. (Acts 6: 1- 7)

IV. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ELDERS (BCO 12)

Every group of elders shepherding a local church shall be organized into a Session. This Session shall be made up of pastors, associate pastors and ruling elders called and elected by the congregation. The Session of Christ Covenant Church shall be organized under the following set of rules, agreeable to the BCO:

1. A quorum: the pastor and ?? ruling elders
2. Meetings: at least quarterly, and usually each month
3. Moderator: the Senior Pastor (vice-moderator: an Associate Pastor or ruling elder elected by the majority of the Session)
4. Records: maintained by the Clerk – a ruling elder appointed by the Session for such duty for a period of one year
5. Assignments: Elders assigned to Christ Covenant Departments

The duties of the Session are set forth under six general headings in the BCO 12-5. These six areas of responsibility incorporate the comprehensive duties of elders:

1. Doctrine and Ethics of Church Members (Discipline)
2. Qualifications and Oversight of Church Officers (Officers)
3. Church Property (Property)
4. Coordination and Control of Church Ministries (Programs)
5. Exercises of Authority over Church Services (Worship)
6. Participation and Compliance with Higher Church Courts (Denominational Business)

Of primary concern for Christ Covenant Church is the ensuring that elders do elders’ ministry: prayer, the Word, oversight, discipline, and spiritual leadership. To the office of deacon belongs the primary concern for administration, property, finances, service ministries and compassion. Elders need to do Session work so that deacons can do Diaconate work.

THE MINISTRY OF CHURCH OFFICERS: ELDERS

- I. The Elder: Ruling and Teaching (1 Timothy 5:17)
 - A. The Scripture and *BCO* describe Elders as...
 1. “Elders” = Their Character (Maturity)
 2. “Overseers/Bishops” = Their function (Management)
 3. “Shepherds” = Their Primary Focus to Feed the Flock (Mandate)
 4. See I Peter 5:1,2 for all these concepts in one thought
 - B. The Scriptural Descriptions
 1. Leading (1 Timothy 5:17)
 2. Teaching (1 Timothy 5:17; 4:13-16)
 3. Shepherding (1 Peter 5: 1-4)
 4. Policy (Acts 15)
 5. Prayer (James 5:14-16)
 6. Discipline (I Timothy 5:19-22)
 7. Other Officers (1 Timothy 4:14)
 - a) Train
 - b) Examine
 - c) Ordain
 - C. The *Book of Church Order (BCO)*, Chapter 8-3 & 12-5 (Spiritual Government)
 1. (a) Discipline: The Concern for Holiness
 2. (b) Officers: The Concern for Leadership and Budgets
 3. (c) Property: The Concern for Church Assets
 4. (d) Programs: The Concern for Doctrine and Duty
 5. (e) Worship: The Concern for Biblical Worship
 6. (f) Denominational Business: The Concern for Connectionalism
 7. (8-3) Prayer: The Concern for Spiritual Power
 - D. A Primary Goal of Christ Covenant Church is to begin to transition the elders (Session) away from business meetings and into more pastoral oversight of the flock (*BCO 8-3*).

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

The Book of Church Order gives a short but accurate biblical definition of the duties and ministries of the deacons of the church. Chapter 9 of the BCO clearly and concisely sets forth four dimensions of the office of deacon: its nature, its duties, its qualifications and its organization. Let us review the office of deacon under these four categories.

I. THE NATURE OF THE OFFICE OF DEACON (BCO 9-1)

1. It is an ordinary (not special) office: God considers it essential for churches to have deacons.
2. It is a perpetual (not temporary) office: God intends for deacons to always be a part of His continuing government of His Church.
3. It is an office of sympathy and service:
 - a) Sympathy: The ministries of compassion, care and shepherding (especially to those in distress or need).
 - b) Service: The facilitation of ministries and services that include administration, management and actual work.
4. It focuses on strengthening the “communion of the saints” and is therefore a highly personal, “hands on” and practical ministry of helping the saints care for each other.

II. THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF DEACON (BCO 9-2)

To the deacons fall four broad categories of ministry responsibility, given to the Diaconate by the BCO and under the general direction of the Session.

1. Ministry to Those in Need: Poor, needy, sick, aged, prisoners, widows and orphans, single mothers, strangers and the lonely.
2. Ministry of Stewardship: The instruction, development and application of giving on the part of the congregation.
3. Ministry of Property and Goods: The care, repair and use of the property and facilities of the congregation.
4. Ministry of Assisting the Elders: The extension of, compliment to and facilitation of the mission of the elders in whatever way the Session may so desire and direct.

III. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF DEACON (BCO 9-3)

1. The Diaconate is a “spiritual” office (engaged in spiritual ministry done in the Spirit and not merely the function of “ordained janitors” or “ecclesiastical flunkies”!).
2. The men selected for deacons must meet the requirements set forth in Acts 6, I Tim. 3

and Titus 1, in summary, men who possess:

- a) spiritual character (spirituality)
 - b) honest repute (integrity)
 - c) exemplary lives (consistency)
 - d) brotherly spirit (unity)
 - e) warm sympathies (love)
 - f) sound judgment (wisdom)
3. The only difference in the qualifications for the two offices is that elders are to be “able to teach” while deacons need not have that qualification, but should “hold to the truth with a clear conscience.”

IV. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF DEACON (BCO 9-4 through 9-7)

1. Deacons are to be organized as a Board of Deacons, usually know as **The Diaconate**. The Board shall be characterized by the following distinctions:
 - a) Its officers: A chairman, secretary and treasurer
 - b) Its meetings shall be at least quarterly or whenever so directed by the Session.
 - c) Its quorum shall be established by local policy (TPC = 50%).
 - d) Its proceedings shall be reflected in minutes, submitted to the Session for review and kept in permanent church records.
 - e) It is desirable that the Diaconate meet at least quarterly with the Session.
2. Deacons may be appointed as members of higher court committees (Presbytery and General Assembly).
 - a) as advisory members
 - b) as treasurers
 - c) as trustees
 - d) as financial planners
3. The Session should appoint godly men and women from the congregation to assist deacons in their many ministries, especially in their ministries to needy people.

THE MINISTRY OF CHURCH OFFICERS: DEACONS

- I. The Deacon: Sympathy and Service (Acts 6:1-4)
 - A. The Scriptures and the BCO describe deacons as.
 1. “Ministers” = Their spiritual work (Ministry)
 2. “Helpers” or “Assistants” = Their spiritual purpose (Partnership with elders)
 3. “Servants” = Their spiritual character (Compassionate)
 4. These are the three meanings of the Greek word *diakonos* and can be clearly seen in Acts 6:1-4
 - B. The Scripture: Acts 6: 1-4 and Philippians 1: 1 and I Timothy 3 (Never seen in NT without elders)
 1. Administration (Acts 6:1-4)
 2. Service (Acts 6:2)
 3. Compassion (Acts 6:1)
 4. Management (Acts 6:3)
 5. Support (Philippians 1:1) - assistants to the elders
 6. Policy (Acts 6:3)
 7. Development (I Timothy 3:13)
 - A. The *Book of Church Order (BCO)*, Chapter 9-2,3,4,5,7 (Sympathy & Service)
 1. Ministry of Mercy: The Concern for the Needy
 2. Stewardship: The Concern for Finances (Treasurer)
 3. Administrative Management: The Concern for Procedure
 4. Church Property: The Concern for Maintenance
 5. Works of Service: The Concern for Helping Others
 6. Advise the Elders: The Concern for Good Information
 7. Assistance to the Session: The Concern for Teamwork
 - D. A Primary Goal of Christ Covenant Church is to develop the Diaconate and the diaconal ministry into a more spiritually focused ministry of outreach, compassion, and service, and to bring them into more partnership with the elders.

The Book of Church Order

THE RULES OF DISCIPLINE

The second section of *The Book of Church Order* concerns the **rules for the discipline** of church members. By “discipline” the Presbyterian Church in America means the exercise of the authority of “the keys to the kingdom,” given to the church, by Christ to instruct and guide the people of God with the Word of God.

Church discipline is concerned with the government and guidance of church members to protect the purity of the church and promote its peace. The government, training, guardianship, policies, procedures and corrective censures administered by church officers all constitute “church discipline.”

The vast majority of church discipline is positive in nature: preaching and teaching, exhortation, the catechizing of children and new converts, one-on-one discipleship, mentoring, officer training and special instruction, and counsel for church members are all part of church discipline. Sometimes negative church discipline must be resorted to for the correction and recovery of wayward saints: warnings, rebukes, and formal censures, up to and including excision from the congregation are part of what is called “judicial process” – formal disciplinary action by the Session of the church.

Church discipline is both good for the church and a necessary part of any true fellowship of believers. In the Reformed Faith “the faithful administration of discipline” is one of three marks of a true church (see *WCF* 25-4). In this session of training, we will look at the purposes, procedures, and particulars of church discipline.

THE RULES OF DISCIPLINE

This second section of the BCO can be naturally broken down into six sections:

1. Nature, Subject and Ends of Discipline (Chapter 27)
2. Terms and Concepts (Chapters 28-31)
3. Cases of Due Process (Chapters 32-35)
4. Censures (Chapters 36-37)
5. Cases without Process (Chapter 38)
6. Referrals to Higher Courts (Chapters 39-46)

I. The Nature, Subject and Ends of Discipline (Chapter 37)

- A. Discipline Defined: Discipline is the exercise of authority given by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct and guide its members and to promote the purity and welfare of the church
 1. Two senses of the word “discipline”
 2. Whole government, inspection, training, guarding, and control of the church over its members, officers, and courts
 3. Judicial process (technical sense)
- B. All baptized persons are subject to discipline (members)
 1. Communing
 2. Non-communing
 3. Officers
- C. Three Goals for Discipline
 1. The glory of God
 2. The purity of the church
 3. The reclaiming and keeping of disobedient sinners
- D. The Ends of Discipline (the final results which are sought after) are six in number:
 1. Rebuke of offenses
 2. Removal of scandal
 3. Vindication of Christ’s honor
 4. Promotion of purity
 5. Edification of the church
 6. Spiritual good of offenders
- E. The Power of the Church to Discipline = The systematic training of the saints under God’s Word
 1. Pastors must instruct officers in discipline
 2. Pastors must instruct the congregation in discipline
 3. Sessions must practice discipline by joint power
- F. The Steps of Discipline are set forth in God’s Word
 1. Instruction in the Word
 2. Admonishing one another
 3. Calling of two or more witnesses
 4. Action on the part of the church court to correct problems

II. Preliminary Terms and Concepts (Chapters 28-31)

- A. The Discipline of non-communing members

1. Primarily the responsibility of parents at home
 2. Church and Parents: Catechize the children
 3. Pastoral oversight by elders
 4. Children are responsible to respond to discipline and instruction
- B. There are several types of offenses defined by the BCO
1. Offense: anything in the doctrines or practice of the church member which is contrary to the Word of God or standards of the church.
 2. Two kinds of offenses:
 - a) Personal: violations of God's Law done to a particular person
 - b) General: heresies or immoralities
 3. Two other kinds of offenses:
 - a) Private offenses: known only to a few people
 - b) Public offenses: notorious and scandalous to the church as a whole
- C. Church Censures are of five degrees of severity:
1. Admonition: a formal reproof by the Session
 - a) Verbal or written
 - b) Public or private
 2. Suspension from the Sacraments (i.e., Lord's Supper)
 - a) Exclusion from taking communion for a time
 - b) Indefinite as to duration: Left up to the discretion of the Session
 - c) No definite suspension from the Sacraments
 3. Suspension from office: exclusion from serving as elder or deacon for a season
 - a) May be definite or indefinite in duration
 - b) Suspension from Sacraments always includes suspension from office
 - c) Suspension from office may or may not include suspension from the Sacraments
 4. Excommunication: excision of the offender from the membership of the church
 - a) Only for gross crime or heresy
 - b) Only to the incorrigible or contumacious
 - c) Object: to reclaim the sinner to repentance
 5. Deposition: the degradation of a man from his office as elder or deacon (to defrock" a officer)
- D. Parties of a Case: Original jurisdiction by the court is as follows:
1. Sessions discipline members, ruling elders, deacons
 2. Presbyteries discipline teaching elders
 3. In every case there are two parties
 - a) The accuser: Always the PCA
 - b) The accused: The supposed offender
 - c) Prosecutors always represent the church (he may be voluntary or appointed)
 - d) In appellate cases the parties are the appellant and the appellee
- E. Care must be exercised in bringing forth accusations
1. Not from persons of malignant or injudicious spirit
 2. Can be disciplined if your accusations prove false
 3. All accused are entitled to due process
 4. All accused are innocent until proven guilty

III. Cases of Due Process (Chapters 32-35)

- A. A case is in “due process” when a trial of the accused actually commences
 - 1. Appoint a prosecutor
 - 2. Indictment drawn up and served
 - 3. Cite all parties and witnesses to trial
 - 4. Conduct a hearing 10 days or longer after the citation
 - 5. Charge read, witnesses heard, accused respond
 - 6. Council assigned to the accused
 - 7. Judicial committee to conduct the trial
 - 8. Cross-examination and discussion
 - 9. A definite order followed
- B. The steps of due process once at trial are six:
 - 1. Charge of the court by the moderator
 - 2. Indictment and answer read
 - 3. Witnesses examined
 - 4. Parties heard: Prosecutor, accused, prosecutor (closes)
 - 5. Roll called and discussion by members of the court
 - 6. Vote taken, verdict announced, judgment recorded
- C. Detailed records are to be kept (BCO 32-18)
- D. No professional counsel shall be retained in such cases (i.e., no lawyers)
- E. Teaching elders shall be tried by Presbytery
 - 1. Great discretion ought to be exercised in bringing an accusation against a minister
 - 2. Disciplinary offenses are: heresy, schism, scandalous behavior or immorality, failure to engage in the proper discharge of his duties (negligence)
 - 3. Base or flagitious matters must warrant suspension or deposition from office even if the minister is repentant
- F. Rules for Evidence (Chapter 35)

IV. Infliction and Removal of Censures (Chapters 36-37)

- A. Procedures for inflicting all five censures are given in detail in chapter 36
- B. Rule of Thumb: The court inflicting the censure is the only court that can lift the censure (i.e., restore)
 - 1. Other courts may assist in cases involving distance and change of residence
 - 2. Cannot escape original jurisdiction by moving

V. Cases without Process (i.e., no trial) (Chapter 38)

- A. People may confess sins without charges ever being filed against them
- B. A minister may voluntarily give up his ordination if he feels unfit or unable to fulfill his ministry
 - 1. He demits (he quits or “steps down”)
 - 2. The Presbytery divests him (takes away his ordination powers and rights)
 - 3. True also of ruling elders or deacons
- C. When a communing member renounces the communion of his PCA church by joining another evangelical church . . .
 - 1. His name is removed from the roll
 - 2. If under charge, it shall be communicated to that church
 - 3. If an officer joins a heretical church his name shall be removed from the roll of

both membership and officers (no longer an officer)

- VI. Referrals to Higher Courts (Chapters 39-46)
 - A. The actions and decisions of a lower court are brought under the supervision of a higher court in one or another of the following modes:
 - 1. Review and Control
 - 2. Reference
 - 3. Appeal
 - 4. Complaint
 - B. Review and Control: regular review of the minutes of lower courts
 - C. References: a written request for advice from a higher court to a lower court on a matter pending before the lower court
 - D. Appeals: transfer to a higher court of a judicial case judged by a lower court
 - E. Complaints: a written representation made against some act or decision of a lower court
 - 1. First to the lower court (within 30 days)
 - 2. Then to the higher court (within 30 days)
 - 3. Must be answered by the court
 - F. Dissents: a minority report expressing a different opinion from the majority
 - G. Protest: a more solemn and formal declaration by members of a minority opinion
 - H. Objection: a minority report of those not having the right to vote on an appeal or complaint declared by the majority.
 - I. Various matters of jurisdiction over individuals by courts are discussed in chapter 46.

The Book of Church Order

THE DIRECTORY FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

The third and final section of *The Book of Church Order* is called “The Directory for the Worship of God.” This section of our standards for church polity summarizes and applies the **“Regulative Principles of Worship”** and is a more detailed exposition of chapter twenty-one of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*: concerning religious worship and the Sabbath Day.

This section of the BCO is not binding upon the churches of the PCA, as the rest of the BCO is, but rather serves as an “approved guide and should be taken seriously as the mind of the church agreeable to the Standards.” It does not have the force of law and is not obligatory in its parts, yet it guides and guards our public, home and private worship as a reflection of Reformed principles for worship.

This section of the BCO includes instruction in the general principles of regulative worship (chapters 47, 48 and 49), the elements of true biblical worship (chapters 49-55), the Sacraments (chapters 56-58), guidelines to seasons and occasions of worship other than the Sabbath Day (chapters 59-62), worship in the home (chapter 63), and several appendices of suggested services (weddings, funerals, dedications, etc.).

Only chapters 56-58 on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are binding and must therefore be followed closely when the Sacraments are administered. These chapters enjoy full constitutional authority and are binding upon all PCA churches.

THE DIRECTORY FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Temporary statement adopted by the Third General Assembly to preface the Directory for Worship. The Directory for Worship is an approved guide and should be taken seriously as the mind of the church agreeable to the Standards. However, it does not have the force of law and is not to be considered obligatory in all its parts. BCO 56, 57 and 58 have been given full constitutional authority by the Eleventh General Assembly after being submitted to the Presbyteries and receiving the necessary two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Presbyteries.

- I. Principles and Element of Worship (Chapter 47)
 - A. Regulative Principle: Only what is prescribed in the Word of God
 - 1. The Word must dictate by precept (no arguments from silence)
 - 2. Corporate Worship: God meeting with His people
 - 3. The Glory of God is the end of public worship
 - 4. Public worship should also build up God's people
 - 5. Worship must be in Spirit and in Truth
 - 6. God has prescribed not liturgy: Freedom with a Form of Regulation
 - B. The Proper Elements of Worship services are:
 - 1. Reading Scripture
 - 2. Singing psalms and hymns
 - 3. Prayer
 - 4. Preaching
 - 5. Offerings
 - 6. Confession of Faith
 - 7. The Sacraments
 - 8. Oaths and Vows on special occasions

- II. The Sanctification of the Lord's Day (Chapter 48)
 - A. The Sabbath day in the N.T. is the Lord's Day (Sunday)
 - B. The Sabbath is kept holy by:
 - 1. Cessation from worldly business and labor
 - 2. Public worship
 - 3. Private devotions and prayer; family worship
 - 4. Cessations from worldly recreations
 - 5. Cessation from worldly thoughts and conversations
 - 6. Acts of mercy and service to others
 - C. Proper preparation for Sunday should be made on Saturday

- III. The Ordering of Public Worship (Chapters 49-58)
 - A. Detailed Guidelines for . . .
 - 1. Assembling for worship (Chapter 49)
 - 2. Public reading of Scripture (Chapter 50)
 - 3. Singing of psalms and hymns (Chapter 51)
 - 4. Public prayers (Chapter 52)
 - 5. Preaching the Word (Chapter 53)
 - 6. Offerings (Chapter 54)
 - 7. The Sacraments (Chapters 56-58)

- B. The three chapters on the Sacraments give detailed instruction for ministers and Sessions in administering:
 - 1. Baptism to infants and children (Chapter 56)
 - 2. Baptism to adults (Chapter 57)
 - 3. The Lord's Supper (Chapter 58)
 - a) Public notification of Communion
 - b) Setting up the table
 - c) Reading or reciting the Words of Institution from the Gospels or I Corinthians 2
 - d) instructions and warnings
 - e) "Fencing the Table" (BCO 58-4)
 - f) Prayers and procedures
 - g) Special offerings

- IV. Other Types of Worship (Chapters 59-62)
(Various guidelines for marriage and funeral services and the visitation of the sick, as well as days of fasting and prayer and thanksgiving)

- V. Christian Life in the Home (Chapter 63)
 - A. Personal devotions, prayer, and worship
 - B. Family devotions (worship)
 - C. Family Catechizing: Word, Catechism, Reading
 - D. Instruction by Parental Example: the key to religion in the home!

Appendices for Ministers: Marriage, Funeral, Graveside and Building dedication services.

SESSION EIGHT SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK

***Read Chapter 8: “Christ’s Purposeful Atonement” &
Chapter 9: “The Spirit’s Effective Call”***

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SHEPHERD?

- Lead
- Protect
- Teach
- Care for

BIBLICAL MANDATE (A SURVEY) GOD HAS NEVER CHANGED ON THIS ISSUE

Old Testament

1. Numbers 27: 15-18 – Moses knows God’s people will perish without a shepherd. They need to be “led out and led in”. Note phrase “like sheep without a shepherd” (cr. Matthew 9: 35-38)
2. Ezekiel 34: 1-20, Jeremiah 23 – One of God’s particular and passionate indictments against Israel was that shepherds had betrayed and neglected their duty. Therefore, God’s people were in desperate straits. God is angry!
 - a. Duties neglected – 34:4 (context is sheep) They failed to:
Strengthen the sick Recover the scattered
Heal the diseased Seek the lost
Bind the broken Feed the flock (34:1)
 - b. Other sins of shepherds
Feeding themselves (34:1)
Using sheep to meet their own needs – greed (34:2)
 - c. Results of no shepherding (34: 5-6)
Sheep scattered and lost
Food for every beast
 - d. God’s solution (34: 7-16, 23-24)
God will deliver sheep personally from shepherds
God will personally see to it that they are shepherded
➤ Prophecy of Christ as Shepherd (Jeremiah 23: 4-6)
3. Psalm 23 – The benefits of a Good Shepherd!
4. Exodus 18: 13-27 – Jethro suggests decentralization of shepherding duties.

5. Numbers 11:14-17, 24-25 – God instructs Moses to select men to share shepherding tasks.

New Testament

We see Old Testament prophecy fulfilled. Jesus, the Chief Shepherd models God's passion for shepherding God's flock. We are also left with precise instructions as to what must be done and who is responsible.

1. Matthew 9:35-38 – Note Christ's compassion and observation, "like sheep without a shepherd". (cr. Numbers 27:15-18)
 2. Matthew 14:14, 15:32, 20:34 – Other references to Christ's passion and compassion.
 3. John 21:15-17 – Emphasis on responsibility for sheep. Note ownership of sheep and need of sheep to be cared for.
 4. John 10:1-18, 27-30 – Jesus as the Good Shepherd.
 5. Acts 20:28-31 – Paul's last words to the Ephesian elders whom he personally discipled. Note urgency/anxiety in communication!
 - Role/responsibility/duty/calling of elders defined
 - Elders appointed by Holy Spirit as overseers/shepherds
 - Object of calling: flock, Church of God
 - Value of God's flock: purchased with the blood of Jesus
- Warnings:**
- Entrance of savage wolves to destroy the flock. Metaphor for men speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them.
 - Will arise from without and within.
6. 1 Peter 5:1-4 – Peter exhorts the elders (as a fellow elder) to fulfill their duty as shepherds of God's flock. He uses negative and positive instructions to define how they should carry out the task.
 7. Hebrews 13:17 – Audience is flock
 - **Command:** To obey and submit to leaders.
 - **Reason:** They keep watch over soul as those who will give an account!
 - Since this is commanded by God, let them do it with joy and not with grief as it would otherwise be unprofitable for sheep.
 8. I Thessalonians 5:12-13 – Sheep instructed to respond to those who have charge over them in the Lord with appreciation and esteem because of their work (it is a tough vocation).

Three-fold Accountability for Shepherding

- A. God's people shepherding one another.
 - Hebrews 3:12-13, 10:24-25 – I Thessalonians 5:14 – Romans 15:14

- B. Shepherds (elders) to God and people
 - Acts 20:28-31 – I Peter 5:1-4
- C. Sheep (God's people) to Shepherd
 - Hebrews 13:17 – I Thessalonians 5:12-13

SHEPHERDING AT CHRIST COVENANT – “MATRIX OF CARE”

1. Through Small Groups
 - a. Men's Groups
 - b. Women's Bible Studies
 - c. Covenant Groups

2. Shepherding the Flock
 - a. Sunday Bible School
 - b. Shepherding Model for Pastors/Elders/Deacons
 - c. Women's' Shepherding Structure (separate handout)

3. Through Pastoral Care Resources
 - a. Pastoral Counseling
 - b. Clinical Counseling through Counseling Advisor, Patti McMillan
 - c. Ministries targeting specific needs:
 - i. Cancer Support
 - ii. Marriage Ministry
 1. Premarital preparation
 2. Marriage enrichment
 3. Remedial care/protection
 - iii. Shepherdess Ministry
 - iv. Set Free Ministries
 - v. His Abilities
 - vi. Kendal Ministry
 - vii. Job Transition Ministry
 - viii. Hospital Visitation
 - ix. Shut-in Visitation

SHEPHERDING VALUES FOR ELDERS AND DEACONS AT CHRIST COVENANT

- VISIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY
 - Lord's Day in Sunday School, before and after worship services
- PRAYER AND ANOINTING OF MEMBERS AT THEIR REQUEST (ELDERS)
- CARE OF MEMBERS IN CRISIS
- OCCASIONAL CHURCH DISCIPLINE ELDER TEAMS

PREPARATION TO SHEPHERD THE FLOCK

- REQUEST YOU READ:
 - How People Change – Paul Tripp
 - Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands – Paul Tripp

**SESSION NINE
EXAM REVIEW**

Read Chapter 10: “God’s Preservation of the Saints”