

STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



Life Together in a Community of Faith:
Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers
in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Professional Code of Ethics

Approved by the

210th General Assembly (1998)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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**LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH:
STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR
ORDAINED OFFICERS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

As an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our Confessions, I affirm the vows made at my ordination, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

I

I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my public ministry. Therefore I will:

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
2. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows;
4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my office of ministry, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

II

I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry. Therefore I will:

1. Preach, teach, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;
2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my office and positions of responsibility I hold;
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my ministry;
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
6. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission, unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
9. Refrain from incurring indebtedness that might compromise my ministry;

10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;
11. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family;
12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable for my ministry;
13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
14. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor;
15. **Participate in the life of a ministry setting I left or from which I have retired only as directed by presbytery;
16. **Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served only as directed by the presbytery and provide pastoral services to members of other congregations only with the consent of their pastors; and
17. **Consult with the committee on ministry in the presbytery of my residence regarding my involvement in any ministry setting during my retirement.

III

I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore I will:

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;
2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;
3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

** These standards apply only to pastors; they also apply to commissioned lay pastors when they are performing pastoral functions.

INTEGRATED VERSION - REFERENCES

LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH: STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR ORDAINED OFFICERS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

As an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our *Confessions*, I affirm the vows made at my ordination, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

References

Jesus Christ as pattern for my life and ministry

Matthew 20:26–28: “. . . whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” See also G-6.0101.

Philippians 2: 1–5: “If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus . . .” See also *1 Peter 1:15–16*.

C-9:24 (The Confession of 1967): “The new life finds its direction in the life of Jesus, his deeds and words, his struggles against temptation, his compassion, his anger, and his willingness to suffer death.”

G-14.0103: “The purpose and pattern of leadership in the church in all its forms of ministry shall be understood not in terms of power but of service, after the manner of the servant ministry of Jesus Christ.”

Relying on God's grace

C-9.22–23 (The Confession of 1967): “The new life takes shape in a community in which men know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no man has any ground on which to stand, except God's grace.

“The new life does not release a man from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, fear. He still has to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as he matures in love and faithfulness in his life with Christ, he lives in freedom and good cheer, bearing witness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.”

Commit myself to the following ethical standards

1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1: “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

Philippians 1:27: “. . . live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ . . .”

James 1:22: “But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.”

James 3:1: “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.”

C-5.167 (Second Helvetic Confession): “SYNODS. Nevertheless, there ought to be proper discipline among ministers. In synods the doctrine and life of ministers is to be carefully examined. Offenders who can be cured are

to be rebuked by the elders and restored to the right way, and if they are incurable, they are to be deposed, and like wolves driven away from the flock of the Lord by the true shepherds.

I

I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my public ministry.

References

Titus 2:7–8: “Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.”

Hebrew 13:7: “Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”

C-4.032 (Heidelberg Catechism):

“Q. 32. But why are you called a Christian?”

“A. Because through faith I share in Christ and thus in his anointing, so that I may confess his name, offer myself a living sacrifice of gratitude to him, and fight against sin and the devil with a free and good conscience.”

Therefore I will:

I.1 Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;

References

Exodus 20:8: “Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.”

Acts 2:42: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

Romans 12:11–13: “Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.”

Ephesians 6:18: “Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

C-5.164 (Second Helvetic Confession): “But in order that the minister may perform all these things better and more easily, it is especially required of him that he fear God, be constant in prayer, attend to spiritual reading, and in all things and at all times be watchful, and by a purity of life to let his light to shine before all men.”

I.2 Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;

References

Exodus 20:16: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Ephesians 4:15: “...speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”

Ephesians 4:25: “So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another.”

Colossians 3:9–10: “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.”

I.3 Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows;

References

Genesis 21:22–34: Story of the covenant of Abraham with Abimelech.

Abimelech. *Exodus 20:14*: “You shall not commit adultery.”

Exodus 20:17: “. . . you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. . . .”

Matthew 19:4–6: “He answered, ‘Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’”

1 Corinthians 6:12–20 “‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are beneficial. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be dominated by anything. ‘Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,’ and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, ‘The two shall be one flesh.’ But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.”

Hebrews 13:4: “Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.”

C-6.123 (Westminster Confession of Faith): [Re: keeping covenants] “An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man’s own hurt: nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.”

C-6.131 (Westminster Confession of Faith): “Christian marriage is an institution ordained of God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, established and sanctified for the happiness and welfare of mankind, into which spiritual and physical union one man and one woman enter, cherishing a mutual esteem and love, bearing with each other’s infirmities and weaknesses, comforting each other in trouble, providing in honesty and industry for each other and for their household, praying for each other, and living together the length of their days as heirs of the grace of life.” See also *G-6.0106b*.

C-6.133-.134 & 6.135(5) & .138 (Westminster Confession of Faith): Marriage is a union between one man and one woman, designed of God to last so long as they both shall live. Marriage is designed for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the safeguarding, undergirding, and development of their spiritual character; for the propagation of children and the rearing of them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. . . . It is the divine intention that persons entering the marriage covenant become inseparably united, thus allowing for no dissolution save that caused by the death of either husband or wife. However, the weaknesses of one or both partners may lead to gross and persistent denial of the marriage vows so that marriage dies at the heart and the union becomes intolerable; yet only in cases of extreme, unrepented-of, and irremediable unfaithfulness (physical or spiritual) should separation or divorce be considered. Such separation or divorce is accepted as permissible only because of the failure of one or both of the partners, and does not lessen in any way the divine intention for indissoluble union. The remarriage of divorced persons may be sanctioned

by the church, in keeping with the redemptive gospel of Christ, when sufficient penitence for sin and failure is evident, and a firm purpose of and endeavor after Christian marriage is manifested.”

C-9.47 (Confession of 1967): “. . . Man’s perennial confusion about the meaning of sex has been aggravated in our day by the availability of new means for birth control and the treatment of infection, by the pressures of urbanization, by the exploitation of sexual symbols in mass communication, and by world overpopulation. The church, as the household of God, is called to lead men out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ. Reconciled to God, each person has joy in and respect for his own humanity and that of other persons; a man and woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern; parents receive the grace to care for children in love and to nurture their individuality. The church comes under the judgment of God and invites rejection by man when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together, or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time.”

I.4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;

References

Exodus 23:9: “You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”

Leviticus 19:15: “You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor.”

Matthew 25:37–40: “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ ”

Mark 12:28–31: “One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, ‘Which commandment is the first of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The first is, “Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second is this, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’ ” See also *Matthew 19:19 and 22:39, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8–9.*

Acts 10:34–35: “Then Peter began to speak to them: ‘I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.’ ”

1 Corinthians 11:19–22: “Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord’s supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?”

C-7.232 (Larger Catechism):

“Q.122. What is the sum of the six Commandments which contain our duty to man?”

“A. The sum of the six Commandments which contain our duty to man is, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to do to others what we would have them to do to us.”

C-8.19–20 (Barmen Declaration): “ ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant.’ (Matt. 20:25, 26)

“The various offices in the Church do not establish a dominion of some over the others; on the contrary, they are for the exercise of the ministry entrusted to and enjoined upon the whole congregation.”

C-9.44 (*Confession of 1967*): “God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love, he overcomes the barriers between brothers and breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary. The church is called to bring all men to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize their fellowmen, however, subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith they profess.”

C-9.46 (*Confession of 1967*): “. . . A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God.”

I.5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my office of ministry, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;

References

Exodus 20:8–10: “Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work . . .”

Exodus 20:12: “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

C-9.47 (*Confession of 1967*): See I.3. above.

I.6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;

References

Exodus 20:15: “You shall not steal.”

Proverbs 20:1: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray is not wise.”

Proverbs 23:29–35: “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger late over wine, those who keep trying mixed wines. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last, it bits like a serpent, and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind utter perverse things. You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. ‘They struck me,’ you will say, ‘but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.’ ”

1 Corinthians 3:16–17: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”

Galatians 5:13–15: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.”

C-7.251–.252 (*Larger Catechism*):

“Q.141 **What are the duties required in the Eighth Commandment?**

“A. The duties required in the Eighth Commandment are: truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections, concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose of those things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and a diligence in it; frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits, and suretyship, or other like engagements; and an endeavor by all just and lawful means to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.

“Q.142 What are the sins forbidden in the Eighth Commandment?”

“A. The sins forbidden in the Eighth Commandment besides the neglect of duties required, are: theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing; . . . injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; . . . all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness, inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise . . . we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate; and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.”

I.7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and

References

Exodus 20:16: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Leviticus 19:16: “You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people . . .”

Proverbs 20:19: “A gossip reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a babbler.”

2 Timothy 2:16–17: “Avoid profane chatter, for it will lead people into more and more impiety, and their talk will spread like gangrene . . .”

James 4:11–12: “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?”

1 Peter 2:1: “Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.”

C-7.254–255 (Larger Catechism): See also *C-4.112 (Heidelberg Catechism)*.

“Q. 144. What are the duties required in the Ninth Commandment?”

“A. The duties required in the Ninth Commandment are: the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors, loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocence; a ready receiving of good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatters, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

“Q. 145. What are the sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment?”

“A. The sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment are: all prejudicing of the truth, and the good name of our neighbors as well as our own, especially in public judicature; . . . speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling; . . .”

I.8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God’s reconciling will.

References

Psalms 51: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions,” et seq.

Proverbs 28:13: “No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”

Matthew 18:21–22: “Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven.’ ”

Philippians 2:3: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.” See also *Proverbs 22:4*, *1 Peter 5:5–6*.

James 1:21: “Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.”

James 5:16: “Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”

1 John 1:8–9: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

C-4.088–.089 (Heidelberg Catechism): See also *C-4.090–.091*.

“Q. 88. How many parts are there to the true repentance or conversion of man?” “A. Two: the dying of the old self and the birth of the new.

“Q. 89. What is the dying of the old self?”

“A. Sincere sorrow over our sins and more and more to hate them and to flee from them.”

C-7.254–.255 (Larger Catechism): See I.7. above.

C-6.086 (Westminster Confession of Faith): “As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof, upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy: so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.”

C-9.21 (Confession of 1967): “The reconciling work of Jesus was the supreme crisis in the life of mankind. His cross and resurrection become personal crisis and present hope for men when the gospel is proclaimed and believed. In this experience, the Spirit brings God’s forgiveness to men, moves them to respond in faith, repentance, and obedience, and initiates the new life in Christ.”

II

I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry.

References

Joshua 7:19: “Then Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession to him. Tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’ ”

Psalms 69:5: “O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.”

1 John 1:5–7: “. . . God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he

himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” See also *Ephesians 5:8–12*.

Therefore I will:

II.1 Preach, teach and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;

References

Leviticus 19:15: See I.4. above.

2 Samuel 12: Story of Nathan’s encounter with David, the king regarding Bathsheba, at v. 7: “Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man! Thus says the Lord . . .’”

Jeremiah 26: “Jeremiah’s Prophecies in the Temple.” See especially vs. 14–15: “But as for me, here I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will be bringing innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the Lord sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.” See also *Jeremiah 28*, story of Jeremiah and the yokes of wood and iron.

Acts 10:34: See I.4. above. See also *James 2:8–9*.

Acts, Chapters 24–26: Story of Paul’s trial in Jerusalem and imprisonment in Caesarea. See especially 26:22–23: “To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

1 Peter 3:13–18: “Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.”

C-7.269 (Larger Catechism):

“Q.159. How is the Word of God to be preached by those that are called thereunto?”

“A. They that are called to labor in the ministry of the Word are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season, and out of season, plainly, not in the enticing word of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God. . . .”

II.2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;

References

Genesis 38: Story of Judah and Tamar.

Genesis 39: Story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife.

Psalms 55:20: “My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me. . . .”

Matthew 26:48–49: “Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.’ At once he came up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed him.”

C-4.105:

“Q.105. What does God require in the sixth commandment?”

“A. That I am not to abuse, hate, injure, or kill my neighbor, either with thought, or by word or gesture, much less by deed, whether by myself or through another, but to lay aside all desire for revenge; and that I do not harm myself or willfully expose myself to danger. This is why the authorities are armed with the means to prevent murder.”

II.3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my office and positions of responsibility I hold;

References

2 Samuel, Chapters 11 and 12: Story of David and Bathsheba.

Matthew 20:25–28: “But Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’ ”

Matthew 23:8, 10–12: “But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. . . . Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

1 Peter 5:1–3: “Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock.”

C-5.157 (Second Helvetic Confession):

“THE POWER OF MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH. Now, therefore, it is fitting that we also say something about the power and duty of the ministers of the Church. Concerning this power some have argued industriously, and to it have subjected everything on earth, even the greatest things, and they have done so contrary to the commandment of the Lord who has prohibited dominion for his disciples and has highly commended humility (Luke 22:24 ff.; Matt. 18:3 f.; 20:25 ff.) There is, indeed, another power that is pure and absolute, which is called the power of right. According to this power all things in the whole world are subject to Christ, who is Lord of all, as he himself has testified when he said: ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’ (Matthew 28:18), and again, ‘I am the first and the last, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Hades and Death’ (Rev. 1:18); also, ‘He has the key of David, which opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens’ (Rev. 3:7).”

C-9.40 (Confession of 1967): “. . . Different orders have served the gospel, and none can claim exclusive validity. A presbyterian polity recognizes the responsibility of all members for ministry and maintains the organic relation of all congregations in the church. It seeks to protect the church from exploitation by ecclesiastical or secular power and ambition.”

II.4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my ministry;

References

Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” See also *Luke 16:13*.

II.5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the covenant community for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;

References

2 *Samuel 11*: David and Bathsheba story.

Psalms 55:20: “My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me.”

C-5.157 (Second Helvetic Confession): “THE POWER OF MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.” See II.3. above. *C-9.47 (Confession of 1967)*: See I.3. above.

II.6. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission, unless an individual is a danger to self or others;

References

Proverbs 11:13: “A gossip goes about telling secrets, but one who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a confidence.”

Proverbs 25:9–10: “Argue your case with your neighbor directly, and do not disclose another’s secret; or else someone who hears you will bring shame upon you, and your ill repute will have no end.”

C-7.254–.255 (Larger Catechism): See I.7. above.

II.7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;

References

Romans 12:3–8: “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.”

Ephesians 4:7, 11–12: “But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. . . . The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, . . .” See also [I Corinthians 3:6–7](#).

C-5.151 (Second Helvetic Confession): “ORDINATION. And those who are elected are to be ordained by the elders with public prayer and laying on of hands. Here we condemn all those who go off of their own accord, being neither chosen, sent, nor ordained (Jer. ch 23). We condemn unfit ministers and those not furnished with the necessary gifts of a pastor.”

II.8 Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;

References

Exodus 20:15: “You shall not steal.”

Proverbs 20:17: “Bread gained by deceit is sweet, but afterward the mouth will be full of gravel.”

Romans 13:7: “Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.”

Galatians 6:3: “For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves.” *C-7.251–.252 (Larger Catechism)*: See I.6. above. See also *C-4.110 (Heidelberg Catechism)*.

II.9 Refrain from incurring indebtedness which might compromise my ministry;

References

Exodus 20:15: “You shall not steal.”

Proverbs 22:7: “The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.” *Matthew 6:24* and *Luke 16:13*: See II.4. above.

Luke 12:29–31: “And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”

Romans 13:8: “Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”

Hebrews 13:5: “Keep your lives from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you.’ ”

C-7.251–.252 (Larger Catechism): See I.6. above.

II.10 Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;

References

Exodus 20:15: “You shall not steal.”

Luke 16:1–3, 10–13: “Then Jesus said to the disciples, ‘There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ . . . Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. . . . if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.’ ”

1 Corinthians 4:1–2: “Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.”

C-7.251–.252 (Larger Catechism): See I.6. above.

II.11 Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family;

References

Exodus 23:8: “You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.”

Ecclesiastes 7:7: “Surely oppression makes the wise foolish, and a bribe corrupts the heart.”

Acts 4:32–5:11: See story of Ananias and Sapphira’s sale of land, concealing their holdback of part of the proceeds forwarded to the congregation.

1 John 2:15–16: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world.”

C-7.251 (*Larger Catechism*): See I.6. above.

II.12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable for my ministry;

References

Joshua 7: Story of Achan. See especially vs.19–20: “Then Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession to him. Tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’ “And Achan answered Joshua, ‘It is true! I am the one who sinned against the Lord God of Israel. This is what I did.’ ”

2 Corinthians 5:19–20: “. . . in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13: “But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.”

C-5.165 (*Second Helvetic Confession*): “DISCIPLINE. And since discipline is an absolute necessity in the Church and excommunication was once used in the time of the early fathers, and there were ecclesiastical judgments among the people of God, wherein this discipline was exercised by wise and godly men, it also falls to ministers to regulate this discipline for edification, according to the circumstances of the time, public state, and necessity. At all times and in all places the rule is to be observed that everything is to be done for edification, decently and honorably, without oppression and strife. For the apostle testifies that authority in the Church was given to him by the Lord for building up and not for destroying (II Cor. 10:8). And the Lord himself forbade the weeds to be plucked up in the Lord’s field, because there would be danger lest the wheat also be plucked up with it. (Matt. 13:29f.)”

C-5.167 (*Second Helvetic Confession*): See Above, Introduction, “Commit myself to the following ethical standards.”

C-6.109 (*Westminster Confession of Faith*): “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.” See also *GI.0301*.

II.13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;

References

Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach the statutes and ordinances in Israel.” See also *Neh. 8:13*.

Psalms 32:8–9: “I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Do not be like a horse or a mule without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.”

Proverbs 9:9: “Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous, and they will gain in learning.”

Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.”

Titus 1:9: “He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.”

Re mentoring: Note especially Paul’s relation to Timothy, as expressed in *1 Timothy*:

4:16: “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

6:20–21: “Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge; by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith.

“Grace be with you.”

2 *Timothy* 3:10–11; 14–17: “Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and suffering the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. . . . But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.”

C-9.49 (*Confession of 1967*): “. . . effective preaching, teaching, and personal witness require disciplined study of both the Bible and the contemporary world.”

II.14. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office, speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor;

References

Deuteronomy 34:9: “Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses.”

2 *Kings* 2:1–14: Elisha inherits Elijah’s mantle.

Romans 13:7: “Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.”

1 *Corinthians* 3:3–9: “. . . For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, ‘I belong to Paul,’ and another, ‘I belong to Apollos,’ are you not merely human?

“What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

C-5.155 (*Second Helvetic Confession*): “THE NATURE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. Paul explains simply and briefly what we are to think of the ministers of the New Testament or of the Christian Church, and what we are to attribute to them. ‘This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God’ (I Cor. 4:1). Therefore, the apostle wants us to think of ministers as ministers. Now the apostle calls them *uphretaV*, rowers, who have their eyes fixed on the coxswain, and so men who do not live for themselves or according to their own will, but for others—namely, their masters, upon whose command they altogether depend. For in all his duties every minister of the Church is commanded to carry out only what he has received in commandment from his Lord, and not to indulge his own free choice. And in this case it is expressly declared who is the Lord, namely, Christ; to whom the ministers are subject in all the affairs of the ministry.”

****II.15. Participate in the life of a ministry setting I left or from which I have retired only as directed by presbytery;**

References

1 Corinthians 3:3–9: See II.14. above.

C-5.155 (Second Helvetic Confession): See II.14. above.

****II.16. Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served only as directed by the presbytery and provide pastoral services to members of other congregations only with the consent of their pastors; and**

References

1 Corinthians 3:3–9: See II.14. above.

C-5.155 (Second Helvetic Confession): See II.14. above. G-14.0405b(5): See ordination vows above at Introduction.

****II.17. Consult with the committee on ministry in presbytery of residence regarding my involvement in any ministry setting during my retirement.**

References

1 Corinthians 3:19–23: “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness,’ and again, ‘The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.’ So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—All belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.”

III

I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the church universal.

References

Galatians 6:9–10: “So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.”

C-5.127 (Second Helvetic Confession): “PARTS OR FORMS OF THE CHURCH. The Church is divided into different parts or forms; not because it is divided or rent asunder in itself, but rather because it is distinguished by the diversity of the numbers that are in it.”

Therefore I will:

III.1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;

References

Ephesians 4:4–6: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

C-5.126 (Second Helvetic Confession): “ONLY ONE CHURCH FOR ALL TIMES. And since there is always but only one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Jesus the Messiah, and one Shepherd of the whole flock, one Head of this body, and, to conclude, one Spirit, one salvation, one faith, one Testament or covenant, it necessarily follows that there is only one Church. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

We, therefore, call this Church catholic because it is universal, scattered through all parts of the world, and extended unto all times, and is not limited to any times or places. . . .”

C-9.40 (Confession of 1967): See II.3. above.

III.2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;

References

1 Corinthians 12: 26–30: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. . . . Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?”

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13: See II.12. above.

C-6.186 (Westminster Confession of Faith): “By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit all believers being vitally united to Christ, who is the head, are thus united one to another in the Church, which is his body. He calls and anoints ministers for their holy office, qualifies all other officers in the Church for their special work, and imparts various gifts and graces to its members. He gives efficacy to the Word and to the ordinances of the gospel. By him the Church will be preserved, increased, purified, and at last made perfectly holy in the presence of God.”

III.3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations;

References

Exodus 20:17: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Matthew 7:12: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”

C-7.256–.257:

“Q.146 Which is the Tenth Commandment?”

“A. The Tenth Commandment is, ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.’

“Q.147 What are the duties required in the Tenth Commandment?”

“A. The duties required in the Tenth Commandment are: such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul towards our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto and further all that good which is his.”

III.4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

References

Micah 6:8: [The Lord] “has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

C-9.41–42 (Confession of 1967): “The church in its mission encounters the religions of men and in that encounter becomes conscious of its own human character as a religion. God’s revelation to Israel, expressed within Semitic culture, gave rise to the religion of the Hebrew people. God’s revelation in Jesus Christ called forth the response of Jews and Greeks and came to expression within Judaism and Hellenism as the Christian religion. The Christian religion, as distinct from God’s revelation of himself, has been shaped throughout its history by the cultural forms of its environment.

“The Christian finds parallels between other religions and his own and must approach all religions with openness and respect. Repeatedly God has used the insight of non-Christians to challenge the church to renewal. But the reconciling word of the gospel is God’s judgment upon all forms of religion, including the Christian. The gift of God in Christ is for all men. The church, therefore, is commissioned to carry the gospel to all men whatever their religion may be and even when they profess none.”

C-9.46 (Confession of 1967): “The reconciliation of man through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God’s good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world’s poor is the cause of his disciples. The church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the product of unjust social structures, exploitation of the defenseless, lack of national resources, absence of technological understanding, or rapid expansion of populations. The church calls every man to use his abilities, his possessions, and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to him by God for the maintenance of his family and the advancement of the common welfare. It encourages those forces in human society that raise men’s hopes for better conditions and provide them with opportunity for a decent living. A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God.”

Abbreviations for Sources and References:

The Book of Confessions: C

Translation of the Bible—New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)