

# Synodical Regulations Regarding the Reception & Training of Students for the Ministry

Of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

## Regulations

- A Synodical committee, called "The Training of the Ministry Committee", shall administer the Synodical regulations of the training of students for the ministry.
  
- The initial procedure that applicants are to follow is:
  - I. No application for admission as a student for the ministry shall be entertained unless the applicant is a member in full communion with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
  
  - II. Applicants must have procured and read the Synod's Regulations for the reception and Training of Students for the Ministry.
  
  - III. Applicants shall in the first instance apply to their particular Sessions for recommendation to the Presbytery of the bounds.

It shall be the duty of the Sessions to satisfy themselves with regard to the piety and manner of life of applicants, and to enquire as to the evidence of a special call to the work of the ministry. In this connection, Sessions are expected to take account, not only of the call of the Word, but also the state of the applicant's knowledge of the Scriptures and of their gifts in general.

When a Session decides to grant an application, the Clerk shall supply the applicant with an extract of minute bearing on his case, which extract the applicant should forward to the Clerk of Presbytery, on his applying to that Court. When, on the other hand, an application is refused, the Session shall instruct the applicant as to his right of appeal to the Presbytery.

- IV. The Clerk of Presbytery, on receiving an application together with the relative extract minute, shall intimate to the applicant the date and place of the first meeting of Presbytery at which the application shall be considered, and shall request the applicant's attendance, due regard being had to his convenience.

The Presbytery shall examine the applicant further as to his grounds for desiring to enter the ministry, and, in addition, shall address to him the following questions:

- i. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and life?
- ii. Are you in full sympathy with the doctrinal position of this Church, particularly as they are set out in the Westminster Confessional Standards?
- iii. Do you accept wholeheartedly the form of worship, discipline and government presently practiced in this Church?
- iv. Do you promise that you will subject yourself to the Courts of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?
- v. Provided you are accepted as a student, do you promise:
  - a. That, should you be conscious of a change of mind on any of these matters during your student course, you will at once intimate this to the Clerk of Presbytery by whom you were received, and
  - b. That if, in consequence of such a change of mind, you cease to be a student of the Church, you may be required, at the discretion of the Presbytery, to refund all or any part of the money you may have received from the Church to assist you in your training?
- V. When a Presbytery is satisfied with an applicant, they shall receive him as a student in training for the ministry of the Church and the Clerk shall immediately intimate the fact to the Training of the Ministry Committee. When, on the other hand, an application is refused, the applicant shall be instructed as to his right of appeal to the Synod and all relevant documents shall be sent to the Synod Clerk.
- That the following shall be the foundational principles that are to be basic to all the Theological training of students for the ministry. That is:

- I. All theological and exegetical studies are to be conducted consistently with, and in the light of, the doctrinal standards as set forth in the Constitution of this Church. In so far as possible such studies are to be related to, and to be an expression of, those Standards as they are subordinate to Scripture.
  
- II. The Standards of the Church are composed of the following documents: The Westminster Confession of Faith; the Shorter and Larger Catechisms; The Directory for the Public Worship of God; The Form of Presbyterial Church Government; The Directory for Family Worship; and other Confessional Standards accepted by the Reformed Church of Scotland prior to the Revolutionary Settlement, such as The First Scotch Confession (Knox's Confession) of 1560; The Second Confession of Faith of the Kirk of Scotland (the National Covenant) of 1639; The First and Second Books of Discipline etc.
  
- III. The Sum of Saving Knowledge and the Practical Use Thereof, is to be used as an outline of the practical outworking of the Westminster Confessional Standards.
  
- The Curriculum of Studies students are to cover is to consist of the following subjects:

\*

Systematic Theology

4 years

\*

Biblical Theology

4 years

\*

Greek

4 years

\*

Hebrew

4 years

\*

Church History

4 years

\*

Devotional Reading

4 years

\*

Homiletics

4 years

\*

Missions and Evangelizing

4 years

\*

Symbolics

2 years

\*

O.T. Studies

2 years

\*

N.T. Studies

2 years

\*

Hermeneutics

2 years

\*

Pastoral Theology

2 years

\*

Church Polity

1 year

\*

Liturgics

1 year

\*

Ethics

1 year

\*

Apologetics

1 year

\*

Philosophy/Logic

1 year

\*

Christian Education

1 year

\*

Archaeology & Biblical History

1 year

- The educational entrance standards for the training for the ministry, shall normally be University matriculation or equivalent. If in the opinion of Presbytery it is necessary, this standard can be waived.
  
- All students must submit an annual written report to their Presbyteries on the progress of their studies, producing exam results, copies of their essays etc.
  
- All students must, unless distant from the bounds of their Presbytery, submit to an annual verbal examination by their Presbyteries on their studies.
  
- Presbyteries are to submit an annual report to the Synodical Committee, who are to bring a report to each ordinary Synod, and with such recommendations as it sees fit.
  
- The Presbyteries are to be responsible for both the appointment of tutors, and pastoral supervision of students, as well as what Colleges can be used to train our students in specific subjects, provided that before embarking on a proposed course, it receive the Synodical Committee's approval.
  
- That the first and final year of the study course (normally four years), be in our more distinctive doctrines, and that they be fully supervised and, as much as possible, be tutored by ministers of our own denomination. That the intermediate years of studies be in such suitable Colleges or tutors from outside our denomination, until such time as the Lord may be pleased to enable us to fully train our own ministers.
  
- All students as far as is practical, shall during the course of their training, spend time with as many of the constituted congregations as possible (under supervision), in order that their gifts and calling or otherwise may be discerned by the Church membership.
  
- That the finances for supporting students for the ministry be gathered by:
  - I. As much as possible, a congregation sponsor them. Any shortfall in this sponsorship will be met from funds raised throughout the whole Church for this purpose.
  
  - II. That regular special offerings be instituted in all congregations to allow people to give of their free will offerings for this purpose.
  
  - III. That money boxes be made available by the

Synod Committee responsible for administering the training of students, for use in the home where loose change can be collected, and that the contents of the money boxes when full, be sent to the Synod Committee.

- IV. That the same Synod committee be authorized to receive voluntary regular or irregular gifts from persons who may wish to support students training, in this direct manner.
- V. The Presbyteries should consult with their students at the time of the initial interviews, and before these matters are referred to the Synod Committee, as to their material needs, and if necessary, make application to the Synod Committee for additional financial help other than what the Presbytery can arrange.
- VI. No man may be accepted as a student unless he is a full time student. This requirement can be only waived by leave of the Presbytery, under exceptional circumstances.
- That all elders are called upon to encourage those men in whom they discern the possible gifts for the ministry, to prayerfully consider whether the Lord may be calling them to the ministry of the gospel.
- After a man has completed his studies he cannot be ordained by a Presbytery of our Church, until Synod has given him an oral examination, and approved his ordination.

Further details on the subjects for study

\* Systematic Theology shall cover Introduction; Doctrine of God; Doctrine of Man in Relation to God; Doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ; The Church; Eschatology.

\* Biblical Theology shall cover Introduction; Survey of the History of Revelation; Creation; Redemption; Sacrifices; Prophetism; Apocalyptic Literature; Eschatological themes; Christology; Christ's Life.

\* Greek shall cover grammar in first year, and translation and exegetical exercises in other years.



\* Hebrew shall cover grammar in first year, and translation and exegetical exercises in other years.

\* Church History shall cover Presuppositions; The Reformation; Scottish Church History; Early Church History; Medieval Church History; European, American & especially Australian Church History in the 19th & 20th century.

\* Devotional Reading shall be set and include such books as the Lives of John Knox, William Tyndale, John Calvin, Andrew Melville; Psalm 119 and Proverbs by Charles Bridges; Religious Affections by Jonathan Edwards; Lectures to My Students by Charles Spurgeon and the Reformed Pastor by Richard Baxter etc.

\* Homiletics shall include the theory and practice of preaching.

\* Missions & Evangelizing shall include the Biblical definitions of; Theology of; History of and practice of.

\* Symbolics shall include the study of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church; Scottish & Westminster Confessional Standards; other Reformed Confessions.

\* O.T. Studies shall include the study of the content and outline of the books of the O.T.; Date of; Author of etc; Pentateuchal books; Prophetic books; the Wisdom & Historical Literature; O.T. Canon.

\* N.T. Studies shall include the study of the content and outline of the books of the N.T.; Date of; Author of etc; Form & Textual Criticism; The Synoptic issue; the N.T. Canon.

\* Hermeneutics shall include the study of Presuppositions and Principles of; Practice in O.T. & N.T. books and types of literature.

\* Pastoral Theology shall include the study of counselling presuppositions; Spiritual, Physical and Social development of personality; Marriage and Family life; Sickness and grief; death and dying; Visitation.

\* Church Polity shall include the study of Presbyterian Church Government; Practices and Procedures of Church Courts; the relationship of the visible Church to the Civil Magistrate (the Establishment Principle).

\* Ethics shall include the study of Revelation and Morality; Presuppositions and Absolutes; the Antithesis of naturalistic and Christian ethics; Practical application.

\* Apologetics & Philosophy/Logic shall include the study of the Principles of Logic; Christian presuppositions to Apologetics and Philosophy; Summary of Secular Philosophies; attempts at a "Christian philosophy"; Sects; Science and Christianity (Rationalism & Revelation); Contemporary Theology; Non-Christian Religions.

\* Christian Education shall include the study of the Biblical basis and presuppositions of Christian Education; its basis and purpose; the Cultural Mandate; The Reformed World and Life View.

\* Archaeology & Bible History shall include the study of the use and help of archaeology and its limits; Introduction to O.T. & N.T. Archaeology; Survey of Bible History, including the Inter-testamentary period.

\* Liturgics shall include the study of the Regulative Principle and its application to such matters as song, set forms and prayers; musical instruments; sacred days etc.Â Â

Requirements for Preaching and Evaluation of Student's in their Intern Year, and the Form of Evaluation

- Preaching:

The Student should preach a minimum of eighteen (18) sermons during the internship. All sermons should be new sermons for him. Nine of the sermons should be set by the supervising Pastor/s and the balance chosen by the student. A sermon outline must be submitted to the supervising Pastor, with complete exegesis if requested,

for critique and approval at least one week prior to the preaching of each sermon. A copy of the sermon outline and exegesis, if any has been requested, is to be sent to the Convenor of the Training of the Ministry Committee, for distribution to members of the Committee.

- Evaluation of sermons and ministerial development.

Elders and ministers will formally critique the student in his preaching in accordance with the form provided by the Training of the Ministry Committee. The supervising minister will gather those critiques for communication to the student, sermon by sermon. At the end of his time in that place the Session will meet with him for discussion and brotherly advice and encouragement. The general assessment of the Session will be forwarded to the Convenor of the Training of the Ministry Committee with a view to the formulation of a report and assessment by the Committee.

- The Student should be afforded the opportunity to teach catechism classes on a regular basis.
- The Student should be afforded the opportunity to lead in mid week studies and youth studies.
- The Student should attend some Session meetings and Deacon's court meetings during the course of the internship.
- The Student should in company with the Pastor of the charge, do such Pastoral work as the Pastor deems appropriate (e.g., family visitation, visiting the sick, comforting the bereaved and counseling sessions). The student's Pastoral experience ought to be both as broad and as intensive as possible.
- The Student should read and briefly review a minimum of twelve books taken from all areas of the theological curriculum, but with emphasis on Practical-Theological studies. Specific titles will be assigned by the Training of the Ministry Committee. Reviews of these books must be submitted to the Training of the Ministry Committee.
- The Student should undertake the following courses of study under the ministers of the church in consultation with the Convenor of the Training of the Ministry Committee: On Scottish Church History. On the Confessional Standards of the church. On the Law and Practice and the Acts of Presbytery. On the history and doctrine re common grace. On the principles and practicalities relevant to special services, counseling, public prayer and ministerial department (e.g., such special services as marriage, funerals, baptisms, Lord's Supper services, and counseling such as pre-marriage, pre-confession, marital issues, addiction, and trauma), and this take place under the supervision of the ministers at the meetings of Presbytery

in his intern year.

#### Responsibilities of each Supervising Pastor and Session

- The different supervising Pastors should meet with The Student following his preaching engagements to discuss the sermon and how he conducted the service. In addition, the different supervising Pastors should meet with The Student regularly to discuss his work and progress.
- The different supervising Pastors, in consultation with the Session, will submit an overall evaluation of the student's work, together with recommendations, etc., at the conclusion of the student's internship.