

Written Ordination Examinations

- Theology •
- Sacraments •
- Reformed Tradition •

General Exam Information

Content Areas

Content areas required by *Book of Government* 13-2 are covered in four written ordination exams:

1. English Bible (2 hours maximum; no books, Bibles, or notes of any kind allowed)
2. Theology, Sacraments, and Reformed Tradition (3 hours maximum; Bible text allowed – no books, study Bibles, Bibles with cross references, or personal notes)
3. Polity (4 hours maximum; open book)
4. Exegesis (2 sections: Biblical Hebrew or Greek Exegesis and Written Sermon Manuscript on the assigned passage. 7 days maximum; exam answers must be typed.)

Exam Arrangements

The four exams must be taken within a time frame of three weeks. Any exceptions for the time limits of each exam (e.g., for those whose first language is not English) must have an advance agreement with both the Presbytery and General Assembly.

After receiving approval from the presbytery's Candidates or Ministerial Committee, the examinee is responsible to secure an approved proctor and arrange a time and place for the exam. The proctor is typically a pastor or church staff member. Others may be approved by the presbytery chairman requesting the exams. Family members will normally not be approved as proctors. Exam arrangements, including the name and mailing address of the proctor, must be communicated to the presbytery chairman requesting the exam.

The presbytery Ministerial or Candidates Committee Chairman submits a **Request for Ordination Exam Form**¹ by email, mail or fax to the Office of the General Assembly. The examinee's current Personal Information Form (PIF) must accompany the exam request.

Requests must be received at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed exam dates in the event there are any problems to be resolved and to avoid unnecessary mailing expenses. Exams and an instruction sheet will be mailed to the proctor no more than 30 days from the projected exam date.

Exam Grading and Results

The proctor mails completed exams to the Office of the General Assembly by a means requiring a signature (e.g., registered mail, Fed Ex envelope). Exams are then forwarded to a grader. Results are typically received from the grader within 10 days. Grading times may be longer over holidays and in the summer.

Scores are communicated from the General Assembly Office to the Presbytery chairman requesting the exam and the presbytery Stated Clerk. The Presbytery chairman, in turn, notifies the examinee. A passing score is 75%. If a passing score is not achieved, the examinee is eligible to take a different version of the exam 30 days following the date of the original exam.

¹ Form may be downloaded from www.epc.org/resources/forms

The request for a second exam follows the procedure above. A third attempt is possible, if needed, after another 30 days.

Theology, Sacraments, and Reformed Tradition Exam

Scope

Theology: Covers all the traditional heads of Systematic Theology with an emphasis on Reformed Theology

Sacraments: Covers the major viewpoints on the Sacraments with an emphasis on the Reformed/Presbyterian view

Reformed Tradition: Covers major people and events of church history with a focus on those with major contributions to the Reformed tradition, particularly American Presbyterianism

Types of Questions

The exam utilizes a range of questions from true/false, multiple choice and matching to short answer and short essay.

Suggested Books and Resources for Study and Review

As the exam covers the broad sweep of Systematic Theology and the Reformed Tradition, a thorough review of notes from seminary classes is a must. Of the many books that cover the material in the exam (see the EPC's "Reformed Reading List," pages 6-9), those listed below have been selected as the best in bringing a good deal of material together in one place for the purpose of reviewing for the exam. *Those marked with an asterisk (*) are essential to digest.*

General

Evangelical Presbyterian Church. 2007. *Leadership Training Guide*. Livonia, Michigan: Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Theology

(Note: Many of the resources listed below also have material related to the Sacraments)

Berkhof, Louis. 1938. *Summary of Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

*Evangelical Presbyterian Church. 2004. *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms in Modern English*. Livonia, Michigan: Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Murray, John. 1955. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

Packer, J.I. 1961. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.

Robertson, O. Palmer. 1985. *Christ of the Covenants*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.

Sacraments

*Evangelical Presbyterian Church. 2008. *The Book of Order*. Livonia, Michigan: Evangelical Presbyterian Church. (See “Book of Worship,” chapter 3)

Glodo, Michael J. “Covenant Sign and Seal.”

http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/mik_glodo/TH.Glodo.Signs.1.html,

http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/mik_glodo/TH.Glodo.Signs.2.html

Strawbridge, Gregg, ed. 2003. *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.

Reformed Tradition

Lucas, Sean Michael. *On Being Presbyterian*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.

Smylie, James H. 2006. *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*. Atlanta: Westminster John Knox Press.

Wells, David, ed. 1985. *Reformed Theology in America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. (Sections published separately as *Dutch Reformed Theology*, *The Princeton Theology*, and *Southern Reformed Theology*.)

Topics for Review

Theology

(Note: Be able to identify the position of the Westminster Confession of Faith when it addresses these topics)

- ◆ Definitions and biblical support for the doctrines of revelation and inspiration identified with various systems of theology and theologians
- ◆ Formation of the canon
- ◆ Definition and biblical support for the nature and attributes of God, both communicable and incommunicable
- ◆ Major approaches to theodicy
- ◆ Major views and biblical theology of the providence of God
- ◆ Classic arguments for the existence of God
- ◆ Definition and biblical support for the doctrine of the Trinity

- ◆ Definition and Biblical support for the humanity and Deity of Christ
- ◆ Major Christological and Trinitarian heresies and the people associated with them
- ◆ Major conclusions and circumstances surrounding the ecumenical councils and creeds
- ◆ The “cultural mandate” as viewed in the Reformed tradition
- ◆ Biblical theology of angels and demons
- ◆ Biblical theology of the nature of human beings
- ◆ Covenants of God with humanity
- ◆ Covenant theology as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith
- ◆ Significance of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ
- ◆ Definition of, people associated with, and biblical support for the major theories of the atonement
- ◆ Definition and biblical support for the *ordo salutis* as a whole and in each of its parts
- ◆ Definition and biblical support for the “five points of Calvinism” in contrast with Arminianism
- ◆ Relationship of law and grace in the Reformed tradition
- ◆ Biblical theology for the assurance of salvation
- ◆ Biblical theology of person and work of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ Definition and biblical theology behind major schools of thought regarding eschatology

Sacraments

(note: give emphasis to the Reformed/Presbyterian view of the Sacraments)

- ◆ Views of major theological traditions and their biblical support for:
 - the nature of sacraments in general
 - baptism
 - the Lord’s Supper

Reformed Tradition

- ◆ Identify and explain the significant events of the Reformation in Europe and Great Britain
- ◆ Identify and explain the significant theological issues surrounding the Reformation in Europe and Great Britain
- ◆ Identify the significant events and theological issues in the history of American Presbyterianism
- ◆ Identify the events and/or writings associated with and the contributions of the following people (positively or negatively) to our faith:

Alexander, Archibald

Anselm

Athanasius

Aquinas, Thomas

Arius

Arminius, Jacob

Augustine

Barker, Frank S.

Barnes, Albert

Bede

Beecher, Lyman

Bell, L. Nelson

Bernard of Clairveaux

Briggs, Charles A.

Bryan, William Jennings

Bucer, Martin

Calvin, John

Cartwright, Thomas

Constantine

Cranmer, Thomas

Dabney, Robert L.

Davies, Samuel

Dickinson, Jonathan

Erasmus

Charles Finney

Fosdick, Harry Emerson

St. Francis

Gregory the Great

Hodge, Charles

Hus, John

Irenaeus

Jackson, Sheldon

Jerome

Jumper, Andrew A.	Smith, Henry B.
Knox, John	Sunday, Billy
Loyola, Ignatius	Tennent, Gilbert
Luther, Martin	Tertullian
Makemie, Francis	Thomson, John
Machen, J. Gresham	Thornwell, James H.
Martyr, Justin	Tyndal, Willam
McGready, James	Ursinius
Melanchthon, Philip	Warfield, B.B.
Miller, Samuel	Wesley, John
Olevianus	Wesley, Charles
St. Patrick	Witherspoon, John
Pelagius	Whitefield, George
Sattler, Michael	Wilson, Woodrow
Servetus, Michael	Wycliffe, John
Simonton, Ashbel	Xavier, Francis
Simmons, Menno	Zwingli, Ulrich

REFORMED READING LIST

(revised 2008)

THEOLOGY

- Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology (Fourth Edition)*. 1941. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Berkhof, Louis. *Summary of Christian Doctrine*. 1938. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. John T. McNeill, Ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.
- Clowney, Edmund P. 1995 *The Church*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- Edgar, William. 2004. *Truth in All Its Glory: Commending the Reformed Faith*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.
- Ferguson, Sinclair. 1997. *The Holy Spirit*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- Frame, John. 2002. *The Doctrine of God (A Theology of Lordship)*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.
- Hoekema, Anthony. 1995. *The Bible and the Future*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Murray, John. 1955. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Packer, J.I. 1961. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- . “Introductory Essay to the Death of Death in the Death of Christ” in John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. Banner of Truth, 1967. “Introduction” available separately as pamphlet from The Chapel Library at http://www.mountzion.org/catalog/lit_contents.html.
- Reymond, Robert L. 1998. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
- Warfield, Benjamin Breckenridge. 2006. *The Plan of Salvation*. Kessinger Publishing. [Reprint of 1942 Revised edition, Eerdmans].

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

- Ridderbos, Herman. 1980. *The Coming of the Kingdom*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing..
- Robertson, O. Palmer. 1985. *Christ of the Covenants*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing..
- Williams, Michael D. 2005. *Far as the Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.

SACRAMENTS

- Bromily, Geoffrey W. 1979. *Children of Promise*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

- Glodo, Michael J. "Covenant Sign and Seal." Available widely on various internet sites including www.thirdmill.org.
- Marcel, Gabriel, trans. Philip Edgcumbe Hughes. 2000. *The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism*, Westminster Publishing House. [orig. 1951]
- Murray, John. 1985. *Christian Baptism*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.
- Pratt, Richard L. n.d. *Why Do We Baptize Our Children?* Casselberry, FL: Third Millenium Ministries. Videotape available at www.thirdmill.org.
- Sartelle, John P. 1985. *What Christian Parents Want to Know About Infant Baptism*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.
- Schaeffer, Francis. 1976. *Baptism*. Wilmington, Delaware: Trimark Publishing.
- Strawbridge, Gregg, ed. 2003. *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.
- Wallace, Ronald S. 1997. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

REFORMED TRADITION

- de Witt, John R. 1981. *What is the Reformed Faith?* Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1981.
- Gerstner, John H, Douglas F. Kelly, and Phillip Rollinson. 1992. *A Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith: Commentary*. Signal Mountain, Tennessee: Summertown Texts.
- Hall, David W. and Joseph H. Hall, eds. 1994. *Paradigms in Polity: Classic Readings in Reformed and Presbyterian Church Government*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
- Horton, Michael. 2002. *Putting Amazing Back into Grace: Embracing the Heart of the Gospel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker.
- Leith, John H. 1977. *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*. Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press.
- Lucas, Sean Michael. *On Being Presbyterian: Our Beliefs, Practices, and Stories*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey.
- McNeill, John T. 1954. *The History and Character of Calvinism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rian, Edmund H. 1992. *The Presbyterian Conflict*. Committee for the History of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- Smallman, Stephen. 2003. *What is a Reformed Church?* Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishers.
- Smylie, James H. 1996. *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*. Atlanta, Georgia: Westminster John Knox.

Wells, David, ed. 1985. *Reformed Theology in America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
Chapters also published separately under *Dutch Reformed Theology*, *The Princeton Theology*, and *Southern Reformed Theology*.

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

Baxter, Richard. 1979. *The Reformed Pastor*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.

Bridges, Charles. 1976. *The Christian Ministry*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976.

Dabney, Robert L. 1979. *On Preaching*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. 1972. *Preachers and Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972.

Taylor, L. Roy. 2004. "Presbyterianism" in *Who Runs the Church? Four Views on Church Government*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

Witherow, Thomas. 1983. *The Apostolic Church: Which Is It?* Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications.