**My Credo and Competencies**

Guidelines for Commissioned Pastor Candidates

**General Information**

In order to complete preparations for recognition as a Commissioned Pastor, it is necessary to write a 10 – 15 page paper (double spaced) called “My Credo and Competencies.” This paper is a combination of a personal testimony (*how I came to understand my relationship with God through Jesus*), an explanation of your ministry call and preparedness (*how I came to my awareness of my vocational call and acted upon it*), a theological essay that gives an articulate yet personal account of the central *loci* of Christian teaching in language that can be understood by interested laypeople, and a summary of evidences of competency that are posted in your e-portfolio.

Central to writing a *Credo* is the feedback from and shared reflection from one or more persons. Prior to posting the final draft in your e-portfolio, you are asked to discuss it with your mentor (and possibly another person.

Writing a *Credo* is an exercise to provide a snapshot of where you are at on your theological and confessional pilgrimage and ministry competencies. In writing your *Credo*, the hope is that you will come more fully to an awareness of what you believe and how it relates to your life and ministries, as well as learn how to communicate these beliefs in a way that is cogent and non-technical. While explanatory footnotes in the *Credo* might give a sense of how you see your position in relation to more technical theological discussions, the body of the paper should be written for a general audience.

Through this process, the hope is that you will:

1. Integrate your learning by developing a statement of belief that spans the broad scope of Christian teaching and reflects an awareness of (if not complete agreement with) the Reformed Church’s confessional standards.
2. Seek to fill in gaps in your thinking and understanding with regard to your statement of faith.
3. Hone your ability to give an account of your personal faith to others with sensitivity to cultural dimensions of the conversation.
4. Express honesty about areas that are still in process or presently in doubt.
5. Learn to communicate your theological positions in an authentic way to contemporary culture (assuming Christian readers who are interested).
6. Summarize your ministry competencies.
7. Develop skills in responding to critical feedback in the context of a supportive, confidential environment.

**A Guide to Credo Writing**

A *Credo* is a theological essay developed in six parts for minimum of twelve pages. Each part is read and critiqued by your mentor (minimum) and perhaps an additional person. The writer uses the insights from the feedback to prepare a final version of the *Credo*. These guidelines should inform the construction of your *Credo*:

1. Organize your parts according to these topics:
2. Introduction and Methodology (Think about such things as Personal Faith and Life, Vocational Calling, Revelation, Experience, Inspiration, Canon of Scripture, Hermeneutic, with a special focus on your autobiography, understanding of your calling, and the manner in which God communicates with you and all people)
3. Who is God? What are God’s intentions for this world? (Think about such topics as Trinity, Attributes, Creation, and Providence, with a special focus on who is God, what is wrong in the world, and how is God seeking to address these things)
4. Who is Christ, and how is Christ a Savior? What does Christ save people from? What are human beings, and what is sin? (Think about such topics as Christology, Atonement, Theological Anthropology, and Sin, with a special focus on who is Jesus and what did he do to address the problem of what is wrong in the world)
5. Who is the Holy Spirit, and how does the Spirit work in the world and the community of faith? (Think of such topics as Holy Spirit, Salvation, Predestination, and Sacraments, with a special focus on how does the work of Jesus bring the Church into being, and how does life in the church look and feel and unfold)
6. Who are the people of God, and where is the Spirit leading them? (Think of such topics as Covenant, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, Ethics, and Christian Practices, with a special focus on how the Church now expresses the mission of God through Christ in the world, and where this is all headed as the great consummation of all things looms)
7. Review and read wisely.
8. Review the Denominational Standards, as well as your theology readings to help with your brainstorming about particular Credo topics. Your *Credo* should locate your position in relation to the Reformed tradition, whether or not you agree with Reformed positions on that topic. You may recognize that some areas of theology represent “gaps” in your theological knowledge. Now is the time to fill them.
9. Pay close attention to correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and form.
10. Write in an accessible, but cogent manner. Leave technical discussions to the footnotes. The body of the paper should be written in a way that authentically communicates your beliefs to a general audience. Do not assume that the readers of the body of your paper would have had theological education. In explanatory footnotes, however, you may note the books and authors that are influencing your approach.
11. Be aware of theological sources throughout the *Credo*, and craft part one carefully. What are the sources for your theology? State how you intend you use your sources in a way that relates to your claims about how God is made known.
12. Exhibit cultural awareness. Your *Credo* must engage the world in which you live, in its creational, social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. The gospel is never disconnected from these realities.
13. Reflect on your pastoral and ministerial identity. Integrate theology and your call to ministry in your *Credo*. Wherever there are echoes of affirmation, challenge, hope, even judgment, identify and reflect on these.
14. Summary and Application of Credo and Competencies.
15. What are the representative evidences of competency that you have provided in your e-portfolio in the required ten areas of competency for Commissioned Pastors
16. What have the above topics meant to your personal journey? What specific ideas have most significantly influenced your life and ministry? In what ways may God be calling you to new levels of mission or transformation in the future?
17. Realize that, for most candidates, your “My Credo and Competencies” is a public document that will be sent to all of the members of your classis.