

Credentialing for the Gospel Ministry in the PCA

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Summary:

The educational and constitutional requirement for ordination in the PCA is the fulfillment of the Uniform Curriculum. Therefore, if a candidate comes for ordination after fulfilling the Uniform Curriculum there is no reason for the extraordinary clause since no part of the educational requirement has been omitted.

Understanding BOCO 21.4

Some have suggested that the Book of Church Order (BOCO) requires every candidate for ministry in the PCA have both a Bachelor and Master degree. This paper seeks to demonstrate the error in that view of BOCO 21.4 and to provide a correct interpretation of same article.

The BOCO 21.4 opens by stating, *“An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies, or a certificate of completion or an endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.”*

A. Historical Development of 21.4:

The historical development of section 21.4 is very important in understanding what the BOCO is requiring. In the beginning years of the PCA the denomination had not addressed what type of training would be required for a man desiring to be ordained. In 1977 TE Charles Dunahoo, as the Coordinator of the Christian Education Committee, developed a Theological Education Sub-Committee composed of 21 members representing each of the presbyteries in the denomination at that time. The product of that sub-committee was the 6th General Assembly adopting “The Uniform Curriculum for Theological Education” (attachment #1) in 1978 with strong approval.

After the approval of the Uniform Curriculum as the standard for the preparation of candidates for the ministry in the PCA, the Theological Education Sub-Committee developed “Guidelines for Theological Education” (attachment #2) to address different avenues that could be used for the preparation of candidates. These avenues of training possibilities ranged from a candidate attending a resident seminary to his undergoing a tutorial based training within the presbytery. The Guidelines for Theological Education were approved in the 7th General Assembly in 1979 with strong support. As TE Charles Dunahoo states, “The purpose of the alternative track approach, considering the context of the PCA in the early days, was to develop a means of training men for ordination by developing a curriculum, the Uniform Curriculum, in which the PCA would require men to satisfy. If that was done satisfactorily, as judged by the Presbytery examining committee, then the person would be ordained from the alternative track. If any part or

parts of that training were omitted, he could still seek ordination under the extraordinary clause. We were not trying to by-pass adequate training and preparation, we simply were offering options to the presbyteries and men themselves on which approach or approaches were available.” (September 9, 2005, personal communication)

At this point the sub-committee worked to revise 21.4 to included the phrases “*or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies, or a certificate of completion or an endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.*” This revision allowed for the implementation of the wide range of training opportunities suggested in Guidelines for Theological Education. TE Charles Dunadoo, “As to the wording of 21-4, in order to insure that we were not dumbing down the process while at the same time offering alternative methods of satisfying the training and education process, we did not remove the degree requirement; however, the intention was not to require both a BS and Master's degree. That would contradict our alternative training methodology in that presbyteries were not established to grant degrees; hence our emphasis that the alternative tracks approach was not a degree method. Actually, when we put this Uniform Curriculum together, we did so in consultation with the presidents of the various seminaries, Morton Smith, Stated Clerk, and Jack Scott, writer for CE/P.” (personal communication, September 9, 2005). This view is also embraced by Dr. Morton Smith, “I completely agree with Charles’ position in regards to a 21.4. If a candidate has successfully completed a course of studies that has been approved by his Presbytery that fulfills the Uniform Curriculum there is no need for any degrees.” (Telephone conversation with the author on October 5, 2005)

From 1982-1985 TE Don MacNair worked with the Christian Education Committee to assist each presbytery to develop their training programs. After 1985, TE MacNair retired and the work he was doing with the CE&P Committee ceased to exist.

B. Constitutional Requirement for Ordination:

Dr. Morton Smith’s Commentary on the BOCO 21.4 is very helpful in gaining an understanding of what is the constitutional requirement for ordination in the PCA (attachment #3).

The following is a quote from Dr. Smith in reference to the opening statement of 21.4 noted on the previous page. “This paragraph outlines the requirements for ordination. We shall simply list these items for easier reference:

1. A diploma of a Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university.
2. A diploma of a Bachelor or Master from an approved theological seminary.
 - 2a. OR, in place of #2 ‘Authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies.’

2b. OR, a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.”

After giving this outline Dr. Smith then states that the Uniform Curriculum is the approved theological education requirement of the General Assembly. After posting the Uniform Curriculum Dr. Smith states, “This curriculum represents the basic subjects with which a candidate for the ministry must be conversant. Ultimately the Church is not concerned as to where a man has studied. What is important is whether he can demonstrate sufficient knowledge in the areas to be able to serve as a minister of the Word.”

Dr. Smith is making it clear that the main focus of 21.4 is not where a candidate has been trained or what degrees he might have earned but if a man has been adequately trained using the Uniform Curriculum Guidelines and can demonstrate sufficient knowledge as a minister of the gospel.

Dr. Smith continues, “If a candidate presents himself without a formal education, the presbytery will need to examine him in all areas, including the original languages.” Here Dr. Smith is making clear that a man who has been trained using the Uniform Curriculum Guidelines can present himself as a candidate for ordination even if he is without formal education. Again the focus is on a man being adequately trained through the Uniform Curriculum Guidelines not on the number of degrees or diplomas.

A closer examination of Dr. Smith’s outline shows three basic options of fulfilling the Uniform Curriculum, which was recommended by CE &P and approved by the General Assembly of the PCA. I will add some practical examples of how different candidates might fit into these options.

1. Option One: 1 and 2: Bachelor and Master

- Most often the candidate using this option has a Bachelors degree in a secular field of study, which has nothing to do with his training for the ministry. Such a Bachelor’s degree is of no specific value in evaluating his ministerial training. Usually this candidate, because he already has a Bachelors degree, will pursue an MDiv, which is what validates his training as long as his MDiv covers the subject matter required in the Uniform Curriculum.
- Sometimes the candidate using this option has a Bachelors degree from a Bible or Christian College and has taken many of the courses required in the Uniform Curriculum. In this case, an MDiv is not necessary but a lesser Master degree which would cover the requirements of the Uniform Curriculum (personal communication from L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk, PCA).

- You will notice that the BOCO states that the diploma of a Bachelor or Master is to be from some “*approved*” college, university or theological seminary, even though there has never been a method in the PCA to approve or disapprove an educational institution. As a matter of fact the denomination and its presbyteries have stayed away from approving any education institution but have recognized many institutions as holding to the Reformed standards (Covenant, RTS, Westminster, New Geneva, Knox, Greenville, just to name a few). It has been left to the institutions themselves to offer a program that meets the requirements of the PCA’s Uniform Curriculum.

2. Option Two: 1 and 2a: Bachelor and Authentic Testimonies

- A candidate using this option could be one who has a Bachelors degree in a secular field of study but has completed a regular course of theological studies fulfilling the Uniform Curriculum by using a broad range of training possibilities without earning a degree/diploma. Authentic testimonies that his theological studies meet the Uniform Curriculum and that he successfully completed the full course of studies is required.
- A candidate using this option could be one who has a Bachelors degree that covered the Uniform Curriculum and authentic testimonies that his theological studies met the Uniform Curriculum and that he successfully completed the full course of studies.

3. Option Three: 1 and 2b: Bachelor and Certificate of Completion

- Since the Theological Education Sub-Committee no longer exists, this is not a viable option.

The view that suggests that BOCO 21.4 requires both a Bachelor and Master degree is misinformed. The BOCO does not require both a bachelor and master’s degree, but one or the other, if an alternative track is followed. The fact is that a secular bachelor degree has nothing to do with theological training and if it did, what secular degrees should the PCA validate as a prerequisite for theological training; engineering, hotel management, personal management, finance, medical?

One could make a case that BOCO 21.4 requires a candidate to have at least a Bachelor degree, but that Bachelor degree would have to meet all the requirements of the Uniform Curriculum. But many respected leaders in the PCA believe that no degree/diploma is required as long as a candidate fulfills the requirements of the set forth in the “Uniform Curriculum” approved by the 6th General Assembly. A presbytery approved study program for the training and development of candidates for the ministry, which covered

every area of the PCA Uniform Curriculum, would meet the constitutional requirements for ordination. This would be true even if the candidate did not hold either a bachelors or masters degree.

Understanding that the Uniform Curriculum is the constitutional requirement for theological education, not degrees or diplomas, is very important. “The goal of the sub-committee back in 1977-1982 was to develop alternative tracks for training so that the PCA could offer the opportunity for men to choose the alternative track approach rather than that the usual degree route from an educational institution,” says Charles Dunahoo, PCA Christian Education and Publications Coordinator (September 05). “We require men to be trained in the Uniform Curriculum. They do this the traditional way through some degree granting institution. Or they can choose the alternative track, non-degree granting approach, with the approval of the presbytery and the necessary testimonials and examinations for ordination.”

The 7th General Assembly recognized that the Uniform Curriculum was broader in scope than the graduation requirements of the four recognized seminaries in 1979. This was one of the reasons why they adopted the “Guidelines for Theological Education.” The 7th Assembly recognized that many seminary graduates were weak in some particulars, while some graduates needed additional instruction in the practical aspects of ministry.

The “Guidelines for Theological Education” suggested possible models for presbyteries to use as they considered different avenues in fulfilling the Uniform Curriculum. These models are not the only methods that can be used for theological training but are only examples of what could be used in developing a program.

Notice that the emphasis of each model is on fulfilling the Uniform Curriculum not the earning of degrees.

1. Model One: 3 + 1(MDiv. plus one year of probationary training under the presbytery)
2. Model Two: 2 +2 Serving (2 years extension course while serving in the church and keeping outside employment then 2 years resident training)
3. Model Three: 2 + 2 Tutorial (Two years seminary training and two years tutorial training in the presbytery)

C. Extraordinary Clause:

Some have suggested that a candidate who does not have both a Bachelors and Masters Degree must be presented for ordination under the “extraordinary clause.” This view is an improper use of the “extraordinary clause.”

It is clear that the “extraordinary clause” is only used when a presbytery omits any part of the exam or any of the educational requirements. If a candidate has fulfilled the Uniform

Curriculum, with or without multiple degrees, then he has no need for the extraordinary clause.

Using Dr. Smith's outline, if a candidate has a Bachelor's Degree that covers the material in the Uniform Curriculum and has authentic testimonials of having completed the full course of theological studies, there is no need for the extraordinary clause. This means that a single Bachelor's degree that covers the Uniform Curriculum from a Reformed theological program fulfills items 1&2a in Dr. Smith's outline. This is especially true when such a candidate has successfully passed a thorough ordination exam.

Dr. Smith cautions presbyteries to use great care in applying the extraordinary clause but also quotes Ramsay, "It belongs to Christ himself through his Holy Spirit to appoint men to office in his Church . . . and the regulations prescribed [in the BCO] are prudential in their nature, precautions against the admission of unqualified men to the ministry rather than an enumeration of the qualifications that Christ has revealed specifically; and consequently, whenever a Presbytery perceives that Christ has qualified a man for the office of the ministry who is ignorant of one or more of these particular branches of learning the Presbytery ought not to refuse to recognize the manifest will of the King . . . no man is to be excluded whom Christ has duly qualified, and no man admitted whom Christ has not qualified, whether he has or has not complied with the prudential requirements for getting these qualifications."

D. Conclusion:

The question that should be asked by any credentials committee and presbytery when examining a candidate is not, "Where did you go to seminary?" or "How many degrees do you have?" but rather, "Is there evidence in this man's character, life, biblical/theological understanding and ministry that Christ has qualified him for the gospel ministry?" This seems consistent with the qualifications of the Apostle Peter and John in that they did not have any formal theological training or degrees/diplomas, as a matter of fact they were recognized as "uneducated men" by the Jewish religious leaders and scholars of their day, but even these Jewish leaders recognized their credentials as "having been with Jesus." (Acts 4.13)

Well someone might say, "We want educated ministers in the PCA." My question is, "What type of educated minister are they expecting?" Of course, there are certain congregations that desire, even require, their ministers to have extensive academic credentials but the core of what the man believes and how he conducts his life should be the same in any PCA church. I think that the committee and GA answered the question of what type of educated minister should be expected by all PCA congregations back in 1977-79 by establishing the Uniform Curriculum. If the expectation is that every PCA minister should have extensive academic credentials, then in my opinion, "God help us."

Usually at this point someone will say, "Yes but the MDiv was a Masters level degree" implying that the MDiv is more intense or advanced. Well, that doesn't really work because:

- 1) the MDiv doesn't require a preparatory or prerequisite degree like Pre-Law or Pre-Med. Any bachelors' degree graduate can enroll in a MDiv regardless of what type of undergrad degree they have.
- 2) As a matter of fact, many seminaries have certificate programs for students who don't have an undergrad. These certificate programs just couldn't exist if there was a prerequisite degree requirement to enroll in MDiv studies.
- 3) And lastly, I personally graduated from a Bible College with a BA in Ministerial Studies. I will be the first to tell you that many of my Bible College classes were equally, and in some cases, more challenging and more in-depth than my seminary classes.

Summary:

The educational and constitutional requirement for ordination in the PCA is the fulfillment of the Uniform Curriculum. Therefore if a candidate comes for ordination after fulfilling the Uniform Curriculum there is no reason for the extraordinary clause since no part of the educational requirement has been omitted.

Attachment #1

POSITION PAPERS

6th General Assembly, 1978, p. 214, Appendix G, IV

UNIFORM CURRICULUM FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The purpose of this material is to set before the General Assembly a uniform curriculum which will lead to the better preparation of candidates for the Gospel ministry and provide for suitable means to guarantee that the quality of education is enhanced and advanced, while guarding against infringing upon the powers of presbyteries as touching their responsibilities in regard to selection, training, examination, and ordination of candidates.

The Sub-Committee of 21 has worked on two phases of the program. One area dealt with the curriculum, and the other was concerned with coordination and implementation. The first phase of curriculum is listed below. The integration and coordination are found in recommendation No. 14-d(1-4).

The Committee has worked in depth over a period of time to handle the assignment from the Fifth General Assembly listed in the 1977 Minutes on page 155 No. 8:a-e.

The uniform curriculum deals with three major areas: (1) Scriptural Content; (2) Christian Doctrine; (3) Practical Theology. It was developed in such a manner as to be utilized by any of the approved methods of theological training.

The following is the proposed uniform curriculum for theological education of PCA ministerial candidates.

SCRIPTURE

- I. Bible Content
 - A. English Bible
 - 1. Required block courses covering the entire Bible.
 - 2. Including areas such as archaeology, history, geography, emphasizing that which is necessary to support the grammatico-historical method of interpretation
 - 3. Required reading of the Bible
 - 4. Scripture memory integrated into course content
 - B. Required comprehensive content examination
- GOAL:** Knowledge and ability to communicate Bible content as outlined above.
- II. Languages
 - A. Hebrew
 - 1. Grammatical forms
 - 2. Syntactical principles
 - 3. Exegesis
 - B. Greek
 - 1. Grammatical forms
 - 2. Syntactical principles
 - 3. Exegesis

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GOAL: Ability to use the tools and work directly with the passages in the original language in preparation of sermons and Bible lessons.

III. Methods and interpretation (should follow language and much of Bible content)

- A. Biblical Theology
- B. Principles of Interpretation
- C. Biblical Criticism (Higher and Textual)
- D. Advanced Principles of Exegesis
 - 1. Old Testament
 - 2. New Testament

GOAL: A comprehension of principles and problems involved in these disciplines as supplementary to materials already taught in relation to English Bible content.

IV. Supervised Practical Opportunities

- A. Advanced exegetical (papers of assigned Old Testament and New Testament passages)
- B. Teach papers during practical year
- C. Required block reading and translation of Hebrew and Greek during fourth year
- D. Teach English Bible courses

GOAL: A practical use of all training skills and gifts in working with God's People

DOCTRINE

I. Church History

- A. Survey of Church History (Including a history of Christian thought)
- B. American Church History
- C. History of the Reformation
- D. Presbyterian Church History

GOAL: The study of Church History should be conceptual (an understanding of the flow of history, the historical development of theology and the influence upon it of secular history and philosophy, and the progress of ecclesiastical development), and with consideration of the relation of the cultural context to the history of the church.

II. Apologetics

- A. Introduction to Apologetic Methodology and Practice (To include a survey of various schools of thought in Reformed apologetics)
- B. Survey of Secular Thought (The history of humanistic thought, its contemporary manifestation in various world views: philosophy, literature, drama, popular arts, scientific methodology, the cults, pagan religions, etc.)
- C. Survey of Contemporary Theology (Liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, etc.)

GOAL: To provide from a Reformed perspective a sound basis for positive presentation of the Christian faith as well as equipping the minister to deal with the anti-Christian systems of thought in their various contemporary manifestations.

III. Theology and Ethics

- A. Systematic Theology. A broad understanding of the whole system of theology as derived from Scripture (Prolegomena, Theology,

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- Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology), including a specific study of the doctrinal position of the PCA as set forth in the Westminster Standards.
- B. Ethics. As exegetical study of Biblical Ethics (the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.)
- GOAL:** 1) to obtain a knowledge of, commitment to, and proficiency in communicating the Reformed Faith (including such distinctives as the inerrancy of Scripture, the Sovereignty of God, Covenant Theology, The Five Points of Calvinism, etc.)
2) A commitment to a Biblical life style in both personal and social ethics.
- IV. Polity
- A. Biblical Church Government
(An exegetical study of the Biblical principles of Church Government)
- B. PCA Church Order and Parliamentary Procedure
- GOAL:** An understanding of the Biblical teaching on the nature and structure of the church, a working knowledge of the PCA Book of Church Order, and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

- I. The Pastor's Personal Life
- A. His Spiritual Life
1. Growth
 2. Call to Ministry
- B. Pastor's Communication
1. With the Family
 2. With the Church
 3. With the Community
- GOAL:** The area of the Pastor's personal life should deal with the matters of development and expression of his personal relation to God through spiritual growth under Scripture and prayer. Growing out of this, the candidate should be helped and encouraged in determining the genuineness of his call to the Gospel ministry. He should be given counsel in developing his relations with his family, church, and community.
- II. Worship
- A. Public Worship (see BCO Directory for Worship chapters 48-64)
- B. Preaching
1. Theology of Preaching
 2. Principles and Practices of Preaching
- GOAL:** The goal of this area of training is to develop a comprehensive understanding and application of the regulative principle of public worship, and the basis of the place and practice of preaching within the Biblical Framework of public worship, as well as to equip the Pastor or Candidate to lead the congregation in public worship
- III. Evangelism
- A. Theology of Reformed Evangelism
- B. Role of the Pastor in Evangelism

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GOAL: An introduction to Evangelism in light of the doctrinal distinctives of the Reformed Faith, developing methods, practical experience and training of others in this area.

IV. Missiology

- A. Reformed Theology of Mission at Home and Abroad
- B. Strategy of Missions at Home and Abroad

GOAL: This area should analyze and understand the needs of missions at home and abroad through consideration of cross-cultural communication, relationships with national governments, an anthropological understanding of decision-making patterns, and the indigenization of Christianity, the application of modern linguistic science, and saturation evangelism. The effective use of missionary radio, TV films, correspondence courses, theological education by extension programs, gospel recordings, Bible translation, and Christian literature production and distribution will also be surveyed.

V. Pastoral Care

- A. Theology of Pastoral Care
- B. Applied Counseling (Gerontology, Pre-Marital, Family, Crisis, Etc.)

GOAL: A study in the understanding and development of the biblical principles of shepherding plus practical experience (e.g., case studies, observing actual counseling sessions, and practical experience in counseling).

PERSONAL THEOLOGY

VI. Christian Education

- A. Theology of Christian Education
- B. History of Christian Education
- C. Practice of Christian Education

GOAL: The goal of this area is to understand the Biblical basis of Christian Education and its historic development, leading to a practical development of a Christian Education curriculum in the home and in the church, the training of Bible teachers for church related ministries, and the developing of spiritual gifts within the church.

VII. Pastoral Administration

- A. Theology of Administration
- B. Mechanics of Administration

GOAL: The goal of this area is to develop an understanding of the Biblical principles of administration and leadership, understanding the goals, strategy, and oversight (e.g. of time, body life [Ephesians 4:11-16], correspondence, and delegating responsibility.)

Attachment #2

POSITION PAPERS

7th General Assembly, 1979

GUIDELINES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

IV. THEOLOGICAL SUB-COMMITTEE

In accordance with the instructions of the 1978 General Assembly on page 219 of the Assembly *Minutes* the Committee sent the following letter to all presbyteries in March:

"The purpose of this letter is to elicit a written response from each presbytery in the matter of its plans and intentions with regard to implementing the Uniform Curriculum adopted by the Sixth General Assembly as a part of its obligations in preparing candidates for the Gospel ministry for ordination. Specifically, the material requested is needed in order that this Sub-Committee may carry out the injunction to give preliminary approval to presbytery training programs so that the presbyteries may be able to elect representatives to the certification committees (*Minutes of the Sixth General Assembly*, Item III, 13, 61, p. 87).

"Please review actions taken by the Sixth General Assembly which are pertinent to this matter: *Minutes*, Appendix G, Section IV. Theological Sub-Committee on Uniform Curriculum (pp. 214-217); the Report on the Committee of Commissioners, Recommendations III, 9 - 13 (pp. 86-87). Part IV of the Report of the Committee of Commissioners on Judicial Business contains material regarding necessary changes to the *Book of Church Order* to implement a mandatory year of licensure and probation before ordination (pp. 115-119). This material should also be studied as it is integrally related to the concept of ministerial training.

"As you study the Uniform Curriculum which has been adopted and compare it with the stipulated course requirements set forth by any of the four recognized seminaries, you will observe that the Uniform Curriculum is broader in scope than the graduation requirements of these seminaries. In addition, upon examination, many seminary graduates are found to be weak in some particulars to such a degree that remedial studies are indicated. These two conditions illuminate the fact that each presbytery is going to have to plan for some academic instruction, as well as practical instruction, to be carried out during the period of supervised probation.

"Another factor to be considered is that the Uniform Curriculum must now be met unless an individual is to be ordained under the extraordinary clause (cf. *Minutes*, Item III, 13.4, p. 87). However, a presbytery cannot certify that a candidate has met the Uniform Curriculum requirements until the presbytery program itself has been approved by the Certification (Accrediting) Committee. Presbytery programs will initially gain certification by the 22-man Theological Education Sub-Committee. This preliminary approval will give the presbytery the right to place a man on the Certification (Accrediting) Committee, which becomes the permanent overseer of quality and uniformity in regard to each presbytery's program.

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"To gain this initial approval, presbytery must present a written plan to this Sub-Committee. To assist you in drafting this preliminary plan, some guidelines have been approved by this Sub-Committee. These are designed to help you understand your options and to indicate some of the categories to which consideration must be given in preparing your plan. These guidelines include typical models of the 3 + 1 and 2 + 2 plans, as well as some planning criteria. Enough detail should be included in your submittal to allow this Sub-Committee to determine the adequacy and the quality of your activities in the preparation of probationers for ordination."

The Committee also recommends that each presbytery supervise this program through joint efforts of the Christian Education Committee and a membership/candidates committee.

The introductory portion has explained the direction and purpose of this suggested guideline paper. It is suggested only because each presbytery may wish to include a different type plan altogether which would then be submitted to the 22-man Sub-Committee for tentative approval or the Certification (Accrediting) Committee which will finally replace the 22-man Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee has suggested three possible models for each presbytery to consider in developing its own program: If the *Book of Church Order* is changed to require the one-year mandatory training period of probation then every presbytery will be required to have its particular plan.

A. Model One - Three plus One.

The first suggestion of a model will deal with the 3 + 1 plan. This indicates that a candidate has received his M.Div. from a particular seminary but then is required to have one year of probationary training under the presbytery that would seek to ordain him at the end of that period or at some later period.

The presbytery would have the responsibility to examine the candidate in the required areas of training. If he is found to be deficient in any area, e.g. English Bible, then during that year the presbytery would have the responsibility to work with him in that particular area as well as in the pastoral areas.

The candidate could be assigned to a supervising pastor or pastors having expertise in certain areas. Remuneration for this year of probation is left to the discretion of the presbytery and candidate. He could work as a licentiate in serving pastorless churches, or as an assistant to another pastor.

During this year there are eight areas that would need particular attention from the presbytery. They are:

- 1) **English Bible.** He would be given opportunities to apply his knowledge in supervised, live teaching situations. Knowledge of the original languages is assumed because of his M.Div. degree.
- 2) **Devotional Life.** The licentiate should have regular times of prayer with his supervising pastor/pastors. The pastors should disciple the licentiate in his personal devotional life and his family's as well.
- 3) **Worship.** The licentiate should have training in leading and preaching in worship services. He should be critiqued by the supervising pastor. Instruction in baptism, Lord's supper, weddings and funerals must be given.

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- 4) **Evangelism.** The candidate should have an opportunity to observe supervising pastors in personal evangelism and be given opportunities to participate in personal evangelism and other expressive methods of evangelism.
- 5) **Missiology.** He should study the area of church growth both at home and throughout the world. He should demonstrate a working knowledge of the mission programs of the PCA.
- 6) **Presbyterian Polity.** The candidate should be given opportunity to sit in on major committees of Presbytery, and attend General Assembly. He should be developing a working knowledge of the *Book of Church Order* as he attends the meetings of the courts of the Church. *Robert's Rules* is another area in which the licentiate is to demonstrate a working knowledge. He is to be exposed to good church administration during this year and take responsibility in developing administrative abilities.
- 7) **Counseling.** He should be given opportunities to sit in on counseling situations and given some opportunity under direction to do some actual counseling.
- 8) **Christian Education.** The candidate should during this year also have an opportunity to work with the Sunday School program, to participate in teaching training courses, in instructing the youth in catechism and having some input with the youth work.

B. **Model Two - Two Extensions plus Two Serving.**

If the Presbytery has allowed a man to go the 2 + 2 route, i.e. two years of academic training at an established institution, then he would receive two years of tutorial training. We suggest one of two methods in fulfilling the 2 + 2 program. First:

The presbytery may allow a candidate first to attend an extension seminary in his area or some other approved area. During this time he remains closely connected to the local church and could even continue employment in other areas. Then after two years, he would attend a resident seminary.

Those already using this method do something like this:

<u>YEAR ONE</u>		
First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter
Bible Content	Bible Content	Bible Content
Greek Grammar	Greek Grammar	Greek
Church History	Church History	Church History
Reformed Theology	Reformed Evangelism	Personal Life
<u>YEAR TWO</u>		
First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter
Bible Content	Bible Content	Bible Content
NT Interpretation	History of Reformation	Teaching Bible Courses
Polity	Principles of Preaching	Pastoral Administration
Pastoral Care	Hebrew	Hebrew
Hebrew		

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The last two years of resident training would follow this general course direction, as adapted from the 1977-78 Catalogue of *Reformed Theological Seminary*. Courses listed in the *RTS Catalogue* in Junior Year.

<u>YEAR THREE</u>		
First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter
Hebrew Exegesis	Hebrew Exegesis	Old Testament Theology I
Advanced New Testament Interpretation	Prophets	New Testament History
Church History	NT Introduction	Missions
Evangelism Clinic	Educational Ministry	Ministry of Teaching
	Preaching Clinic	Pastoral Counseling Clinic
<u>YEAR FOUR</u>		
First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter
Old Testament Theology Introduction II	Old Testament Introduction I	Old Testament Theology II
Systematic Theology	Poets	Systematic Theology
History of Christianity in America	NT Theology	Ethics II
	Systematic Theology Ethics I	

C. Model three - Two Seminary plus Two Tutorial.

This approach would allow a man to attend a resident seminary for the first two years and possibly work towards a Master of Religious Arts, such as is available at Westminster Theological Seminary, or the Master of Theological Study at CTS, or equivalent at RTS or TPTS. The Presbytery would then pick up the third and fourth years of tutorial training.

It would work like this. On page 215 of the 1978 *Minutes of the Sixth General Assembly*, where the approved curriculum is located:

<u>To be taught by:</u>	
Under Scripture:	
I. Bible Content	Presbytery
II. Languages	Seminary
III. Methods of Interpretation	Seminary
IV. Supervised Practical Opportunities	Presbytery
Under Doctrine:	
I. Church History	
A. Survey of Church History	Seminary
B. American Church History	Presbytery
C. History of Reformation	Seminary
D. Presbyterian Church History	Presbytery
II. Apologetics	Seminary

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III. Theology and Ethics

A. Systematics

B. Ethics

IV. Polity

V. Practical Theology

Seminary

Seminary

Presbytery

Presbytery

Except possibly Christian

Education and Missiology

As the presbytery picks up the third and fourth years of tutorial training it would follow this progression:

Third Year

Prophetic Books

General Epistles & Revelation

The Reformation

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Sermon Content

Pastoral Theology

Poetic Books

Modern Age

Doctrine of Christian Life

Church Mission and Ministry

Sermon Delivery

Fourth Year

Bible Content (English)

Supervised Practical Opportunities

American Church History

Presbyterian Church History

Theology of the Church

Theology of Westminster Standards

Polity and Parliamentary Procedure

Practical Theology

Personal Theology

Pastoral Administration

The Sub-Committee has met with the presidents of the above four seminaries and reviewed these plans. A general spirit of cooperation and encouragement was given to the Committee in its assignment and execution of it.

Not only do the seminaries have the regular three-year M. Div. degree program that would continue to be used, but several of them have a two-year degree program that would meet the 2 + 2 approach, if that is the method desired.

The Committee offers as its recommendations the following: see numbers 16-21.

Attachment # 3

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

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previous views concerning any points in the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Before listing the specific requirements, a comment should be made on the portion of the paragraph which allows Presbytery to accept examination for licensure in the place of a reexamination on the same subject for ordination. If a Presbytery intends to exercise this option, then its examinations for licensure should be done on the same level as for ordination. This would be perfectly proper for the graduate of a seminary, or for one who has completed his course of academic training for the ministry. The language of the chapter on licensure (19-2), however, suggests that this examination is to be at a more basic level than that for ordination. The candidate is to demonstrate a "basic knowledge" in Biblical doctrine, and in the government of the Church. Presumably ordination implies a fuller knowledge than that which is intended by the word "basic." If a Presbytery only examines for basic knowledge in the licensure examination, then it should go beyond that in the ordination examination. If, on the other hand, it is going to use the same examination for both licensure and ordination, then the Presbytery should so state, and so examine at the time of licensure that more than just a basic knowledge is expected. If the candidate knows this beforehand, he can be properly prepared. In all cases a commitment to the doctrinal Standards of the Church and to the *Book of Church Order* is to be ascertained.

This paragraph outlines the requirements for ordination. We shall simply list these items for easier reference:

1. A diploma of a Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university.
2. A diploma of a Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary.

The presentation of the actual diplomas is required at European universities for candidates for higher degrees. Such should be the practice of our Presbyteries, though it seldom is done. A transcript showing that the degree was awarded could be allowed in place of the diploma.

OR in place of #2 "Authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies."

OR A certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Start

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

This uniform curriculum approved by the General Assembly is as follows:

SCRIPTURE

I. Bible Content

A. English Bible

1. Required block courses covering the entire Bible.
2. Including areas such as archaeology, history, geography, emphasizing that which is necessary to support the grammatico-historical method of interpretation.
3. Required reading of the Bible.
4. Scripture memory integrated into course content.

B. Required comprehensive content examination.

GOAL: Knowledge and ability to communicate Bible content as outlined above.

II. Languages

A. Hebrew

1. Grammatical forms
2. Syntactical principles
3. Exegesis

B. Greek

1. Grammatical forms
2. Syntactical principles
3. Exegesis

GOAL: Ability to use the tools and work directly with the passages in the original language in preparation of sermons and Bible lessons.

III. Methods and Interpretation (should follow language and much of Bible content).

A. Biblical Theology

B. Principles of Interpretation

C. Biblical Criticism (Higher and Textual)

D. Advanced Principles of Exegesis

1. Old Testament
2. New Testament

GOAL: A comprehension of principles and problems involved in these disciplines as supplementary to materials already taught in relation to English Bible content.

IV. Supervised Practical

A. Advanced exegetical (papers of assigned Old Testament and New Testament passages).

B. Teach papers during practical year.

C. Required block reading and translation of Hebrew and Greek during fourth year.

D. Teach English Bible Courses.

GOAL: A practical use of all training skills and gifts in working with God's people.

DOCTRINE

I. Church History

A. Survey of Church History (Including a history of Christian thought).

B. American Church History

C. History of the Reformation

D. Presbyterian Church History

GOAL: The study of Church History should be conceptual (an understanding of the flow of history, the historical development of theology and the influence upon it of secular history and philosophy, and the progress of ecclesiastical development), and with consideration of the relation of the cultural context to the history of the church.

II. Apologetics

A. Introduction to Apologetic Methodology and Practice

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- B. Survey of Secular Thought (The history of humanistic thought, its contemporary manifestation in various world views: philosophy, literature, drama, popular arts, scientific methodology, the cults, pagan religions, etc.)
- C. Survey of Contemporary Theology (Liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, etc.).

GOAL: To provide from a Reformed perspective a sound basis for positive presentation of the Christian faith as well as equipping the minister to deal with the anti-Christian systems of thought in their various contemporary manifestations.

III. Theology and Ethics

- A. Systematic Theology. A broad understanding of the whole system of theology as derived from Scripture (Prolegomena, Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology), including a specific study of the doctrinal position of the PCA as set forth in the Westminster Standards.
- B. Ethics. An exegetical study of Biblical Ethics (the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.).

GOAL: To obtain a knowledge of, commitment to, and proficiency in communicating the Reformed Faith (including such distinctives as inerrancy of the Scripture, the Sovereignty of God, Covenant Theology, The Five Points of Calvinism, etc.).

IV. Polity

- A. Biblical Church Government. An exegetical study of the Biblical principles of Church Government.
- B. PCA Church Order and Parliamentary Procedure.

GOAL: An understanding of the Biblical teaching on the nature and structure of the church, a working knowledge of the PCA Book of Church Order, and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

I. The Pastor's Personal Life

- A. His Spiritual Life
 - 1. Growth
 - 2. Call to Ministry
- B. Pastor's Communication
 - 1. With the Family
 - 2. With the Church
 - 3. With the Community

GOAL: The area of the Pastor's personal life should deal with the matters of development and expression of his personal relation to God through spiritual growth under Scripture and prayer. Growing out of this, the candidate should be helped and encouraged in determining the genuineness of his call to the Gospel ministry. He should be given counsel in developing his relations with his family, church, and community.

II. Worship

- A. Public Worship (see BCO Directory for Worship chapters 48-64)
- B. Preaching
 - 1. Theology of Preaching
 - 2. Principles and Practices of Preaching

GOAL: The goal of this area of training is to develop a comprehensive understanding and application of the regulative principle of public worship, and the basis of the place and practice of preaching within the Biblical Framework of public worship, as well as to equip the Pastor or Candidate to lead the congregation in public worship

III. Evangelism

- A. Theology of Reformed Evangelism
- B. Role of the Pastor in Evangelism

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GOAL: An introduction to Evangelism in light of the doctrinal distinctives of the Reformed Faith, developing methods, practical experience and training of others in this area.

IV. Missiology

- A. Reformed Theology of Mission at Home and Abroad
- B. Strategy of Missions at Home and Abroad

GOAL: This area should analyze and understand the needs of missions at home and abroad through consideration of cross-cultural communication, relationships with national governments, an anthropological understanding of decision-making patterns, and the indigenization of Christianity, the application of modern linguistic science, and saturation evangelism. The effective use of missionary radio, TV films, correspondence courses, theological education by extension programs, gospel recordings, Bible translation, and Christian literature production and distribution will also be surveyed.

V. Pastoral Care

- A. Theology of Pastoral Care
- B. Applied Counseling (Gerontology, Pre-Marital, Family, Crisis, Etc.)

GOAL: A study in the understanding and development of the biblical principles of shepherding plus practical experience (e.g., case studies, observing actual counseling sessions, and practical experience in counseling).

PERSONAL THEOLOGY

VI. Christian Education

- A. Theology of Christian Education
- B. History of Christian Education
- C. Practice of Christian Education

GOAL: The goal of this area is to understand the Biblical basis of Christian Education and its historic development, leading to a practical development of a Christian Education curriculum in the home and in the church, the training of Bible teachers for church related ministries, and the developing of spiritual gifts within the church.

VII. Pastoral Administration

- A. Theology of Administration
- B. Mechanics of Administration

GOAL: The goal of this area is to develop an understanding of the Biblical principles of administration and leadership, understanding the goals, strategy, and oversight (e.g. of time, body life [Ephesians 4:11-16], correspondence, and delegating responsibility.)

This curriculum represents the basic subjects with which a candidate for the ministry must be conversant. Ultimately the Church is not concerned as to where a man has studied. What is important is whether he can demonstrate sufficient knowledge in these areas to be able to serve as a minister of the Word. If a candidate presents himself without a formal education, the Presbytery will need to examine him in all areas, including the original languages. For those who have attended a seminary that teaches the languages, the Presbytery may, at its discretion, accept this in lieu of direct examination in these areas. This is not mandated. A Presbytery has the right to examine in all areas to determine if a man is properly prepared for the high calling of the gospel ministry.

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Satisfactory testimonials as to the completion and approval of his internship in the practice of the ministry (BCO Chapter 19) are also required.

Trials for ordination shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in I Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-8), as to his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, the English Bible, theology, the Sacraments, Church History and the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and the principles and rules of the Government and Discipline of the Church. A Presbytery may accept a Seminary degree which includes study in the original languages in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages. He shall prepare a thesis on some theological topic assigned by Presbytery. The candidate shall prepare an exegesis on an assigned portion of Scripture, requiring the use of the original language or languages. He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery. No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with three-fourths approval of Presbytery.

The actual trials for ordination are as follows:

1. Testimony demonstrating acquaintance with experiential religion. That is, demonstration that he has experience as a Christian. In particular, the Presbytery is to look into the personal character and family management of the candidate as specified in I Timothy and Titus.
2. Knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages.
3. Knowledge of the English Bible.
Provision is made for the acceptance of the standard seminary training in Hebrew and Greek in lieu of the Presbytery's conducting an examination in these areas.
4. Knowledge of theology.
5. Knowledge of the Sacraments.
6. Knowledge of the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the Church.
7. Knowledge of the History of the Church.
8. Knowledge of the History of the Presbyterian Church in America.
9. Prepare a thesis on a theological subject as assigned by the Presbytery.

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10. Prepare an exegesis using original languages as assigned by the Presbytery.
11. Preach a sermon before the Presbytery.
It should be observed that for ordination, the candidate is examined not only as to his views, but also must demonstrate sufficient knowledge in all of these areas to be ordained as a minister of the Word.

No exceptions to any of these parts are allowed except in extra-ordinary cases, and that must be passed by a three-fourths vote of the Presbytery.

The next paragraph requires a full record of any omissions, and of the reasons for such omission.

Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons for such omissions and of the trial parts omitted. The Presbytery being fully satisfied of his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought, if practicable, to be in that church of which he is to be the pastor.

Once the Presbytery is satisfied that the candidate is ready for ordination, it appoints a day for the ordination to take place. This is generally in the Church of which he is to be pastor. In the case of persons going as missionaries to other parts of the world, it is appropriate to ordain at the meeting of Presbytery, or in any particular congregation of the Presbytery.

The extraordinary clauses should be limited to extraordinary circumstances of the church or proven extraordinary gifts of the man. Presbyteries should exercise diligence and care in the use of these provisions in order that they not prevent the ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly exceptional circumstances, nor ordain (nor receive from other denominations BCO 13-6) a person who is inadequately prepared for the ministry.

Presbyteries are cautioned to use great care in applying the extraordinary clause. Ramsay makes the following observations regarding this clause:

"It belongs to Christ himself through his Holy Spirit to appoint men to office in his Church . . . and the regulations prescribed [in the BCO] are prudential in their nature, precautions against the admission of unqualified men to the