

Reformed Presbytery In North America Deed Of Constitution

We, the undersigned Ministers and Ruling Elders, upon this fifth day of August, 2000, after mature deliberation, do unite together to form a Presbytery which shall be from henceforth constituted as the "Reformed Presbytery In North America."

We do fully and unanimously subscribe, without any known point of disagreement, the following "Six Terms Of Ecclesiastical Communion" which formally summarize the Constitution upon which this Reformed Presbytery In North America is now established.

Six Terms Of Ecclesiastical Communion

- 1.** An acknowledgment of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.
- 2.** That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon the Scriptures.
- 3.** That Presbyterian Church Government and manner of worship are alone of divine right and unalterable; and that the most perfect model of these as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory for Worship, adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation.
- 4.** That public, social covenanting is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these Deeds are of continued obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this, that the Renovation of these Covenants at Auchensaugh, Scotland, 1712 was agreeable to the word of God.
- 5.** An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; immoral civil governments; Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them; and of the Judicial Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761 with supplements from the Reformed Presbyterian Church; as containing a noble example to be followed, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states.
- 6.** Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Savior by walking in all His commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

We do sincerely profess that it is the glory of God, the edification of Christ's Church, as well as the preservation and promotion of the true Christian religion throughout the whole world that does persuade us to unite in constituting this Presbytery.

We do voluntarily promise to be subject in the Lord unto the Reformed Presbytery In North America; to promote and to preserve the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline as summarized in the above cited "Six Terms Of Ecclesiastical Communion"; and to receive with meekness all brotherly counsel and admonition tendered by fellow members of this Presbytery.

We do not consider the Reformed Presbytery In North America to be an entirely new entity, but rather a continuation of the one moral person with other covenanted judicatories of the past, and with those faithful witnesses of the Covenanted Reformation known as Protesters and Society People (1650-1742 inclusive). Accordingly, when we refer above to our "Constitution", we include within it all the judicial documents comprehended and engaged unto in our "Six Terms Of Ecclesiastical Communion"--specifically, only those documents which are agreeable to the Word of God, and consistent with our covenanted attainments, as they were formally received and approved by the following covenanted judicatories between the following inclusive dates:

1. The Church Of Scotland (1560-1602, 1638-1649).
2. The Reformed Presbytery In Scotland (1743-1808), and the Synod Of The Reformed Presbyterian Church In Scotland (1809-1821).
3. The Reformed Presbytery In Ireland (1763-1779, 1782-1810), and the Synod Of The Reformed Presbyterian Church In Ireland (1811-1839).
4. The Reformed Presbytery In America (1774 -1778, 1798 -1805, 1840 -1845, 1854 -1887).

In constituting the Reformed Presbytery In North America in moral succession to these aforementioned faithful judicatories, it is evident that we have not included any of the present bodies designated as "Reformed Presbyterian" whether in Scotland, Ireland, Canada, or the United States.

In full agreement with the official position of the Reformed Presbytery In America, as recorded in their Minutes of June 2, 1841 (which are attached as an Addendum to this Deed of Constitution), we hold these ecclesiastical bodies to be unfaithful to the attainments of the Covenanted Reformation. With full persuasion of conscience, we stand separate from them and cannot unite with them until they publicly repent of their shameful backsliding.

Thus, we affirm that we, having returned to faithful terms of communion, and a true constitution, are not a schismatic body that has further divided the Church of Christ. To the contrary, the Reformed Presbytery In North America is a moral perpetuation of that faithful and unified manifestation of Christ's Covenanted Church in Scotland, Ireland, and the United States. It is our goal to unite the Church of Christ in every land by means of promoting a truly covenanted reformation in accordance with the prayer of our Lord, "That they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22).

Therefore, in accordance with the aforesaid principles and declarations, we, the undersigned, joyfully owning and upholding the faithful attainments and contendings of our covenanted forefathers, subscribe this "Deed of Constitution" in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation.

Ministers

Derek Edwards _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Witnessed by _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Greg L. Price _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Witnessed by _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Ruling Elders

Greg Barrow _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Witnessed by _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Lyndon Dohms _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Witnessed by _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

David Hart _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Witnessed by _____ Date: _____ Location: _____

Addendum to Deed Of Constitution for the Reformed Presbytery in North America

MINUTES OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERY.

GREENE COUNTY, OHIO.

MASSIE'S CREEK MEETING HOUSE, June 2, 1841.

On motion, Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to report on our ecclesiastical relations, with special reference to those calling themselves Reformed Presbyterians. Rev. R. Lusk, Nathan Johnston, and Thomas Steele were appointed that committee.

Presbytery met pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted by prayer. All the members present. The Committee appointed to report on our Ecclesiastical Relations reported. The report being read, paragraph by paragraph, and remarks made thereon, was re-committed.

Court met and was constituted by prayer. All the members present. The committee appointed on our ecclesiastical relations, was called upon and reported. **The report being read, on motion was accepted, and on motion was read, paragraph by paragraph, amended, and on motion adopted. It is as follows:**

The committee appointed on our ecclesiastical relations &c. offer the following:-

The church of Christ, from the doctrines which she holds, the subjection to her blessed Lord which she professes, the organization bestowed upon her, and the object thereof, has in times past been as a city on a hill, and such is to be her position in time to come. Being distinct from all other communities in organization, with the reasons and objects thereof, her members should be intimately acquainted not only with her abstract doctrines, but also with the efficacy of these doctrines on their own life and conversation. And altho' every living member sustains a relation to the Head, which shall never be dissolved; yet the mere circumstance of having a name to live, as it respects either organization or membership, will not secure the reality in the one case or the other. Hypocrites have been in the true church, and local churches, so called, have been, in their very organization, synagogues of Satan; or, as in other cases, have so far degenerated as to be considered no longer churches of Christ. Hence the necessity of attention, by every lover of truth,-by all who desire to promote the declarative glory of God, to have a knowledge of the distinct characteristics of the church of Christ. As to individuals, it is an unalterable law,-"without holiness no man shall see the Lord:" and as to communities, the same law is equally applicable,-it cannot be expected that God will dwell in them.

Opposition in profession, to any part of revealed truth is evidence of the ascendancy of the carnal heart; and the relinquishment of acknowledged doctrine carries with it additional guilt, being a violation of voluntary engagements; and obstinacy in such defection must eventuate in the reprobation of the community.

Time was when the Reformed P[resbyterian] Church in the British Isles and America was considered one, both in doctrinal profession and covenant engagements. This time has passed, and now various distinct fellowships lay claim to the designation of witnesses, and profess to be the followers of the

martyrs of Jesus, who sealed with their blood the testimony which they held.

Discrimination must be exercised, to ascertain who they are and where they are, who are following the footsteps of the flock. These are such who neither oppose nor relinquish the doctrines professed, nor the testimony maintained, by their witnessing and covenant ancestors; nor cast off the obligations under which they have been brought by the deeds of their forefathers.

Formerly, all who claimed the name of Reformed Presbyterians in Europe and America, whether as sojourners or emigrants, had free access to the privileges of the church in either country. She was considered one, although geographically divided by the Atlantic Ocean; because professing ostensibly the same faith in both hemispheres. **It is now known that different fellowships exist, based upon different views of her profession and obligations;-hence the visible unity is destroyed, and antagonist principles put into operation.**

The doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession and in our Testimony, declared to be agreeable unto and founded upon the word of God, relative to civil government, had been, for a length of time, practically disregarded by individuals and by courts of the church in America. Discrepancy of views led to a division of the body in 1833. A large proportion of the people, but especially of the ministry, professing to have obtained clearer views of the application of their principles to civil society, considered the American Government as the moral ordinance of God, and consequently entitled to the christian's approbation and conscientious support. This party, from the assumption of having attained to clearer views than their brethren of the nature of civil government, were commonly known by the name New Lights. The other party, as contradistinguished from these were denominated Old Lights: nevertheless both continued to claim the original designation, Reformed Presbyterian.

Corruption in doctrine on the part of the Old Lights, leading necessarily to the violation of covenant engagements in practice, and the exercise of tyranny in discipline, forced some members to a separation from the body in '38. This party, characterized by a Safety League and Declinature, also assumes to be the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The same corruptions continuing to operate, with additional aggravations, and these cherished and defended by influential members as leaders; and the western part becoming more fully acquainted with the extent of defection, some were alarmed and saw the necessity of resorting to scriptural means of reform. Efforts to stay the progress of declension proved unavailing. The Synod refused to retrace her steps, by confessing her sins, and ascertaining her own legality and freedom when formally called thereunto. Thus a separation was loudly called for, and an organization imperatively demanded, that a judicial banner be displayed for the doctrines and order exemplified by our covenant fathers.-Hence the organizing of the Ref'd. Presbytery in '40, in order to hold fast and transmit to posterity all the faithful and public deeds of the Ref'd. Covenanted church.

The two Synods in the British Isles, as appears from their published proceedings, have pursued for substance the same course as the parties in defection from Reformation attainments in America. Different degrees of defection from covenant attainments are, however, discernible among the several and conflicting parties, in the land of our fathers.

The Synod of Scotland has been, since 1822, in a course of declension, having at that date expunged from her terms of communion the Renovation of the covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712. The tendency of this measure was to divide, and it is now matter of history that some were obliged to withdraw from the body. Among these was the **Rev. James Reid, author of the Memoirs of the Westminster Divines, who continued in a state of separation till his death;** near to which, he declared that he "could not have laid his head on a dying pillow in peace," had he acted otherwise. By this unfaithful act of formally removing from their terms of communion, a solemn public deed; the Scottish Synod went back to the year 1648, thereby overlooking, lightly esteeming and virtually condemning their own former act: together with the solemn and judicial recognition of the same by the Reformed Presbytery in 1761: **as also, disregarding the unanimous judgment of all the judicatories of the Ref'd Church in Ireland,** Thus they plainly manifested a disposition to innovate on the church's profession, and an evident determination to remove her ancient landmarks.

Although the Synod in Ireland has not formally expunged the deed; yet she has virtually recognized the act as righteous, by continued fellowship, judicial and ministerial, with the Synod of Scotland. This continued communion had an unhappy influence upon the Synod in Ireland, tending to foster a spirit of neutrality, in violation of one of the provisions of our Solemn League. The innovations prevailing in Scotland found advocates in Ireland, by whom their adoption was strenuously urged. This, together with conflicting sentiments on the doctrine of Magistracy, has more recently resulted in **separate communions in Ireland.** While we cordially approve the faithful contendings of the majority in that body, for the integrity of our Standards on the head of magistracy; we are obliged in conscience, **to express unequivocally our disapprobation of their tolerating the aforesaid innovations; as also, their countenancing of, and co-operating in, the popular, voluntary associations of the day,-such as "Sunday Schools," "Temperance Societies," &c.-calculated to undermine our uniformity, divert the attention and alienate the affections of Christ's witnesses from each other and from his own institutions, and eventually to effect disorganization.**

As the Reformed Covenanted church has ever been professedly a witnessing church, and in correspondence with this trait of character, has been frequently called to the unpleasant work of testifying against other christian communities: so also, as Paul withstood Peter face to face, we are now urged, as matter of duty, however painful, to testify against our former brethren.

In view of the foregoing state of things among the professing witnesses for a covenanted work of Reformation; your committee recommend the adoption of the following resolution:-

That this Presbytery cannot, in consistency with covenant engagements, or fidelity to Jesus Christ, hold communion judicially, ministerially, or in the dispensation of word or sacraments, with any of the aforesaid communities, assuming our name,-whether in America or the British Isles, until the causes of existing separation shall have been removed, according to the laws of the house of God.

R. Lusk, Ch'n.