

BOOK *of* MEMORIALS



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CREC
Book of Memorials



**COMMUNION OF REFORMED
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES**

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Introduction

Memorials state the position of the CREC on issues on which a confessional statement has not been made. Memorials are contained in the Book of Memorials and are incorporated by reference into the Constitution.

A candidate or mission church must declare any exceptions or reservations to the memorials prior to its becoming a CREC member. Member churches must immediately notify the broader assembly of any changes to their position on the memorials. If presbytery determines that the exceptions or reservations place the church at odds with CREC standards, it may initiate proceedings under Article IV.D.3.

The process for adopting a memorial must involve a careful striving for like-mindedness. This deliberate process will help us guard against various fads and winds of doctrine (Eph. 4:14). A memorial must be approved as a draft at a stated council and adopted at a subsequent stated council.

Memorial A. Ministerial Training

We believe that ministerial training is best conducted under the oversight of a local session, and should include an intense apprenticeship in a local body to test and develop the gifts, skills, knowledge, and spiritual qualifications of the candidate. At the same time, it is very difficult for many local congregations, with limited resources, to provide a candidate with a form of theological training that upholds high academic standards, equips the candidate in original languages, and so forth. Thus, we see a place for churches to send men to seminaries, while still overseeing and facilitating their training in other ways. In an ideal

scenario, seminaries would function as educational extensions of the Church, and seminary learning would be integrated into a comprehensive program of ministerial apprenticeship.

Memorial B. Confessional Revision

Our process of confessional revision is established so that the differences between our churches may be resolved over time by a careful striving for like-mindedness. The process is established to work in a slow and deliberate fashion so that we will be less susceptible to various fads and winds of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

Memorial C. Christian Education

All things are to be considered and conducted under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, including education, and especially the education of our covenant children. God has not charged the state to educate children but has explicitly commanded parents to bring up their children in the education and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4, Deut. 6:7). Given the importance of the task (Ps. 127:3–5, Deut. 6:7–9), and the impossibility of neutrality in education (Prov. 1:7, Matt. 12:30, Luke 6:40, Col. 2:1–10, 2 Cor. 10:3–5), we do heartily affirm the necessity of educating our children in a manner that is explicitly Christian in content and rigor. Government schools tend to be, by decree and design, explicitly godless, and therefore normally should not be considered a legitimate means of inculcating true faith, holy living and a decidedly Christian worldview in the children of Christian parents. Therefore, we strongly encourage Christian parents to seek alternative ways of educating their children, whether by means of Christian schools or homeschooling. In cases, where Christian education is an impossibility,

parents must be active and diligent in overseeing the education of their children.

Parents who do not fully understand the indispensability of Christian education should be warmly received into membership. However, the leaders of Christ's church must thoroughly understand and plainly teach the divine imperative to disciple our children, the divine prohibition of rendering unto Caesar those who bear God's image (Matt. 22:20–21), the divine warning to those who cause their little ones to stumble (Matt. 18:6) and the divine promises to those who raise their children in faith (Deut. 7:9, Ps. 102:5–7, Ps. 103:17–18, Prov. 22:6, Luke 1:48–50, Acts 2:39).

Memorial D. Creation

The doctrine of creation lies at the heart of Christian living, deeply embedded within our assumptions about worship, knowledge, faith, celebration, beauty, and redemption. In recent decades, many conservative evangelicals have been moved by the science of the day to oppose the historic view of creation in six sequential days of common length, several millennia in the past. Instead, they hold that the bare ideas of creation presented in Genesis have little to do with the actualities of creation. Falsely pitting poetry and symbolism against history, they distort the text of Scripture and divorce ideas from the created order in ancient Gnostic fashion.

Science is a legitimate and noble pursuit, as an aspect of the creation mandate (Gen. 1:26–28), and Christians should not be fearful or ungrateful for advances in scientific knowledge and technology. Indeed, the best scientific developments have been the fruit of an essentially Christian worldview. Advances in medicine, transportation, communication, computers, etc. are God's good gifts. We therefore encourage the cultivation of the scientific

enterprise on the basis of fully biblical principles. Science and the gospel are not inherently antagonistic.

Memorial E. Terrorism

1. Because God is the Sovereign Lord, all of history is under His control. Nothing happens apart from His knowledge and without His divine decree (Dan. 4:34–35). Therefore, we must view acts of terror in the light of God’s sovereignty rather than from the carnal point of view. It is God who brings disaster upon men and nations for His holy and righteous purposes (Gen. 50:19; Amos 3:6). While not denying that wicked individuals commit these acts, we affirm that God is active in these events for His glory and honor (Acts 2:22–24; 4:24–30).
2. Many formerly Christian nations in the West, particularly the United States of America and Canada, have grievously sinned against the true and living God, and His Son Jesus Christ, and have slipped into wholesale idolatry and polytheism. We have done this in the name of tolerance and acceptance, tolerating everything except the truth. Civil and religious representatives tell damnable lies when they say that the faiths of Abraham and Mohammed are the same, that Yahweh and Allah are the same, that the living God wants His people to commune with infidels, and that we ought to regard as enemies those who believe in such a thing as truth (Ex. 20:3, John 4:22, Eph. 4:3–6). These are lies which we believe to our own destruction. Therefore, God has brought and continues to bring judgments upon us as a warning to all that turn their face against the living God. The only faithful response is confession of sin, drawing near to Jesus Christ, and repentance (Joel, *passim*). Apart from

repentance we will find no blessing for our nations in these events, particularly if we band together to pursue the spread of humanistic goals. It is appropriate for nations to respond to terrorist attacks by using military force in order to bring terrorists to justice. Furthermore, it is lawful for believing Christians to participate in such military responses. However:

- It is not lawful for women to be mustered for combat service, for our Lord has declared it an abomination for women to don the martial attire of a man (Deut. 22:5). Christian fathers must protect their daughters from being seduced or coerced into such a circumstance, and the Church must support them as they do so. It is the duty of men not women to protect their countries (Jer. 51:30).
- It is not lawful to respond to terrorist attacks in the name of false gods or with a proud and arrogant spirit (Isa. 10:5–19). No nation has the right to expect God to bestow blessing upon any military response so long as that nation embraces false gods and practices wickedness. In the West, we must repent the idols of pluralism, the carnage of abortion, the mustering of our daughters for combat service, and the honoring of the perversion of sodomy. Though it is lawful and right to respond militarily, if a nation protects these and other corruptions as a way of life, it cannot expect to enjoy God's blessing upon such endeavors, or anything other than continued judgment both on the battlefield and off.

Therefore, mindful of the judgments of God (2 Cor. 5:9–11; 1 Thess. 4:6; Rev 18:8; 19:1–5, 11), the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches urges our leaders and peoples to fear God,

to honor His Christ, to confess our sins, and to seek His blessing as we respond to terrorist attacks (Pss. 2:10–12; 110).

Memorial F. Homosexuality

Courage, Clarity, and Charity: A Phoenix Declaration

January 2003

As Christian ministers standing in the stream of historic Christianity and rooted in the Evangelical heritage, we believe it is time to speak with courage, clarity, and charity to the issue of homosexuality that is besetting the Church at large. Confessing the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God (Isaiah 40:8; Luke 4:31–32; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21), we believe that God has spoken clearly and sufficiently to the issue of human sexuality. In accordance with this belief, we must state that homosexuality in its varied forms, whether gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, is out of accord with God’s design for human sexuality and is sinful, therefore, in the eyes of God (Genesis 1:27–28; 2:18–25; 19:1–28; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Matthew 19:4–6; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:8–10; 2 Peter 2:6–8). The only remedy for this, and all other sin, is found in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11). As ministers of this glorious gospel of God’s grace, who are striving after faithfulness to God and His Word, we state the following as a call to the Church to return to faithfulness in a spirit of repentance.

Courage

In our time, many who are recognized as clergy are calling for and promoting a revision of the historic Christian understanding of God’s Word concerning homosexuality. This teaching is out of

accord with the Bible and leads the flock of Christ astray. Such teaching arrogantly overturns God's holy standard dealing with human sexuality. Love for Christ and His Church compels us to speak truthfully about that which is false. Courage is needed to refute those who would call evil good and good evil. The example and teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles show clearly that false teachers are to be exposed and refuted so that the Church is protected (Acts 20:28–31; Romans 16:17–18; Titus 1:9; 2 Peter 2:1–3). In an age that tolerates everything but the truth, courage is needed to speak the truth in love in an uncompromising manner.

Clarity

The Bible provides a clear and consistent teaching in opposition to homosexuality. Modern attempts to subvert this clear teaching are without substance. The Word of God must not be held prisoner to alien philosophical or cultural agendas. If allowed to speak with its own authority, the Biblical teaching is seen to be utterly opposed to homosexuality and its attendant practices. Furthermore, the historic testimony of Christian interpretation is in perfect harmony with this position. Contrary to popularized agendas, the Bible and those who have officially taught Christianity throughout the ages have recognized the sinfulness of homosexuality. The interpretations of such teachers as Athenagorus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Augustine are unanimous. The modern attempt to revise the Biblical teaching, claiming Biblical and interpretive support, is a theological and moral novelty.

Charity

Love for neighbor compels us to remind those who are caught in the depths of sin that God in His holiness will not be mocked—He

will bring judgment against sin. It is not an act of oppression or hate to point out the Divine condemnation of homosexuality. Rather, it is an act of kindness. We are opposed to the ill-treatment that many people in favor of homosexuality have experienced; yet we deny that our disagreement and presentation of the Bible's teaching with regard to this subject constitutes ill treatment, hatred, or bigotry. In speaking the truth about the nature of homosexuality and God's opposition to it, we simultaneously hold forth the message of God's grace. God can and does forgive those who forsake the sin of homosexuality. God can and does bring freedom from bondage and cleansing of conscience to those who turn to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance (1 Corinthians 6:9–11; Romans 3:21–26; 6:1–14; Ephesians 2:1–10; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 10:19–22). It is false compassion to accept and affirm those who are unrepentant in homosexuality. Charity demands that we speak the truth about God's holiness and His gospel.

Memorial G. Worship

1. We believe that Lord's Day worship is our highest privilege, our greatest duty, and our deepest joy.¹ God has created us for just this purpose: to worship Him, and to be transformed by Him as we worship.²
2. We believe that in worship the people of God are engaged by the Spirit and drawn into the Father's presence as living sacrifices in union with the Risen Christ.³ In Lord's Day worship, God renews His covenant relationship with His people

1 Ex. 20:8–11, Heb. 4:9; Heb. 10:25, Deut. 26:10, Ps. 29:2, Ps. 27:4, Ps. 65:4, Ps. 73:25; Heb. 4:16.

2 Is. 43:21; 1Cor. 6:20; Rev. 4:11; Rom. 12:1–2; Jn. 4:23.

3 Lam. 3:41; Ps. 25:1; 28:2; Eph. 2:12–22, Rom. 12:1–2; Heb. 12:18–25; Heb. 8:5; Rev. 4:1.

by serving them and them serving Him.⁴ He draws near to us to draw us near to Him.⁵

3. We believe that in Lord's Day worship, we are gathered together in the presence of the living God among a glorious assembly consisting of angels, the church militant on earth, and the church triumphant in heaven.⁶
4. We believe that each week in worship, through the Lord's service to us and our service to Him, our Triune Creator and Redeemer gives us the covenant gifts of glory, knowledge, and life, in and through the assurance of our forgiveness, the preaching of the Word, and the partaking of the Lord's Supper.⁷ While bestowing these gifts upon us in worship, at the same time, He graciously accepts our praise and thanksgiving of Him.⁸ In re-orienting us around His covenant,⁹ He empowers and calls us to live in terms of His new creation.¹⁰
5. We believe that God uses our worship to change us and the world.¹¹ We are transformed by the grace of God's presence,¹² and leave worship with a renewed sense of, and commitment to, mission,¹³ discipleship,¹⁴ and community.¹⁵ Biblical worship results in changed lives, Spirit-empowerment, and impacts the world for Christ. Furthermore, God is pleased

4 Is. 66:20–22, Lk. 22:19; Lev. 1–5.

5 Deut. 4:7; Rev. 3:20, Ex. 24:12; 2 Cor. 6:16b–18; Heb. 10:19 with Heb. 9:11,12.

6 Rev. 9–12, Heb. 12:22–24, Eph. 2:6.

7 Rom. 3:23; 8:30; Jn. 17:22; Rom. 1:21–23; Jn. 17:17; Jn. 17:2,3; Ro. 2:7–10; 1Jn. 2:20, 27; Ps. 115, Rev. 21:11, Jn. 6:53–58, 1Pet. 1:23.

8 Ps. 51:17, Ez. 20:40–41.

9 Ps. 50:5; Mt. 26:28; Heb 8:6; 12:24.

10 Mt. 28:16–20; Jn. 20:19–23.

11 Ps. 22:25–27; Gen. 22:9–18.

12 Rom. 12:1–2; 2Cor. 3:18.

13 Mt. 28:19a.

14 Mt. 28:19b, 20a.

15 Is. 55:12; Rom. 15:13–14; Mt. 28:20b.

to hear and answer our prayers, particularly those that ascend in the Lord's Day worship of the Church.¹⁶ He hears our prayers for the nations and in answering us makes manifest His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.¹⁷

6. We believe that worship should be informed and governed by the Bible in its entirety.¹⁸ In constructing our liturgies, we are to pay particular attention to those portions of God's Word that are specifically given to inform us of what God desires in worship. These portions include, but are not limited to, descriptions of patriarchal worship, Levitical worship,¹⁹ and Tabernacle of David worship,²⁰ which all point toward the glorious advent of Jesus Christ, whose self-offering and victorious resurrection accomplished our salvation.²¹ This final work of our Savior provides the basis for the resultant transformation of worship spoken of by the Apostles in the New Covenant.²² We are, of course, prohibited from returning to the practices of animal sacrifices, for this would deny our faith in the perfect and complete sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. We believe that these portions of the Bible give us a divine pattern and sequence of worship,²³ and provide us a detailed understanding of the benefits of Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.²⁴ These benefits include

16 1Kg. 8:26–53; Mt. 18:19–20; Rev. 8:3–6.

17 Mt. 9:38; Mt. 6:9–10.

18 2Tim 3:16–17; Is. 8:20; Ex. 20:4–6; Heb. 8:5.

19 Lev. 1–7.

20 1Chr. 16:1 ff; 1Chr. 25; 2Sam. 6; 2Chr. 15:14–15; 23:18; 29:25–30; 35:15; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:45–46; Acts 15:16,17.

21 Jn. 1:29; 1Cor. 5:7; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 9:11–14.

22 Acts 15:16–17; Heb. 7:12; Heb. 8:5; 10:19–22; 9:23, 24.

23 Lev. 9:22.

24 Jn. 1:29.

purification from our sins,²⁵ transformation of our persons,²⁶ acceptance of our work and tribute,²⁷ and peace with God and men.²⁸ Through Biblical worship, the Lord assures us of the forgiveness of our sins,²⁹ the Holy Spirit's ongoing work of renewal in our lives,³⁰ the requirement and acceptability of vocation,³¹ and the promise of the increase and maturation of Christian community.³²

8. We believe that these portions of the Bible also teach us that each of these glorious aspects of worship are to be set in the context of beautiful music that is maturing in both voice and instrument, to the praise of Christ the King.³³
9. We believe that the proper implementation in love of the above requires a practical understanding of all that Scripture teaches, including an understanding of lesser and greater matters, Christian forbearance with our brothers, liberty in worship which is not self-willed, an avoidance of an over-scrupulous zeal, and a desire to maintain a Biblical catholicity as we build on the work of the historic church.³⁴

25 Lev. 4:5; Heb. 9:26; 10:12.

26 Lev 1; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 4:16; Gal. 6:15.

27 Lev. 2; Eccl. 9:7.

28 Lev. 3; Rom. 5:1.

29 Lev. 4-5; Col. 1:14.

30 Lev. 1; Rom. 12:1-2.

31 Lev. 2; 2Thes. 3:10-12; Rom. 15:27; 1Cor. 9:13-14.

32 Lev. 3; 1Cor. 10:17; Eph. 4:11-13; Jn. 17:20.

33 1Chr. 15:16; 25:6,7; Ps. 98:4-6; 144:9; 150; Rev. 5:8; 14:2-3; 15:2-3.

34 Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:2.