

C&C Proposal

Evaluation

The Candidates and Credential Committee of the South Texas Presbytery is regularly the busiest committee of the presbytery. There are responsibilities the committee is performing well and some that need improvement.

Looking forward to the continuing growth of the presbytery, there are three particular elements that could impact the committee's work: character exams, background checks, and increase in interns and candidates.

Character Exams and Background Checks

In 2022, the STP adopted a Character Exam that would be administered to all candidates that come before the presbytery. The C&C committee has decided to implement this exam both at the beginning and conclusion of a candidate's time before the committee (when it is appropriate for both). This important exam has added to the committee's agenda.

Further, the future possibility of a background check policy will add administrative tasks and reviewable materials to the committee. The importance of both practices highlights two distinct and important points of emphasis for the current committee: relational knowledge of the candidate and theological examination of the candidate.

Recognizing that both of these are crucial, some presbyteries have two committees that specialize in their respective emphasis. The addition of the character exam and possible addition of a background check makes the creation of a separate candidates committee something the presbytery should consider to improve its evaluation of candidates.

Increase in Interns and Candidates

Along with the increase in exams, STP has been blessed with growth. New and growing churches increase the number of candidates, transfers, and interns. This growth has been felt in the number of total candidates and exams that have come through the C&C committee.

The requirements for interns are laid out explicitly in the BCO (19-7 through 19-16). Among these requirements, interns are to bring a report to the presbytery every year and the committee tasked with overseeing them is to bring a report on all interns at every stated meeting (19-12). This is a task the C&C committee of STP is seeking to improve.

This task needs to be added without rushing reports. This would be a disservice to interns and candidates both from a relational standpoint and from a theological examination standpoint. A

specialized candidates committee would specialize in the specific role and responsibility of mentoring interns and keeping reports of their progress.

Details of Changes

The responsibilities of filling vacated pulpits will reside solely with Ministerial Relations. This duty already resides with them and they are the proper committee to contact ministers in the presbytery who are available for pulpit supply. It is being removed from the new Candidates Committee and the Credentials Committee.

The candidates committee will focus on the Christian experience and inward call exam as well as the first Christian character exam that should be given before Licensure. They will be responsible for receiving regular updates from interns and providing those reports to the Presbytery.

The candidates committee will not receive transfer exams from ministers transferring into the presbytery. That responsibility will remain with the credentials committee—though it could also be extended to Ministerial Relations. The candidates committee will not address changes of views for teaching elders.

Finally, the credentials committee will relinquish all duties connected to internships. This belongs properly to a candidate committee.

The Proposal in Summary

In conclusion, the STP as it continues to grow would be better served by two committees dedicated to its different points of emphasis. A stand alone candidates committee will be better equipped and provided more time to meet with interns, provide reports, and perform the Christian experience, inward call, and character exams. The stand alone credentials committee would be provided more time for thorough examination of the candidate's theology.

This proposal optimizes the unique gifts of the men in our presbytery. It would also provide two committees—hopefully each consisting of the same size as the present committee—more face to face time with candidates as they come before our presbytery. The outcome should be candidates that the presbytery knows better and candidates that better know the presbytery they are joining.

Presbyteries with similar setups include Potomac, Central Florida, Westminster, Tennessee Valley, North Texas, Calvary, Covenant, Missouri, Philadelphia, Evangel, Central Carolina, Wisconsin, and Gulf Coast.

The Original Standing Rules

Candidates and Credentials Committee

Purpose

The purpose of the Candidates and Credentials Committee is to assist vacant churches, oversee ministers and licentiates, conduct requisite examinations, oversee candidates for the Gospel ministry, and direct internship programs for candidates within the presbytery.

Duties and Responsibilities

VACANT CHURCHES

1. This committee shall assist vacant churches in securing supply preaching and interim supply.

MINISTERS

1. Churches desiring to call a minister may seek the committee's counsel.
2. The committee shall be responsible to present to Presbytery: transferring ministers, candidates for ordination, and licentiates seeking admission to South Texas Presbytery along with their credentials. The applications for admission to South Texas Presbytery must ordinarily be received one month prior to the Presbytery meeting at which the applicant will be examined.
3. This committee shall review all calls, examining them as to whether they are in order, before presenting them to Presbytery.
4. This committee shall instruct churches that a minister must be examined and approved by Presbytery before he can move on the field.
5. This committee shall transfer a minister's credentials only at a meeting of presbytery.
6. This committee shall hear and make recommendations to Presbytery concerning Teaching Elders who report changes in their views related to Ordination Vow #2 (BCO 21-5).

CANDIDATES

1. The committee shall oversee the candidates' course of study and practical training.
2. This committee shall have the oversight of all candidates for the Gospel ministry under the care of Presbytery still pursuing courses of preparation, keeping in touch with their progress and spiritual growth by annual reports from them.
3. It shall receive and consider all applications from persons seeking to become candidates for the Gospel ministry.

4. The committee shall recommend candidates eligible for a loan from funds administered by the Presbytery, or a seminary, when funds administered by the seminary require such recommendation and approval by the Presbytery.
5. This committee shall assist candidates and licentiates of the Presbytery in securing summer employment within the bounds of the Presbytery.
6. The committee shall provide guidance to sessions on the process of bringing a candidate under care of the session and Presbytery.
7. This committee shall hear and make recommendations to Presbytery concerning Teaching Elders who report changes in their views related to Ordination Vow #2 (BCO 21-5).

18

EXAMINATIONS

1. The Candidates and Credentials Committee shall prepare and conduct a preliminary examination of those seeking licensure, ordination, and ministers seeking admission from another Presbytery or denomination according to the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* 21.4.
2. All candidate sermons shall be heard by the committee on behalf of the Presbytery and shall report their recommendation to the Presbytery.

INTERNSHIPS

1. Approve all intern programs.
2. Approve all intern mentors.
3. Receive reports from interns and mentors.

The Proposed Standing Rules

Candidates Committee

Purpose

The purpose of the Candidates and Credentials Committee is to ~~assist vacant churches, oversee ministers and~~ licentiates, conduct requisite examinations pertaining to Christian character and experience, oversee candidates for the Gospel ministry, and direct internship programs for candidates within the presbytery.

Duties and Responsibilities

~~VACANT CHURCHES~~

- ~~1. This committee shall assist vacant churches in securing supply preaching and interim supply.~~

~~MINISTERS~~

- ~~7. Churches desiring to call a minister may seek the committee's counsel.~~
- ~~8. The committee shall be responsible to present to Presbytery: transferring ministers, candidates for ordination, and licentiates seeking admission to South Texas Presbytery along with their credentials. The applications for admission to South Texas Presbytery must ordinarily be received one month prior to the Presbytery meeting at which the applicant will be examined.~~
- ~~9. This committee shall review all calls, examining them as to whether they are in order, before presenting them to Presbytery.~~
- ~~10. This committee shall instruct churches that a minister must be examined and approved by Presbytery before he can move on the field.~~
- ~~11. This committee shall transfer a minister's credentials only at a meeting of presbytery.~~
- ~~12. This committee shall hear and make recommendations to Presbytery concerning Teaching Elders who report changes in their views related to Ordination Vow #2 (BCO 21-5).~~

~~CANDIDATES~~

- ~~8. The committee shall oversee the candidates' course of study and practical training.~~
- ~~9. This committee shall have the oversight of all candidates for the Gospel ministry under the care of Presbytery still pursuing courses of preparation, keeping in touch with their progress and spiritual growth by annual reports from them.~~

10. ~~¶~~ The committee shall receive and consider all applications from persons seeking to become candidates for the Gospel ministry, ensuring that the requirements of BCO 18-2 for church membership and session endorsement are met.
11. The committee shall recommend candidates eligible for a loan from funds administered by the Presbytery; or a seminary; ~~w.~~ When funds administered by the seminary require such recommendation and approval by the Presbytery the committee is authorized to act as a commission with respect to such approvals.
12. This committee shall assist candidates and licentiates of the Presbytery in securing summer employment within the bounds of the Presbytery.
13. The committee shall provide guidance to sessions on the process of bringing a candidate under care of the session and Presbytery.
14. ~~This committee shall hear and make recommendations to Presbytery concerning Teaching Elders who report changes in their views related to Ordination Vow #2 (BCO 21-5).~~

EXAMINATIONS

3. The Candidates and Credentials Committee shall prepare and conduct a preliminary examinations of Christian experience, inward call, and Christian character as necessary for those coming as candidates or seeking licensure or internships, ordination, and ministers seeking admission from another Presbytery or denomination according to the requirements of the Book of Church Order 21.4.
4. ~~All candidate sermons shall be heard by the committee on behalf of the Presbytery and shall report their recommendation to the Presbytery.~~

INTERNSHIPS

4. Approve all intern programs.
5. Approve all intern mentors.
6. Receive reports from interns and mentors under BCO 19-12 the required annual report from interns and, if the intern is still in school, the annual report from his instructors and report at each stated meeting with respect to each intern.

Credentials Committee

Purpose

The purpose of the ~~Candidates and~~ Credentials Committee is to ~~assist vacant churches, oversee ministers and licentiates, and~~ conduct requisite examinations for licensure (BCO 19-2), ordination (BCO 21-4.c), and transfers (BCO 13-6); ~~oversee candidates for the Gospel ministry, and direct internship programs for candidates within the presbytery.~~

Duties and Responsibilities

~~VACANT CHURCHES~~

- ~~1. This committee shall assist vacant churches in securing supply preaching and interim supply.~~

MINISTERS

13. Churches desiring to call a minister may seek the committee's counsel.
14. The committee shall be responsible to present to Presbytery: transferring ministers, candidates for ordination, and licentiates seeking admission to South Texas Presbytery along with their credentials. The applications for admission to South Texas Presbytery must ordinarily be received one month prior to the Presbytery meeting at which the applicant will be examined.
15. This committee shall review all calls, examining them as to whether they are in order, before presenting them to Presbytery.
16. This committee shall instruct churches that a minister must be examined and approved by Presbytery before he can move on the field.
17. This committee shall transfer a minister's credentials only at a meeting of presbytery.
18. This committee shall hear and make recommendations to Presbytery concerning Teaching Elders who report changes in their views related to Ordination Vow #2 (BCO 21-5).

~~CANDIDATES~~

- ~~15. The committee shall oversee the candidates' course of study and practical training.~~
- ~~16. This committee shall have the oversight of all candidates for the Gospel ministry under the care of Presbytery still pursuing courses of preparation, keeping in touch with their progress and spiritual growth by annual reports from them.~~
- ~~17. It shall receive and consider all applications from persons seeking to become candidates for the Gospel ministry.~~

- ~~18. The committee shall recommend candidates eligible for a loan from funds administered by the Presbytery, or a seminary, when funds administered by the seminary require such recommendation and approval by the Presbytery.~~
- ~~19. This committee shall assist candidates and licentiates of the Presbytery in securing summer employment within the bounds of the Presbytery.~~
- ~~20. The committee shall provide guidance to sessions on the process of bringing a candidate under care of the session and Presbytery.~~
- ~~21. This committee shall hear and make recommendations to Presbytery concerning Teaching Elders who report changes in their views related to Ordination Vow #2 (BCO 21-5).~~

EXAMINATIONS

5. The Candidates and Credentials Committee shall prepare and conduct a preliminary examination of those seeking licensure (BCO 19-2), ordination (BCO 21-4.c), and ministers seeking admission from another Presbytery or denomination (BCO 13-6) according to the requirements of the *Book of Church Order-21.4*.
6. All candidate sermons shall be heard by the committee on behalf of the Presbytery and shall report their recommendation to the Presbytery.

INTERNSHIPS

- ~~7. Approve all intern programs.~~
- ~~8. Approve all intern mentors.~~
- ~~9. Receive reports from interns and mentors.~~

Other Changes To The Standing Rules

- Update committee distinction in Table of Contents (pg 2)
- Split the committees under the “Structure” of the presbytery (pg 7)
- Clarify that both distinct committees may conduct exams electronically (pg 12)
- Split the committees under the list of committees (pg 14)
- Clarify that the candidates committee will not approve calls (pg 14)