

Constitution of the Covenant Presbyterian Church

Preface

We believe that our doctrine, polity, and worship are strictly regulated by Scripture. Only circumstantial matters are to be determined by the light of nature and the general rules of the Word of God. Accordingly, we profess that the principles set out in this Constitution are binding on us in the same way as are the historic confessions of faith, catechisms, and creeds of the church listed below.

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

A. Confessional Standard

The Covenant Presbyterian Church hereby adopts and subscribes to the Westminster Confessional Standards listed below as subordinate standards which represent the fullest expression of the teaching of the Scriptures. These documents are incorporated herein by reference.

- a. **The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)**
- b. **The Westminster Larger Catechism**
- c. **The Westminster Shorter Catechism**

B. Exceptions and Clarifications

1. Exceptions

- a. WCF 21:5: We allow the use of Biblically consistent hymns and spiritual songs, singing from portions of the canon of Scripture other than the Book of Psalms, and the use of musical accompaniment for the purpose of assisting congregational singing. However, every church should agree that Psalms have been set forth in God's word to be sung by His people and therefore, it is most desirable that, at a minimum, they should be incorporated into worship in the churches.
- b. WCF 25:6: One may hold and teach within our denomination that the pope is not "that Antichrist", as the Westminster Confession asserts, though we believe that the pope is an antichrist, and the mass is antichristian.
- c. WCF 29:7: We add that "worthy receivers" may also include the baptized children of baptized parents who profess the true religion.

2. Clarifications

a. WCF 1 – Nature of Scripture

We reject higher critical teaching that denies the inerrancy of the Scripture, postulates any position which makes any portion of Scripture the product of evolutionary development or redaction, and/or teaches that any portion of Scripture is "not profitable" for the church to teach, use, or expound today.

b. WCF 1:1 – Extra-Ordinary Spiritual Gifts And Offices

The Confession refers to "those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people" as "being now ceased." We believe these "former ways" include the extra-ordinary spiritual gifts and offices (tongues, prophecy, healing, miracles, and apostleship).

c. WCF 4:1 – Creation

Any position which denies a recent creation in six calendar days or results in death before the Fall, is out of accord with the Bible and the Confessions. Examples of such un-Biblical and anti-Confessional positions include: theistic evolution, uniformitarian geology, the Framework Hypothesis, and the Analogical Day View.

d. WCF 19:6-7 – Violations of the Ten Commandments

The following are considered to be violations of the Ten Commandments: abortion, infanticide, euthanasia (differentiation is maintained between actively killing by withholding food or water and removal of life support), bisexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism and all forms of artificial procreation using donors outside of the existing bonds of marriage.

e. WCF 21:8 – Lawful Recreations on the Sabbath Day

We would clarify that “recreations” does not exclude recreational fellowship of God’s people on the Lord’s Day.

f. WCF 23 – Distinctions of Governments: Family, Church, and Civil

The Scriptures declare that civil magistrates are instituted by God for the good of both mankind and the church. We believe, however, that the family and the church are legitimate governments distinct from the civil magistrate. Accordingly, we reject the subordination of the family and church to the State in matters of faith and religious practice. As an extension, we believe in promoting and supporting the training of our children in Christian educational institutions, especially in the home schooling method. It is allowed for Christians to refuse to serve in the military when, in the judgment of the general assembly, such action is deemed unjust. It is not lawful for women to serve in military service, except for voluntary acts of mercy.

g. WCF 27:4 – Guarding the Lord's Table

All churches must practice, in some manner, a guarding (“fencing”) of the Lord’s Table. Presbytery will not specify beyond this mandate.

h. WCF 28:3 – Modes of Baptism

The allowable modes of baptism include sprinkling, pouring, and immersion.

i. Covenantal Theology

We adhere to a Covenantal hermeneutic of Scripture and reject Dispensationalism.

j. Non-established Practices

The following practices may vary from local church to local church but are not established by the broader assemblies. (It is understood that any member joining a local church will submit to the position of that church while a member, even if they might transfer from a church within the CPC that held differently.)

1. Specific age of communication at the Lord’s Supper with the proviso that all communicants must be examined by the session and give a credible confession of faith before their 20th birthday in order to continue communing at the Lord’s Table.
2. Allowable activities on the Sabbath.
3. Women teaching children in appropriate settings.

4. In situations where the regular ministry of the word is not available, which male leaders may be authorized to lead in prayer, read Scripture, and/or read sermons (or administrate authorized taped sermons).

k. Subscription

All ministers in the CPC are bound by oath to teach and practice publicly only those things found to be in accord with the Constitution (as interpreted by the exceptions and clarifications herein stated). Those received who hold different views are bound not to teach them publicly or privately, though they may be discussed within the context of a broader assembly as provided by its rules and directories.

l. Vows and oaths

Self-maledictory vows and oaths to secret pagan societies (e.g. Masonic organizations) are considered to be "superstitious and sinful snares" (WCF 22:7) and therefore prohibited.

C. Conflict (Real or Apparent) Amongst Confessional Statements

The CPC recognizes the wisdom and usefulness of the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort) and considers these standards to express the same faith as the Westminster Confessional Standards. However, where perceived or real conflicts exist between the Westminster Confessional Standards (including the Larger and Shorter Catechism) and these other Creeds listed above, the Westminster Confessional Standards shall prevail.