

Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance

Part 2

FROM THE REPORT OF THE PASTORAL FORMATION OVERSIGHT BOARD

TE 22-1 (Change name of Certificate of Fitness for Ministry to Certificate of Readiness for Examination, workbook pp. 240-243)

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to vote in favor of TE 22-1.

TE 22-2 (Establish process for Certificate of Readiness for Examination, workbook pp. 243-245)

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance is to amend TE 22-2. (The committee's additions are double underlined and highlighted; the committee's deletions are double struck and highlighted.)

TE 22-2 (amendment)

To establish the following process for a candidate to receive a Certificate of Readiness for Examination by adopting the following changes to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

Article 12. Certificates of Fitness for Ministry~~Readiness for Examination~~

Sec. 1. Candidates at Seminaries Officially Related to the Reformed Church in America~~Reformed Church Seminaries~~

A Master of Divinity degree from a seminary officially related to the Reformed Church in America will serve as a Certificate of Readiness for Examination. A candidate for ministry who has received ~~the~~such ~~a degree of Master of Divinity~~ from a seminary of the Reformed Church in America, upon the successful completion of the prescribed course of theological studies, is found to be qualified and is adjudged to be a fit candidate for ministry of Word and sacrament in the Reformed Church in America, shall receive from the General Synod through the board of trustees of an RCA seminary a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, which is entitlement to an examination for licensure and ordination, ~~with the courses that~~that includes course work satisfying addressing the requirements for ministry of Word and sacrament as defined in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Sections ~~6 and 7,~~ s 6 and 7, as documented on the candidate's transcript, ~~from one of the two historic seminaries of the Reformed Church in America,~~ is entitled to an examination for licensure and ordination ~~by a classis.~~

Sec. 2. Candidates at ~~Other Seminaries~~ Not Officially Related to the Reformed Church in America

- a. A candidate for ministry who has received the degree of Master of Divinity or ~~an academically~~ equivalent degree from a seminary not ~~officially historically~~ related to the Reformed Church in America upon the successful completion of the prescribed course of theological studies, ~~is found to be qualified, and is adjudged to be a fit candidate for ministry of Word and sacrament in the Reformed Church in America, and who satisfies~~ addressing the requirements for ministry of Word and Sacrament as defined by Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, ~~Sections 6 and 7,~~ shall receive from the General Synod through the board of trustees of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry ~~Readiness for Examination, which is entitlement to an examination for licensure and ordination.~~
- b. The General Synod through the board of trustees of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency shall require the applicant to furnish, at the conclusion of seminary studies, the following: a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools or a theological accrediting agency of comparable standards as determined by the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency; a transcript of the applicant's academic record at this seminary; and evidence of confessing membership in a Reformed church of the classis making petition.
- c. ~~The General Synod through the board of trustees of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency shall determine that the candidate meets minimum competencies as determined by the standards established by the General Synod and designated as indispensable for the proper exercise of the ministerial office of the church. If a candidate comes under the jurisdiction of a new agent of the General Synod, the classis in which the candidate is enrolled shall apply to the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency on behalf of the candidate. If the candidate has completed less than half the process toward reception of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, the relevant agents of the General Synod shall effect the transfer. If the candidate has completed half the process or more, the original agent shall award the Certificate. If the applicant has previously been asked to terminate studies, has withdrawn under duress, or has been denied the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry at a Reformed Church in America seminary or the MFCA, further supervision and/or examination of the applicant shall only be carried out by or with the consent of the seminary or agent~~

~~within whose program the candidate had previously been enrolled.~~

Sec. 3. Transfer Between Agents

~~If a candidate desires to come under the jurisdiction of a new different theological agent of the General Synod during the process, or if the applicant has previously been asked to terminate studies, has withdrawn under duress, or has been denied the Certificate of Readiness for Examination at an official seminary of the RCA or the MECA, the classis in which the candidate is enrolled shall notify both parties on behalf of the candidate. Further supervision and/or examination of the applicant shall only be carried out by or with the consent of the seminary or theological agent within whose program the candidate had previously been enrolled.~~

Subsequent sections will be renumbered.

Reason:

The proposed revisions reflect consultation among the PFOB, the Commission on Church Order, and the advisory committee, and clarify the intention of the amendments as originally proposed.

***NOTE: With the intent of providing increased clarity for the body, if the General Synod votes to adopt the committee's amendments to the proposal, the following is how the amended recommendation would read:*

TE 22-2 as it would be on the floor if the committee's amendments are adopted

Article 12. Certificates of ~~Fitness for Ministry~~ Readiness for Examination

Sec. 1. Candidates at ~~Reformed Church Seminaries~~ Seminaries Officially Related to the Reformed Church in America

A Master of Divinity degree from a seminary officially related to the Reformed Church in America will serve as a Certificate of Readiness for Examination. A candidate for ministry who has received the such a degree of Master of Divinity from a seminary of the Reformed Church in America, upon the successful completion of the prescribed course of theological studies, is found to be qualified and is adjudged to be a fit candidate for ministry of Word and sacrament in the Reformed Church in America, shall receive from the General Synod through the board of trustees of an RCA seminary a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, which is entitlement to an examination for licensure and ordination. that includes course work satisfying the requirements for ministry of Word and sacrament as defined in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Section 7, as documented on the candidate's transcript, is entitled to an examination for licensure and ordination.

Sec. 2. Candidates at ~~Other Seminaries~~ Not Officially Related to the Reformed Church in America

- a. A candidate for ministry who has received the degree of Master of Divinity or ~~an academically equivalent degree from a seminary not officially related to the Reformed Church in America upon the successful completion of the prescribed course of theological studies, is found to be qualified, and is adjudged to be a fit candidate for ministry of Word and sacrament in the Reformed Church in America, addressing the requirements for ministry of Word and Sacrament as defined by Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Section 7,~~ shall receive from the General Synod through the board of trustees of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry Readiness for Examination, ~~which is entitlement to an examination for licensure and ordination.~~
- b. The General Synod through the board of trustees of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency shall require the applicant to furnish, at the conclusion of seminary studies, the following: a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools or a theological accrediting agency of comparable standards as determined by the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency; a transcript of the applicant's academic record at this seminary; and evidence of confessing membership in a Reformed church of the classis making petition.
- c. ~~The General Synod through the board of trustees of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency shall determine that the candidate meets minimum competencies as determined by the standards established by the General Synod and designated as indispensable for the proper exercise of the ministerial office of the church. If a candidate comes under the jurisdiction of a new agent of the General Synod, the classis in which the candidate is enrolled shall apply to the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency on behalf of the candidate. If the candidate has completed less than half the process toward reception of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, the relevant agents of the General Synod shall effect the transfer. If the candidate has completed half the process or more, the original agent shall award the Certificate. If the applicant has previously been asked to terminate studies, has withdrawn under duress, or has been denied the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry at a Reformed Church in America seminary or the MFCA, further supervision and/or examination of the applicant shall only be carried out by or with the consent of the seminary or agent within whose program the candidate had previously been enrolled.~~

Sec. 3. Transfer Between Agents

If a candidate desires to come under the jurisdiction of a different theological agent of the General Synod during the process, the classis in which the candidate is enrolled shall notify both parties on behalf of the candidate. Further supervision and/or examination of the applicant shall only be carried out by or with the consent of the theological agent in whose program the candidate had previously been enrolled.

Subsequent sections will be renumbered.