

Seven Points of Agreement for Church Teachers¹

1. Scripture

We believe that the Bible is the word of God. It was produced without error under his divinely inspired guidance and is our only infallible authority. God's word is necessary, sufficient and clear for us to know God and what he requires of us. We may neither add to nor take away from his word.²

2. Trinity and Person of Christ

We believe in one God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, known as the "Trinity."³ We believe that the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, took human nature, yet without sin. We believe that Jesus is both truly human and truly God, two perfect distinct natures in one person.⁴ We affirm the Apostle's Creed as a statement of the nature of God and the salvific activity of Jesus in history. He was crucified, was resurrected, he ascended into heaven, and is reigning in power until he returns on the last day.⁵

3. Creation and Fall

We believe that humans were made in the image of God and were originally without sin. We affirm the categories of "male" and "female" as part of God's creation design.⁶ We believe that our first human parents rebelled against God and plunged all mankind into sin and misery. Though fallen, all humans continue to bear the image of God and should be treated with dignity and respect.⁷

¹ *The words of each Point of Agreement are the product of City Reformed Church. Footnotes show how we ground our statements in the creedal commitments of the church and the Bible. When the creedal statements are used, they contain within themselves a reference to the Bible. WCF and WSC are abbreviations for the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Shorter Catechism.*

² *Ordination vows for the PCA read: "We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, are the inerrant Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice."*

³ **WCF 8:2** In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

⁴ **WCF 8:3** The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

⁵ **Apostle's Creed** - I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

⁶ **WCF 4.2** After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,(1) with reasonable and immortal souls,(2) endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image,(3) having the law of God written in their hearts,(4) and power to fulfill it;(5) and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.(6) Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil;(7) which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.(8)

⁷ **WCF 6.2** By this sin, they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God,(1) and so became dead in sin,(2) and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.(3)

WCF 6.3 They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed,(1) and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.

4. Redemption and Resurrection (Atonement and Salvation)

We believe that God planned and accomplished our salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our savior. His righteous life and substitutionary death bring salvation for all who received this grace through faith alone. All who are united to Christ by faith are declared righteous (“justified”), are being made holy (“sanctified”) and will be perfectly formed into the image of Christ upon their resurrection from the dead (“glorified”).⁸

5. Church

We believe that the Christ is the only head of the church, which is God’s ordinary means for accomplishing the salvation of his people.⁹ Together, we grow in grace, through continual repentance and faith, as we encourage one another through the ordinary means of grace.¹⁰

6. Ethics & Sexuality

We believe that teachers in the church will be held by God to a higher standard. While no Christian leader is free from sin, it is important that Christian leaders not be under the influence of a life dominating sin as the moral failure of a leader causes greater damage to the church.¹¹

We believe that Christ calls his people to sexual integrity, with sexual intimacy permissible only within the boundaries of marriage between a man and a woman.^{12 13}

⁸ **WCF 8.5** The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father;(1) and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.(2)

WSC #32 Q: What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A: They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification,¹ adoption,² and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.³

WSC #33 Q: What is justification?

A: Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins,¹ and accepts us as righteous in his sight,² only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us,³ and received by faith alone.⁴

WSC #35 Q: What is sanctification?

A: Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace,¹ whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God,² and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.³

WSC #38 Q: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A: At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory,¹ shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment,² and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God,³ to all eternity.⁴

⁹ **WCF 25.2** The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion;(1) and of their children:(2) and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,(3) the house and family of God,(4) out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.(5)

¹⁰ **WSC #88** What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

¹¹ **James 3:1** Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Mark 9:42 “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

¹² **WCF 24:1** We believe that marriage is to be between one man and one woman.

¹³ **Note of explanation:** *We recognize a wide range of issues that people can disagree on. The reason that we included a specific statement on marriage is because this issue is highly contentious in our culture. Disagreements on this issue have led to split or*

7. Unity and Cultural Engagement

We desire that all leaders become more acquainted w the doctrinal standards of the PCA. We recognize that members of our church will hold differing views on certain theological matters, within the framework of Orthodox Christianity. We expect that leaders will not use their position in the church to teach views contrary to the positions of our church.¹⁴

We believe that we are called to be ambassadors of reconciliation and peacemakers. We pursue the unity of the church by treating other people with dignity and respect. We value the unity of the church across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, generational and all other human barriers and seek visible expressions of that unity as possible.¹⁵ We subordinate our legitimate desires for political and social change to the appropriate pursuit of the good of the church.^{16, 17, 18}

schism in other Christians denominations and institutions and we believe that it is essential to have unity among our leaders on this point. It is not our intention to single out sexual sin as being worse than other sins.

¹⁴ *Two examples would be covenant baptism and the charismatic gifts. While we do not exclude people with differing views in this statement, we do expect that leaders would not subvert the official teaching of the church when they are acting in their position. Private opinions may be freely expressed privately.*

¹⁵ **2 Cor. 5:18** All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

Eph 4:1-3 I... urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

John 17: 21 That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

¹⁶ **1 Cor. 9:12** Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

1 Cor. 15: 3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

¹⁷ **Note of explanation.** *This is one of the hardest things for any church to balance. On one hand, Christianity applies to all of our life concerns, including those labelled “social, political, physical, and even controversial.” Desire to see transformation in the political realm is a legitimate desire for the Christian and one that each Christian must weigh and balance in their own life. On the other hand, we believe that the church as an institution is separated from the government as an institution. In addition, we believe that the public teaching of the church is meant to be “regulated” and confined to the matters which the Bible directly addresses. This requires us to walk a fine line and balance the need to address social issues against the danger of becoming politically enmeshed.*

In addition to politics, Christians can have legitimate concerns about other social issues. There are many concerns which can easily dominate and overshadow the unique proclamation of the Gospel which has been given to the church. What we are attempting to agree in this statement that the needs for church unity often require us to keep some of our personal convictions to ourselves. There are many things which are important and good, but that need to be evaluated against the backdrop of that which is most important – the proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus. Again, we recognize that this is a fine line. After all, Jesus claims Lordship over all of life. We are not attempting to provide a comprehensive list of these types of issues, we are simply acknowledging the principle that is in play and asking all leaders to use godly wisdom and prayer as we work this out together.

¹⁸ **Example:** *As a church we believe it is necessary to talk about social matters such as racism, sexuality, the sanctity of life and care for the poor. However, we do not advocate for particular political policies, we do not direct people how to vote, and we stop short of calling for particular political action. Individual members will necessarily do all of these things, but we will likely find that people in our congregation arrive at different conclusions about how to best apply biblical truths. As leaders we seek to guard against infringing upon the freedom of conscience that our members have as they make these applications on their own.*

(Proposed Response)

I have read these statements and agree with the principles contained therein. I have spoken to one of our pastors about where I think I might have a disagreement. If at any time I find that I am no longer in agreement with these principles, I will notify the session of CRPC through one of the pastors or a ruling elder. (Because the Bible is our highest authority, the session retains the right to allow exceptions to these points of agreement if the exception is made in accordance with the word of God and does not strike against the vital truths presented in this statement.)

_____ (Name and date)