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**Inquiry into the Suitability of the Rite Known as
“Profession of Faith” or “Confirmation”
for the Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC)**

I was born and baptized in a Dutch reformed church. In a German reformed church, at the age of 13, I studied the Heidelberg Catechism, made Profession of Faith, and partook of my first Lord's Supper. Since then, I joined the CREC, I accepted paedocommunion, and last summer, I interned at a church where I taught a Profession of Faith class. This forced me to ask some questions I hadn't considered before, like what is a “Profession of Faith” in a church that practices paedocommunion? Does it meet a need that is real in the experience of churches? What does it mean? Also, if it's not an entrance to the Lord's Supper, what import does it bear on church membership?

The CRC¹ church that I grew up in, the RCUS² church I made my profession in, the URCNA³, PCA⁴, OPC⁵, PCUSA⁶, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed Episcopal, and probably any other paedobaptist, protestant, reformed denomination you can think of practice either “Profession of Faith,” or “Confirmation.” The church I interned in was formerly an OCRC⁷ church which joined the CREC and became paedocommunion a few years ago, but they retained the Profession of Faith.

The CREC is an interesting animal when it comes to practice of worship and liturgical specifics because it is not homogenized the way these other denominations are. This is partly due to the relative youth of the church, but it is also due to a glorious intentional biblical flexibility, and a refusal to divide the church along unbiblical lines. For example, the CREC is open not only to paedocommunion, but also to credo-communion, and even credo-baptists, provided they are covenantal and Calvinistic in their theology. These variations in particular are relevant to the Profession of Faith / Confirmation question. These rites

are a natural and logical part of a credo-communion perspective because a Profession of Faith is a meal-ticket to the Lord's Supper (and so much more, as we shall see). For credo-baptists baptism fulfills the same requirements, i.e. believer's baptism is a profession of faith. The paedocommunion crowd is the one throwing the monkey-wrench in the machinery. Many of them don't practice this rite, and those looking in from the outside would have difficulty distinguishing what the advantages of it are. However, I think these difficulties are easily overcome.

I suggest that Profession of Faith or Confirmation is a useful tool in the church's chest, even if you are paedocommunion. It provides for something that is lacking in both church experience and oversight for those churches that do not practice it and are not baptist. As we delve into these things, I will describe how these rites are currently being practiced, touch on the history of them, define them for our purposes, ponder their impact on membership, consider the experiential issues they address, and last but not least, weigh the pro's and con's of calling it Profession of Faith vs. Confirmation.

This rite is usually performed on completion of a class about the church's faith. These classes are called catechism, confirmation, profession of faith, or perhaps new members' classes. In the class, students learn the distinctives of their church and identify themselves with the church. For instance, URCNA students take catechism classes based on the Heidelberg Catechism. In so doing, they learn what their church teaches and believes about the Bible, salvation, baptism, the Lord's Supper, Christian living, etc. The best courses should cover all the creeds and confessions a church holds to, church history, and biblical foundations for its teachings.

When students finish the class and ask to be confirmed or make a profession, they are examined by their elders. At this time they are required to display a working knowledge of their faith and a commitment to uphold and defend it. They may be required to recite from memory such things as the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, or the Ten Commandments, along with being able to explain any questions put to them by the session. They will also provide a summary of their religious experience. After this, upon approval of the elders, a Sunday is selected to perform the rite, which is done in a worship service. Some churches

tend to perform the confirmation or profession on set Sundays through the year (the Lutherans usually do it on Pentecost or Reformation Sunday).

The continental and presbyterian churches call the rite “Profession of Faith” and view the rite as a “coming of age” or reaching a maturity in their faith and achieving the rights of full membership in the church. Lutherans, Anglicans, and Episcopalians call this rite "Confirmation." All of these traditions see biblical warrant for the rite taken from Acts 8:14-17.

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.⁸

One of the reasons Lutherans traditionally perform confirmations on Pentecost Sunday is because of the symbolism of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

The forms for the rite and the age of the participants vary from church to church, but generally this is how it goes: The minister announces the occasion to the congregation. Then he identifies the professors (confirmands) by having them come to the front of the church or rise in their seats. Then he reads through the liturgical form, during the course of which the professors take vows, are welcomed into full membership, and then return to their seats. Laying on of hands may, or may not, be a part of the ceremony. After the ceremony, the membership status of the professors changes. They become a “professing” or a “confirmed” member. They are entitled to various benefits, like the ability to participate in the eucharist, eligibility to be a voting member of the congregation, or simply recognized as having reached a milestone of the faith.

The following vows are taken from the Dutch reformed (URCNA, CRC) form for Profession of Faith. They address salvation, knowledge, membership general (baptism), and membership local.

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent to redeem the world, do you love and trust him as the one who saves you from your sin, and do you with repentance and joy embrace him as Lord of your life?

Answer: I do.

2. Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God revealing Christ and his redemption, and that the confessions of this church faithfully reflect this revelation?

Answer: I do.

3. Do you accept the gracious promises of God sealed to you in your baptism and do you affirm your union with Christ and his church which your baptism signifies?

Answer: I do.

4. Do you promise to do all you can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen your love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring and submitting to its authority; and do you join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere?

Answer: I do.⁹

In taking these vows, the member is renewing the covenant his parents made on his behalf at his baptism. Profession of Faith (or Confirmation) is really a “coming of age” ceremony. It is a time for those who have been brought up in a church to demonstrate that they understand and affirm the faith of their parents. They become responsible for their own faith through their vows. This definitely is a milestone in their walk of faith, but where did this rite originate? Where does it come from?

The Jews have a corresponding rite called the Bar (or Bat) Mitzvah. This name means “son (or daughter) of the commandments”. Their practice originated in the Middle Ages, and is based on a Talmudic claim that boys and girls reach an age of maturity at ages 13 and 12, respectively.

Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics have practiced Confirmation for centuries. They also call it “Chrismation” and consider it a sacrament. They originally performed it immediately after baptism, but the Western tradition started postponing it until a bishop could be available to participate in the ceremony. Both of these ancient traditions also appeal to the Acts passages for biblical warrant. As a sacrament, they view the rite as a “strengthening” of the confirmand by placing the protection of the Holy Spirit on him. Confirmation also is seen as a sort of “knighting” of the Christian soldier, preparing him to go out and defend his church, furthering her realm.

In the Reformation, the reformers rejected the status of sacrament but maintained the practice of professing faith. In his institutes, Calvin soundly refutes the Roman sacrament of Confirmation, but expresses a desire for the practice of the ancient church to be maintained and promoted:

I wish we could retain the custom, which, as I have observed, existed in the early Church, before this abortive mask of a sacrament appeared. It would not be such a confirmation as they pretend, one which cannot even be named without injury to baptism, but catechising by which those in boyhood, or immediately beyond it, would give an account of their faith in the face of the Church. And the best method of catechising would be, if a form were drawn up for this purpose, containing, and briefly explaining, the substance of almost all the heads of our religion, in which the whole body of the faithful ought to concur without controversy. A boy of ten years of age would present himself to the Church, to make a profession of faith, would be questioned on each head, and give answers to each. If he was ignorant of any point, or did not well understand it, he would be taught. Thus, while the whole Church looked on and witnessed, he would profess the one true sincere faith with which the body of the faithful, with one accord, worship one God. Were this discipline in force in the present day, it

would undoubtedly whet the sluggishness of certain parents, who carelessly neglect the instruction of their children, as if it did not at all belong to them, but who could not then omit it without public disgrace; there would be greater agreement in faith among the Christian people, and not so much ignorance and rudeness; some persons would not be so readily carried away by new and strange dogmas; in fine, it would furnish all with a methodical arrangement of Christian doctrine.¹⁰

Calvin is not the only reformer who maintained confirmation or the equivalent, but the 1662 Anglican Book of Common Prayer has a form for Confirmation in it, and as we've seen, the descendants of the reformers, Lutheran, presbyterian, and continental reformed churches all still practice it.

The issue now is to define what Confirmation or Profession of Faith is for a reformed, evangelical, paedocommunion church. Profession of Faith, or Confirmation, is a public profession of the faith received at baptism and made in the form of vows. It is prepared for by long and careful instruction, interview by the elders, and a commitment to walk faithfully under the leadership of the church.

Now it will be necessary to consider what the impact of the rite is on membership, and what experiential needs it addresses. Paedocommunion folks balk at the idea of incomplete membership because they view baptism as *the* sacrament of entrance into the church. It is the covenantal gateway to membership in the body of Christ. And they are right. It's like being born as a citizen of the U.S., and with that status, many rights are inherent. At baptism, a Christian is born into the church and they receive many rights as the consequence of this (the right to eat the eucharist being one of them).

Profession of Faith or Confirmation is more like the oath of enlistment taken on entering the military or the oath of office taken on inauguration of a public office (e.g. the President) than a birth certificate. Their vows entitle them to exercise the powers bestowed on them and give them public recognition as rightfully occupying those positions of authority. The reason that these metaphors work is that all Christians are office-bearers, we are all prophets, priests, and kings.

The terms “Confirmation” and “Affirmation of Baptism,” and the vows in the form for the Profession of Faith directly tie this rite to baptism, and through baptism to membership. In baptism, God acts and he names the baptized as His own. The recipient of the sacrament is passive. In Confirmation or Profession of Faith, the baptized respond to the promises given to them at their baptism. They confirm their name, claiming it as their own. They profess their faith and commit to proclaim it in their lives. They take vows to submit to and serve the body of Christ in their local congregation.

This alters the lines of authority in churches that practice “household” membership. Covenant heads are responsible for children that grow up in covenant homes. They answer to the session for their children's faithfulness or wickedness. At Confirmation or Profession of Faith, covenant children take vows to submit to the elders directly rather than vicariously through their parents.

This process provides elders an opportunity to assess the Christian walk of the young adults under their care. It also clarifies the membership status of people who grow up in the church and are somewhere in the hinterlands between living at home and establishing their own households. Moreover, it gives the young man or woman assurance of their position within the church and clarifies their identity for them during adolescence when many young people struggle with such things.

Here is an example of the sorts of membership issues raised from the absence of this rite: A youth who grew up in another church and then moved to the local church has a membership status that is very different from that of the home-grown youth. The transplanted youth made a default “profession” on taking membership vows, while the home-grown youth never did. Instead his membership is “grandfathered” in through his father and is somewhat squishy when you start to look at it closely. This results in two young folks in exactly the same position in life, with the same practical circumstances, with *different* membership statuses. This is usually not a problem, unless discipline becomes necessary, but sin always makes things messy anyway (I digress). What I mean to say is, we needn't assist sin in creating confusion.

I do not mean to take away from the impact that various other things bear on membership either.

Marriage, financial independence, church offices, gender, age, or other considerations may all impact membership rights in their own way. I am simply recommending that this rite be another normal part of the equation.

The experiential benefits of this rite are manifold. Aside from membership clarification, Confirmation or Profession of Faith is a tremendous encouragement. It encourages the elders that they are faithfully administering their office to covenant children. It encourages parents tremendously, for what can be of greater comfort and joy to Christian parents than to see their children profess and claim their own faith? It encourages the professor/confirmand in their own walk and assures them of their own faithfulness. And it encourages the congregation to see their number grow and strengthen into maturity, giving them hope and anticipation for other children in the community.

The process of preparing for this rite is extremely helpful in educating covenant children about their religious heritage. It gives the leadership a unique “handle” by which to gauge the faithfulness of families in raising their children in the “nurture and admonition of the LORD.” Moreover, it displays the elders' interest in the welfare of the children and reminds the parents of their own commitment to the church.

This rite also acts as a milestone of faith. In this sense it is sort of like a graduation ceremony from ecclesiastical education. This does not signify that the professor/confirmand is done learning about the faith. Rather the Christian life is a life of learning, and the rite signifies a commencement of that life as a mature, responsible Christian.

Now the question arises, should we call it Profession of Faith, or Confirmation, or something else? There are advantages and disadvantages to each.

Confirmation is more ancient, but both it and Profession of Faith have been used for centuries in the churches we consider as our ecclesiastical ancestors and cousins. Confirmation certainly carries more baggage in relation to Catholicism. But Confirmation seems to relate more directly to baptism in its meaning, which is a benefit. Also, Confirmation tends to be associated with churches that are from a

higher liturgical perspective (this may be pro or con depending on your own perspective).

Profession of Faith, on the other hand, has the advantage of being central in our definition of the rite. But it has the disadvantage of implying an inadequate standing of non-professing members, this is especially true when you consider Jesus' teaching that our salvation is dependent on our confession of Him before men.¹¹ Profession of Faith is also less explicitly tied to baptism.

“Affirmation of Baptism” is another possibility. It has been used by the Lutherans in English speaking churches. Its ties to baptism are obvious, but it lacks some of the ecumenical appeal. “Laying on of Hands” is another term used by Anglicans and Episcopalians, but it would certainly have liturgical implications.

If it came down to my personal preference, I would probably land on Confirmation, but I am certainly willing to submit to wiser heads than my own. I propose that any church that considers implementing the rite take into account the ecclesiastical history of its congregation and the liturgical trajectory they are on, and judge what would be wisest.

There are a number of thriving and faithful churches who do not practice this rite. I suppose they could wonder, "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" They probably know a number of churches that do have Confirmation or Profession of Faith, and they aren't seeing too much green on the other side of the fence. First, I don't fault them for this, but I do want them to consider the advantages I've outlined above, especially regarding the experiential and membership benefits. Second, the CREC is a young denomination and we do well to consider the work that's been done in our brothers' churches. Third, I hardly think it has been the dutiful enthusiastic teaching about the doctrines of the church and the faithful practice of Confirmation and Profession of Faith that have led to the current state of those churches.

Formalism and half-hearted participation have been problems in some of those churches. These problems etch away at the life of the church, but they are not caused by the rite. Rather, they are dragged into the catechism classes and the worship services, and the homes of the members. They would do well to consider the warning of John the apostle to the Laodiceans, “I know your works, that you are neither

cold nor hot. I could wish you cold or hot. So then, because you are luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.”¹²

Another objection might regard the arbitrary nature of the age of the professors/confirmands. Calvin was concerned if it happened past the age of ten. The Roman Catholics and some Lutherans perform it around the age of seven. The Jews perform the Bar Mitzvah at thirteen. The Eastern Orthodox do it right after baptism, with infants. Most protestant reformed churches do it upon completion of catechism classes, which is usually between sixteen and nineteen years of age, and most of them don't have a “set” age.

This is another area where I am content to submit to my elders on, but in general, I think we ask far too little of our youth. I believe that most thirteen year olds are mature enough to understand and take the vows required for this rite. I also think that a firm foundation for them to build on will be very useful to them in high school.

Confirmation and Profession of Faith have a long history in the reformed tradition. They are universally used in credo-communion churches, but they fill a real need in the life of faith for paedocommunion churches too. The rite clarifies membership issues, encourages the body of Christ, educates covenant children, and provides a triumph in the life of faith that in some ways is like a graduation from theological boot camp. Now it's time to go out and fight the good fight of faith, defend the church, and increase her dominion. Soli Deo Gloria.

Appendix

Assorted Forms and Definitions from Various Denominations

Church of England 1662 Book of Common Prayer¹³ -

Upon the day appointed, all that are to be then confirmed, being placed, and standing in order, before the Bishop; he (or some other Minister appointed by him) shall read this Preface following.

TO the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church hath thought good to order, That none hereafter shall be Confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can also answer to such other Questions, as in the short Catechism are contained; which order is very convenient to be observed; to the end, that children, being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things, as they, by their own confession, have assented unto.

Then shall the Bishop say,

DO ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you?

And every one shall audibly answer,

I do.

The Bishop.

OUR help is in the Name of the Lord;

Answer. Who hath made heaven and earth.

Bishop. Blessed be the Name of the Lord;

Answer. Henceforth, world without end.

Bishop. Lord, hear our prayers.

Answer. And let our cry come unto thee.

The Bishop. Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins: Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Then all of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall lay his hand upon the head of every one severally, saying,

DEFEND, O Lord, this thy Child [*or* this thy Servant] with thy heavenly grace, that *he* may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until *he* come unto thy everlasting kingdom. Amen.

Then shall the Bishop say, The Lord be with you. *Answer.* And with thy spirit.
And (all kneeling down) the Bishop shall add,

Let us pray.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

And this Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who makest us both to will and to do those things that be good and acceptable unto thy divine Majesty; We make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy Apostles) we have now laid our hands, to certify them (by this sign) of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them. Let thy fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be over them, let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy Word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we O beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that, through thy most mighty protection both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Then the Bishop shall bless them, saying thus,

THE Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you, and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

And there shall none be admitted to the holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.

CRC / URCNA –

Form for the Profession of Faith ¹⁴

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Today we are privileged to welcome into the full life of the church's fellowship those who wish to confess their faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. When they were baptized God made clear his claim on them as his own, and they were received into the church. Now they wish to share fully in the life of this congregation and of the whole church of God. And so today they will publicly accept and confirm what was sealed in their baptism, confess their faith in the Lord Jesus, and offer themselves to God as his willing servants. We thank God for having given them this desire and pray that as we now hear their confession, he will favor us with the presence and guidance of his Holy Spirit.

*The Vows**

(name), will you stand now, and in the presence of God and his people respond to the following questions:

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent to redeem the world, do you love and trust him as the one who saves you from your sin, and do you with repentance and joy embrace him as Lord of your life?

Answer: I do.

2. Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God revealing Christ and his redemption, and that the confessions of this church faithfully reflect this revelation?

Answer: I do.

3. Do you accept the gracious promises of God sealed to you in your baptism and do you affirm your union with Christ and his church which your baptism signifies?

Answer: I do.

4. Do you promise to do all you can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen your love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring and submitting to its authority; and do you join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere?

Answer: I do.

The Reception[The minister asks the congregation to rise.]

Minister: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I now welcome you to all the privileges of full communion. I welcome you to full participation in the life of the church. I welcome you to its responsibilities, its joys, and its sufferings. "May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20-21).

Congregation: Thanks be to God! We promise you our love, encouragement, and prayers.

Minister: Let us together say what we believe:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator 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 to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to 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.

The Prayer

Lord, our God, we thank you for your Word and Spirit through which we know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. May those who confessed your name today never cease to wonder at what you have done for them. Help them to continue firmly in the faith, to bear witness to your love, and to let the Holy Spirit shape their lives. Take them, good Shepherd, into your care that they may loyally endure opposition in serving you.

May we, with all your children, live together in the joy and power of your Holy Spirit. We ask this, Lord Jesus, in the hope of your coming. Amen.

**The questions may be changed into statements and said by the confessors. Opportunity may also be given here for additional self-expression on the part of the confessors. The response may be asked after the last question only.*

OPC – Directory for the public worship of God chapter V¹⁵.

PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH IN CHRIST

1. *In order to aid those who contemplate making public profession of faith in Christ to understand the implication of this significant act and to perform it intelligently, the pastor shall conduct classes in Christian doctrine both for the covenant youth and for any others who may manifest an interest in the way of salvation.*
2. *Before permitting any one to make profession of his faith in the presence of the congregation, the session shall examine him in order to assure itself so far as possible that he possesses the doctrinal knowledge requisite for active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation on the merits of Christ alone, and is determined by the grace of God to lead a Christian life.*
3. *When the session is satisfied that any one is qualified to make public profession of faith in Christ, his name shall be publicly announced to the church at least one week before the day chosen for this solemn event, in order that the members of the church may have opportunity to acquaint the session with such facts concerning him as may appear to be irreconcilable with a sincere profession. The session shall weigh such evidence and determine its validity.*
4. *No one shall be allowed to take part in the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper who has not first made public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord.*
5. *On the occasion of public profession of faith in Christ, the minister shall address the candidate in these or like words, using the form which the circumstances require:*

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, we thank our God for the grace which was given you, in that, having come to years of discretion, you have accepted God's covenant promise which was signified and sealed unto you in your infancy by holy baptism.

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, we thank our God for the grace which was given you, in that, although you have not been privileged to receive the sacrament of baptism in your infancy, nevertheless, through faith you have become a partaker of the covenant of grace.

Thereupon the minister shall ask these, or equivalent, questions:

Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?

Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in Jesus Christ alone?

Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and

to lead a godly life?

Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?

When any one has publicly professed his faith by answering these questions in the affirmative, the minister shall address him in the following or like words:

Beloved, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I welcome you to all the privileges of full communion with God's people, and in particular to participation in the sacrament of the holy supper. I charge you that by the faithful use of the means of grace—the Word of God, the sacraments and prayer—and in humble reliance upon the grace of God, you continue steadfastly in the confession which you have made. Rest assured that if you confess Christ before men, he will confess you before his Father who is in heaven. May the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, and strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

This part of the service shall be concluded with an appropriate prayer

PCA – Book of Church Order Chapter 57-5¹⁶

(All of) you being here present to make a public profession of faith, are to assent to the following declarations and promises, by which you enter into a solemn covenant with God and His Church.

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?
4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

Lutheran Service Book definition¹⁷ -

Confirmation in the Lutheran Church is a public profession of faith prepared for by long and careful instruction. In English, it is called "affirmation of baptism", and is a mature and public profession of the faith which "marks the completion of the congregation's program of confirmation ministry".

Reformed Episcopal Church¹⁸ -

The Order for Confirmation
or Laying on of Hands upon Those
who are Baptized and come to
Years of Discretion

Upon the day and time appointed, all who are to be confirmed shall stand in order before the Bishop, sitting in his chair near to the holy Table, the people all standing until the Lord's Prayer; and the Presbyter presenting them shall say,

REVEREND Father in God, I present unto you these persons who now desire to confirm their Baptismal Covenant through the Laying on of Hands.

Then the Bishop, or some Minister appointed by him, shall say,

BELOVED, it is written in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that, when the Apostles in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Then they laid their hands upon those who were baptized, and they received the Holy Ghost. Also, in the nineteenth chapter of that same Book, we read that St. Paul laid his hands upon certain disciples at Ephesus, after their baptism, and the Holy Ghost came upon them.

In accordance, therefore, with Holy Scripture, apostolic custom, and the practice of the early Church, we have retained this rite of the laying on of hands upon those who are baptized, in order that they may thus, in open confession before men, confirm their faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and avow their unchanged purpose to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in his holy ways.

Then shall the Bishop say,

DO ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that ye made, or that was made in your name, at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons; and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which ye then undertook, or your sponsors then undertook for you?

And every one shall audibly answer,

I do.

Then shall the Bishop say,

DO ye promise to follow Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

And every one shall answer,

I do.

Then shall the Bishop say,

DO ye believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord? And that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that he went down into hell, and also did rise again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and from thence shall come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead? And do ye believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the Remission of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and everlasting Life after death?

And every one shall answer,

All this I steadfastly believe.

Then shall the Bishop say,

DO ye steadfastly purpose, by God's help, to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?

And every one shall audibly answer,

I renounce them all.

- 1 Christian Reformed Church
- 2 Reformed Church in the United States
- 3 United Reformed Church in North America
- 4 Presbyterian Church in America
- 5 Orthodox Presbyterian Church
- 6 Presbyterian Church in the United States of America
- 7 Orthodox Christian Reformed Church (this denomination recently disbanded, and the remaining churches joined the URCNA)
- 8 NKJV
- 9 Psalter Hymnal (1976) "blue/centennial" (http://www.crcna.org/pages/1976_prof.cfm) 7/12/2010
- 10 Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV. XIX. 13. (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.vi.xx.html>) 7/14/2010.
- 11 Matthew 10:32,33; Luke 12:8,9
- 12 Revelation 3:15-16 (NKJV)
- 13 <http://www.eskimo.com/~lhowell/bcp1662/baptism/confirm.html>
- 14 Psalter Hymnal (1976) "blue/centennial" (http://www.crcna.org/pages/1976_prof.cfm) 7/12/2010
- 15 http://www.opc.org/BCO/DPW.html#Chapter_V 7/12/2010
- 16 <http://www.pcaac.org/2009%20Reprint%20for%20web%20rev%208-24-09.pdf> 7/12/2010
- 17 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_\(Lutheran_Church\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_(Lutheran_Church)) 7/12/2010
- 18 <http://homepage.mac.com/klock/lwec/bcp/13-Confirmation%207.5.pdf> 7/14/2010