

# **BCO Requirements for Candidacy, Internship, Licensure and Ordination**

**Candidates Committee, Central Carolina Presbytery, PCA**

## **CHAPTER 18.**

### *Candidates for the Gospel Ministry.*

**18-1.** A candidate for the ministry is a member of the church in full communion who, believing himself to be called to preach the Gospel, submits himself to the care and guidance of the Presbytery in his course of study and of practical training to prepare himself for this office.

**18-2.** Every applicant for the ministry must put himself under the care of Presbytery, which should ordinarily be the Presbytery that has jurisdiction of the church of which he is a member. The endorsement of his Session must be given to the Presbytery, consisting of testimonials regarding his Christian character and promise of usefulness in the ministry. The endorsement should also describe the activities of ministry the applicant has participated in with brief evaluation.

Every applicant for care shall be a member of the congregation whose session provides an endorsement for at least six months before filing his application, except in those cases deemed extraordinary by the Presbytery.

Every applicant must file his application with the clerk of the Presbytery at least one month before the meeting of the Presbytery. An applicant for care may not be received under care and examined for ordination at the same meeting of the Presbytery, since he must serve a period of at least one year of internship prior to ordination (see *BCO* 19-7 and 21-4). An applicant for internship is obliged to be under care and may be licensed to preach the Gospel; further, one who is not already under care may be taken under care, be licensed to preach the Gospel, and become an intern at the same meeting of Presbytery.

**18-3.** The applicant shall appear before the Presbytery in person, and shall be examined by the Presbytery on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry.

If the testimonials and the examination prove satisfactory, the Presbytery shall receive him under its care after the following manner:

The moderator shall propose to the applicant these questions:

- 1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?**
- 2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?**

If these questions be answered in the affirmative, the moderator, or someone appointed by him, shall give the candidate a brief charge; and the proceeding shall close with prayer.

The name of the applicant is then to be recorded on the Presbytery's roll of candidates for the ministry.

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**18-4.** The candidate continues to be a private member of the church and subject to the jurisdiction of the Session, but as respects his preparatory training for the ministry he is under the oversight of the Presbytery. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery to show a kindly and sympathetic interest in him, and to give him counsel and guidance in regard to his studies, his practical training, and the institutions of learning he should attend. In no case may a candidate omit from his course of study any of the subjects prescribed in the Form of Government as tests for ordination without obtaining the consent of Presbytery (see *BCO* 21-4); and where such consent is given the Presbytery shall record the fact and the reasons therefore.

**18-5.** For the development of his Christian character, for the service he can render, and for his more effective training, the candidate, when entering on his theological studies, should be authorized and encouraged by the Presbytery to conduct public worship, to expound the Scriptures to the people, and to engage in other forms of Christian work. These forms of service should be rendered under the direction of Presbytery, and also with the sanction and under the guidance of the candidate's instructors during the time of his being under their instruction. A candidate should not undertake to serve a church which is without a pastor as regular supply unless he has been licensed and approved for that supply by the Presbytery having jurisdiction of the church (see *BCO* 19-1).

**18-6.** The Presbytery shall require every candidate for the ministry under its care to make a report to it at least once a year; and it shall secure from his instructors an annual report upon his deportment, diligence, and progress in study.

**18-7.** The Presbytery may, upon application of the candidate, give a certificate of dismissal to another Presbytery. The candidate may be allowed to retain membership in his home church upon the request of his Session and the approval of both Presbyteries involved. A candidate shall, at his request, be allowed to withdraw from the care of the Presbytery. The Presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove the name of the candidate from its roll of candidates; but in such a case it shall report its actions and the reasons therefore to the candidate and to the Session of his church.

**18-8.** An applicant coming as a candidate from another denomination must present testimonials of his standing in that body and must become a member of a congregation in the Presbyterian Church in America. He shall then fulfill the requirements of applicants listed under *BCO* 18-2, as well as requirements placed upon those desiring to be licensed or to become an intern as set forth in *BCO* 19.

## **CHAPTER 19.**

### *Licensure and Internship*

#### **A. Licensure**

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**19-1.** To preserve the purity of the preaching of the Gospel, no man is permitted to preach in the pulpits of the Presbyterian Church in America on a regular basis without proper licensure from the Presbytery having jurisdiction where he will preach. An ordained teaching elder who is a member in good standing of another Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America may be licensed after being examined as to his views, according to the provision of *BCO* 13-6. This license shall immediately become void if the minister's own Presbytery administers against him a censure of suspension from office or the sacraments, or deposition from office, or of excommunication (in the event of such censures, the Presbytery with jurisdiction shall always notify the licensing Presbytery). A ruling elder, a candidate for the ministry, a minister from some other denomination, or some other man may be licensed for the purpose of regularly providing the preaching of the Word upon his giving satisfaction to the Presbytery of his gifts and passing the licensure examination. (See also *BCO* 22-5 and 22-6.)

**19-2.** Examination for Licensure.

The examination for licensure shall be as follows:

- a. Give a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel in written form and/or orally before the Presbytery (at the discretion of the Presbytery):
- b. Be tested with a written and/or oral examination by the Presbytery (at the discretion of the Presbytery) for his:
  1. basic knowledge of Biblical doctrine as outlined in the *Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms* of the Presbyterian Church in America.
  2. practical knowledge of the Bible content.
  3. basic knowledge of the government of the Presbyterian Church in America as defined in *The Book of Church Order*.
- c. Be examined orally before Presbytery for his views in the areas outlined in part b above.
- d. Provide his written sermon on an assigned passage of Scripture embodying both explanation and application, and present orally his sermon or exhortation before Presbytery or before a committee of Presbytery.

No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of examination except in extraordinary cases; and whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons therefore, and of the trial parts omitted.

**19-3.** Questions for Licensure.

If the Presbytery be satisfied with the trials of the applicant, it shall then proceed to license him in the following manner:

The moderator shall propose to him the following questions, namely:

- 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?**

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- 2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture?**
- 3. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?**
- 4. Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other into the bounds of which you may be called?**

**19-4.** The applicant having answered these questions in the affirmative, the moderator shall offer a prayer suitable for the occasion, and shall address the applicant as follows:

**In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the church for its edification, we do license you to preach the Gospel in this Presbytery wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen.**

Record shall be made of the licensure in the following or like form:

**At \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery, having received testimonials commending \_\_\_\_\_, proceeded to submit him to the prescribed examination for licensure, which was met to the approval of the Presbytery. Having satisfactorily answered the questions for licensure, \_\_\_\_\_ was licensed by the Presbytery to preach the Gospel within the bounds of this Presbytery.**

**19-5.** When any licentiate shall have occasion to remove from the bounds of his Presbytery into those of another, the latter Presbytery may, at its discretion, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, repeat any portion of the previous Presbytery's examination it desires. The Presbytery into whose bounds the licentiate is moving, however, must at least examine the man concerning:

- a. his Christian experience,
- b. his call to preach the Gospel,
- c. his views in theology,
- d. Bible content,
- e. church government.

This Presbytery then may license him to preach within its bounds.

**19-6.** The license to preach the Gospel shall expire at the end of four years. The Presbytery may, if it thinks proper, renew it without further examination. The licentiate must apply for renewal prior to expiration. If the license expires, the stated clerk shall report the expiration to the Presbytery and to the individual's Session, and such action shall be recorded in the minutes.

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The procedures of *BCO* 19-2 must be followed for re-licensure and such fact shall be recorded in the minutes. The license may be terminated at any time by a simple majority vote of the issuing Presbytery. The Presbytery shall always record its reasons for this action in its minutes.

### **B. Internship**

**19-7.** The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously made of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the Word, both concerning their gifts and concerning their ability to rule as teaching elders, in order that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men, and that the Church may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the gifts of those to whom this sacred office is to be committed.

To provide for such a period of trial, a candidate for ordination must serve an internship. This period of internship shall be at least one year in length, and may be longer at the discretion of the Presbytery so as to give sufficient time for the Presbytery to judge the candidate's qualifications and service. This period of internship may occur during or after the candidate's formal theological education. When it occurs during his formal theological education, it may include an intern year in addition to his time of academic training or it may run concurrent with his academic training.

The nature of the internship shall be determined by the Presbytery, but it should involve the candidate in full scope of the duties of any regular ministerial calling approved by the Presbytery. It is to be both a time of practical instruction and testing by the Presbytery, and may be in any work which the Presbytery deems to be a suitable ministry to test the intern's gifts. The intern should be closely supervised by the Presbytery throughout this trial period.

**19-8.** An applicant for internship must be a candidate and may be a licentiate in the Presbytery in which he is seeking to become an intern. He may, however, become a candidate, and an intern at the same meeting of Presbytery. If an applicant for internship is already a candidate in another Presbytery, that Presbytery should dismiss him as a candidate to the Presbytery in which he is seeking to become an intern.

**19-9.** Examination for Internship.

Before the applicant begins his period of internship, he shall give to the Presbytery a written and/or an oral statement (at the discretion of the Presbytery) of his inward call to the ministry of the Word.

**19-10.** When an applicant is approved for internship, the moderator of the Presbytery shall offer a prayer suitable for the occasion, and shall address the applicant, if present, as follows:

**In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the Church for its edification, we do declare you to be an intern of this Presbytery as a means of testing your gifts for the holy ministry wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest**

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upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen.**

Record shall be made of the internship in the following or like form, namely:

**At \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery, having received testimonials commending \_\_\_\_\_, having received him as a candidate for the ministry, has placed him under internship at his request in order to test his gifts for the holy ministry.**

**19-11.** When any intern shall have occasion, while his internship is in progress, to remove from the bounds of his own Presbytery into those of another, the latter Presbytery may, at its discretion, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, take up his internship at the point at which it was left, and conduct it to a conclusion in the same manner as if it had been commenced by itself. Presbytery shall repeat any portion of the previous Presbytery's examination it desires, but it must at least examine the intern on:

- a. his Christian experience,
- b. his call to the ministry,
- c. his views in theology, and
- d. church government.

When God gives the intern the providential opportunity to serve the church and to receive part of his training within the bounds of a Presbytery other than the one in which he has been declared an intern, the Presbyteries involved may develop a cooperative agreement to assure the proper training of the intern. In such cases the home Presbytery retains the final responsibility for and authority over the internship, but may rely to any extent considered necessary and proper in the circumstances, on the assistance of the sister Presbytery. When regular preaching of the Word is involved, care must be taken to comply with *BCO* 19-1.

**19-12.** Presbyteries should require interns to devote themselves diligently to the trial of their gifts; and no one should be ordained to the work of the ministry of the Word until he has demonstrated the ability both to edify and to rule in the Church. Reports on every intern in the Presbytery should be presented at each stated meeting of the Presbytery by the committee of Presbytery charged with the oversight of interns, and these reports shall become a part of the minutes of Presbytery. The Presbytery shall also require every intern himself to make a report to it at least once a year describing his ministerial experiences. If the intern is still in school, the Presbytery shall secure from his instructors an annual report upon his deportment, diligence, and progress in study.

**19-13.** At the end of the period of time set by the Presbytery for his internship, an intern shall have his internship either approved or disapproved. Even if it is approved, he cannot be ordained without a call to some specific work. If the internship is disapproved, the Presbytery may either extend it for another definite period of time or it may completely rescind his intern status and may revoke his internship. If the intern shall devote himself unnecessarily to such pursuits as

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interfere with a full trial of his gifts, it shall be the duty of the Presbytery to rescind his intern status, and to record its reasons therefore in the Minutes of Presbytery.

**19-14.** An intern, who, during his internship, is to serve a congregation in the capacity of the minister of the Word must be called by the congregation in the same way that a regular minister is called. A congregation may later call such a man as its pastor. This call must be approved by Presbytery prior to the time of ordination. In the event a congregation does not desire to call such a man as its pastor as determined by a congregational vote, notice should be given as early as possible. Interns may be called to serve as assistants to ministers during their internship, by the Session of a church with approval of the call by Presbytery.

**19-15.** Restrictions.

The intern may be asked by the moderator of a Session temporarily to chair the meeting of the Session. In such cases the moderator shall supervise this activity and may overrule the intern or re-assume the chair at will. The intern is not a member of Session and may not vote in the meetings unless he has previously been ordained a Ruling Elder and elected to the Session by the congregation. Normally, he shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Session and Diaconate when he has been called to work out his internship by a congregation. He shall have the right to conduct funerals. An intern may not administer the Sacraments. He may serve on committees of the church he serves.

**19-16.** Where circumstances warrant, a Presbytery may approve previous experience which is equivalent to internship. This equivalency shall be decided by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Presbytery at any of its regular meetings. Such equivalent experience shall be decided only after the Presbytery's internship committee has determined and reported that the candidate has met the following requirements:

- a. he has had at least one (1) year of experience in comparable ministry;
- b. he has satisfactorily performed the full scope of ministerial duties;
- c. he has the manifest approbation of God's people in a local church as having the requisite gifts for the pastoral ministry.

## **CHAPTER 21.**

### *The Ordination and Installation of Ministers.*

**21-1.** No minister, licentiate or candidate shall receive a call from a church but by the permission of his Presbytery. When a call has been presented to the Presbytery, if found in order and the Presbytery deem it for the good of the Church, they shall place it in the hands of the person to whom it is addressed.

Ordinarily a candidate or licentiate may not be granted permission by the Presbytery to move on to the field to which he has been called, prior to his examination for licensure or ordination. Likewise an ordained minister from another Presbyterian Church in America

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Presbytery or another denomination, ordinarily shall not move on to the field to which he has been called until examined and received by Presbytery.

**21-2.** When an intern has completed his internship to the satisfaction of the Presbytery, and has accepted a call, the Presbytery shall take immediate steps for his ordination.

**21-3.** No Presbytery shall ordain any intern to the office of minister of the Word with reference to his laboring within the bounds of another Presbytery, but shall furnish him with the necessary testimonials, and require him to repair to the Presbytery within whose bounds he expects to labor, that he may submit himself to its authority, according to the Constitution of the Church.

**21-4.** An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America. No Presbytery shall omit any of these educational requirements except in extraordinary cases, and then only with a three-fourths (3/4) approval of the Presbytery. Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these educational requirements, it shall always make a record of the reasons for such omission and the parts omitted. The intern shall also present satisfactory testimonials as to the completion and approval of his internship in the practice of the ministry.

Every candidate for ordination shall ordinarily have met the requirements of the Assembly's approved curriculum. Ordinarily, the intern shall have been examined in most of the following trials when he was licensed. If the Presbytery previously approved all parts of the licensure examination, it need not re-examine the intern in those areas at this time. If there were areas of weakness, which the Presbytery noted, or if any member of the Presbytery desires to do so, the intern may be examined on particular points again. Additionally, the intern shall be examined on any parts required for ordination which were not covered in his examination for licensure. In all cases, he should be asked to indicate whether he has changed his previous views concerning any points in the *Confession of Faith*, *Catechisms*, and *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Trials for ordination shall consist of:

- a. A careful examination as to:
  1. his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
  2. his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
  3. Bible content,
  4. theology,
  5. the Sacraments,



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6. church history,
7. the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
8. the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

A Presbytery may accept a seminary degree which includes study in the original languages in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages.

- b. He shall prepare a thesis on some theological topic assigned by Presbytery.
- c. The candidate shall prepare an exegesis on an assigned portion of Scripture, requiring the use of the original language or languages.
- d. He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery or committee thereof, upon three-fourths (3/4) vote.

No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with three-fourths (3/4) approval of Presbytery.

Whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons for such omissions and of the trial parts omitted. The Presbytery being fully satisfied of his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought, if practicable, to be in that church of which he is to be the pastor.

The extraordinary clauses should be limited to extraordinary circumstances of the church or proven extraordinary gifts of the man. Presbyteries should exercise diligence and care in the use of these provisions in order that they not prevent the ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly exceptional circumstances, nor ordain (nor receive from other denominations *BCO* 13-6) a person who is inadequately prepared for the ministry.

**21-5.** The day appointed for the ordination having come, and the Presbytery being convened, a sermon suitable for the occasion shall be preached by a person appointed or invited by the Presbytery. The Presbytery member appointed to preside shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit the proceedings of the Presbytery preparatory to the ordination; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance, and endeavor to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction.

### **Questions for Ordination** (For an assistant minister, only questions 1-7 shall be used)

Then, addressing himself to the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions:

- 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?**
- 2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms* of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will on your own initiative, make known to your Presbytery the change which has taken place in**

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**your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?**

- 3. Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of Biblical polity?**
- 4. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?**
- 5. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son?**
- 6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?**
- 7. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relational, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make you overseer?**
- 8. Are you now willing to take the charge of this church, agreeable to your declaration when accepting their call? And do you, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties of a pastor?**

**Questions to Congregation** (For assistant minister, address the Session omitting the last phrase of questions 1 and 2)

**21-6.** The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding minister shall propose to the church the following questions:

- 1. Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive \_\_\_\_\_, whom you have called to be your pastor?**
- 2. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?**
- 3. Do you promise to encourage him in his labors, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?**
- 4. Do you engage to continue to him while he is your pastor that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and to furnish him with whatever you may see needful for the honor of religion and for his comfort among you?**

**21-7.** The people having answered these questions in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel, and the presiding minister shall, with prayer and the laying on of hands of the Presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly set him apart to the holy office of the Gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees; and the minister who presides shall first, followed by all members of the Presbytery, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this effect:

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**We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this ministry with us.**

The presiding minister shall then say:

**I now pronounce and declare that \_\_\_\_\_ has been regularly elected, ordained, and installed pastor of this congregation, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America; and that as such he is entitled to all support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.**

After which the minister presiding, or some other teaching or ruling elder appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge to the pastor and to the congregation, to persevere in the discharge of their reciprocal duties, and then after prayer and the singing of a psalm, or hymn, the congregation shall be dismissed with the benediction. The Presbytery shall duly record its proceedings. (For assistant minister, add the word 'assistant' before 'pastor', and charge the Session rather than the congregation.)

**21-8.** After the installation, the heads of families of the congregation then present, or at least the ruling elders and deacons, should come forward to their pastor, and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

**Questions for Installation** (For assistant minister substitute the word 'serve' for 'take charge of', and add the word 'assistant' before 'pastor')

**21-9.** In the installation of an ordained minister, the following questions are to be substituted for those addressed to a candidate for ordination, namely:

- 1. Are you now willing to take charge of this congregation as their pastor, agreeable to your declaration in accepting its call?**
- 2. Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that, in taking upon you this charge, you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of the Church?**
- 3. Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the Gospel of Christ, agreeable to your ordination engagements?**

**Questions to Congregation** (For assistant minister, address the Session, omitting the last phrase of questions 1 and 2)

**21-10.** The candidate having answered these question in the affirmative, the presiding minister

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shall propose to the church the following questions:

- 1. Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive \_\_\_\_\_, whom you have called to be your pastor?**
- 2. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?**
- 3. Do you promise to encourage him in his labors, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?**
- 4. Do you engage to continue to him while he is your pastor that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and to furnish him with whatever you may see needful for the honor of religion and for his comfort among you?**

**21-11.** In the ordination of interns as evangelists the same questions are to be propounded as in the ordination of pastors, with the exception of the eighth, for which the following shall be substituted:

**Do you now undertake the work of an evangelist, and do you promise, in reliance on God for strength, to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties incumbent on you as a minister of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?**