

PART TWO THE RITUAL

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200 CHAPTER I – THE SACRAMENTS

201 SACRAMENT OF INFANT BAPTISM

Christian baptism is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ and administered by the church for its beginning. The formal application of water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a sign and seal to recognize that the person so consecrated stands in a holy covenant relation to God and His people. Recognizing this child (or these children) as under the atonement of Christ and as a part of the spiritual family of God we consider (him, her or them) (a) worthy subject(s) for Christian baptism.

The Baptism:

Let us pay reverent attention to the reading from God’s Word: “People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.” (Mark 10:13-16)

As parents presenting your child for baptism you signify your own personal faith in Jesus Christ; you bear witness to your belief that the child stands in holy covenant relation to God and His people through the finished work of Christ, and you publicly affirm the reality of God’s grace at work in the life of your child.

Is this your belief and purpose in presenting your child for baptism?

If so, answer: IT IS.

(The pastor may take the child into his arms for the baptism if so desired.)

_____ (full name of child), I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(The child may be returned to the parents.)

Let us pray: Our heavenly Father, we thank You that Your loving arms are open to encompass all who come to You in faith and that our children are in a covenant relationship with You and Your church. We thank You for Your unmerited favor toward us and the impartation of Your grace upon us on the occasion of the sacrament of baptism. May the fullness of Your grace be upon this child whom we have baptized in Your name. Grant that the Holy Spirit may guide _____ in the path of truth, lead _____ to accept Christ by faith, give _____ victory over evil, empower _____ to live in holiness, and at last receive _____ into Your eternal home. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Parental Declaration:

Having already stated your personal faith in Jesus Christ, it is important that you also recognize the awesome and serious responsibility that is yours as parents in the raising of the child entrusted to your care.

Will you set before the child the example of a godly life, and will you pray for and with your child, instructing _____ in the elements of the Christian faith?

If so, answer: WE WILL.

Will you seek to lead _____ to acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior, train _____ in the Christian life, show _____ the way of holiness, and endeavor to bring _____ into the membership of the church?

If so, answer: WE WILL, BY THE HELP OF GOD.

Sponsor’s Declaration (Optional):

Having heard the promises of the parents, will you who have come forward with them promise to assist them in carrying out their resolve?

If so, answer: WE WILL.

Congregational Declaration:

Children of believing parents, through Christian baptism, become a special responsibility of the church. It is our duty and privilege as a congregation to receive this child into the care of the church and to minister to _____, welfare in every way possible. It is also our responsibility to assist the parents in fulfilling the commitments made here today.

As a congregation, you too shall have a part in the spiritual growth of this family. They need you for prayer support, to assist in Bible teaching, for sharing in the fellowship of believers and to provide opportunities, facilities and personnel through which both parents and child can enter into the fullness of the Christian experience and expression.

Will you, as members of the congregation, promise to do all in your power to show this child true godliness by kind words and loving deeds? Will you undertake to provide facilities and opportunities for Christian training and fellowship? And will you assist the parents in bringing the child to a personal commitment of life to Christ?

If so, answer: WE WILL.

Prayer for Parents and Congregation:

Almighty God, bless these parents who have dedicated themselves to the task of bringing up the child to seek and know Christ. Grant them wisdom and power, love and compassion, tenderness and firmness as together they strive to fulfill the vows made this day before You and this congregation.

Grant that the people of this congregation who have agreed to assist in the training of the child, may always with openness welcome every opportunity to share in the fulfilling of this awesome responsibility. May this congregation continue to provide a loving atmosphere, the biblical teaching, and the spiritual unity in which the family can grow. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

202 SACRAMENT OF ADULT (BELIEVER) BAPTISM

At the appropriate time, the candidates shall present themselves before the congregation. A hymn fitting the occasion may be sung.

The Minister shall address the congregation:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Let us hear the Word of God as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the second chapter: "And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one who the Lord our God calls to Him.'...So those who received his word were baptized... and they devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Beloved in Christ, forasmuch as our Savior did commission his disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His great mercy, He will grant to (this/these) person(s) now to be baptized. His grace, so that (he/she/they) may serve Him faithfully, be (a) true member(s) of the church, and (an) heir(s) of eternal life.

The Minister shall then address the candidate(s):

We greatly rejoice that God the Holy Spirit has brought you to repentance of sin, and to personal life in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. By presenting yourself (yourselves) for this sacrament, you declare your faith, and your purpose to live the new life in Christ. That all here present may know of your profession, please respond to the following questions: (individually)

1. Do you believe that the Holy Bible is the actual, authoritative Word of the one true and living God, and that therein only is proclaimed the way of salvation? Answer: I DO
2. Have you experienced the forgiveness of your sins through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? Answer: I HAVE
3. Are you determined, by the grace of God, to live the Christian life, to devote yourself to the study of God's Word and to prayer, and to be a faithful participant in the work of His kingdom?
Answer: I AM
4. It is now your desire to be baptized in this faith? Answer: IT IS

Then the Minister shall ask each candidate to state his/her full name.

Then the Minister shall repeat the candidate's name, sprinkle or pour water on (his/her) forehead, OR immerse (him/her) in water, with the Baptismal Formula:

I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then shall the Minister say to those baptized:

And now dear (brother(s)/sister(s)), the vows of the Lord are upon you. Of your own free will you have sought this solemn Christian sacrament. You have here pledged allegiance to Jesus Christ, and to Him alone. His appointment is upon you, and you go forth a confessor of Christ before the world. Be steadfast and true, and let your baptism prove the sacramental seal of a lifelong covenant with God, for our Savior said, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father in Heaven.'

Those baptized may here be encouraged to share a brief word of personal testimony before the congregation.

The Minister shall conclude with prayer.

203 SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

(Public Service)

The Lord's Supper should be observed at least four times annually in each congregation. It may be administered at the altar or in the pews, or for a special occasion such as on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, it may be celebrated in a "Last Supper" setting.

The Lord's Supper shall be preceded by a sermon or meditation using 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, Luke 22:14-20, or another appropriate passage of Scripture.

Prior to the emblems of the sacrament being served, the minister shall invite all who can do so to kneel with him as he prays extemporaneously or in the following manner:

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open and all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse even the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Almighty God, "we all, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). All of us "have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We have broken Your laws. Therefore, we repent our sins and confess them before You. We thank You that "if we confess our sins, [You] are faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Our heavenly Father, because of Your tender mercy, You gave Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, and by the offering of Himself, suffering once, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world. In His gospel, He has instituted a memorial of His death and instructed that we continue it until His coming again.

Gracious Father, we come to this table trusting in Your great mercies. May we receive this sacrament with devout, believing, and grateful hearts as we receive the bread and the juice in memory of His passion. May His death be ever before us, quickening us to a holy resolve to hate sin, to love Christ, and to serve You through Him.

The minister may conclude the consecratory prayer by asking the congregation to pray the Lord's Prayer with him:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

If the sacrament is being served at the altar, the minister shall commune first followed by the congregation. When the bread is distributed, he shall say:

“The body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for you. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.”

When the cup is distributed, the minister shall say:

“Drink this in remembrance that the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ was shed for you, for the washing away of all your sins and the sanctification of your soul. Take of it by faith and be thankful.”

If the sacrament is being served in the pews, the minister shall distribute the bread trays to the Communion servants who shall distribute the trays in the pews. After the congregation has been served, the minister shall serve the Communion servants. Then the minister shall say:

“The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me’” (1 Corinthians 11:23-24).

Then the minister and the congregation shall eat of the bread.

Then the minister shall distribute the cup trays to the Communion servants who shall distribute the trays in the pews. After the congregation has been served, the minister shall serve the Communion servants; he shall say:

“In the same way, after the supper, He took the cup, saying ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes’” (1 Corinthians 11:25-26).

After the Supper is concluded a prayer of thanksgiving may be shared, a hymn may be sung and the benediction offered:

“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” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

THE LORD’S SUPPER

(Private Service)

When the request is made of the minister to serve the Communion in a private setting (shut-in, hospital, nursing facility, etc.), he should be sure that the setting is conducive for the observing of the sacrament.

When those to participate are gathered, the minister may read 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 or other appropriate scriptures and lead in a prayer of confession and thanksgiving. He then shall distribute the bread and the cup. The minister may choose to participate along with those being served. He then shall conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving.

204 THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS

PRESENTATION OF ELDERS

Secretary of Conference: Esteemed Bishop, I present unto you these persons to be ordained as Elders:

(The Bishop -- or --chairman shall then address the congregation, saying:)

Brethren, these are the persons whom we purpose, by divine approval, to ordain elders. For, after due examination, we find nothing contrary to the belief that they are divinely called to this function and ministry, and that they are persons meet for the same. But, if any of you know any crime or impediment in any of them for which he should not be ordained, let him come forth, in the name of God, and show what such crime or impediment is.

(Should any crime or impediment be charged, the person concerned shall not be ordained until such charge shall have been removed.)

(Then shall the Bishop pray, as follows:)

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, who by Your Holy Spirit, has appointed divers orders of ministers in Your church, mercifully behold these, Your servants, now called to the office of Elder, and replenish them so with the truth of Your doctrine; and adorn them with innocence and holiness of life, that both by word and good example they may faithfully serve in this office, to the glory of Your name and the edification of Your church, through the merits of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Head and Glory of the church, world without end. Amen.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:7 & 8; 11-13

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:

‘When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.’ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Scripture: John 10:1-4

“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all of his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.”

EXAMINATION OF ELDERS

Bishop:

You have heard, brethren, in your private examination, and in the holy lessons taken out of the gospel and the writings of the Apostles, of what dignity and importance this office is whereunto you are called. And now again we exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep in remembrance the dignity and weight of your calling: to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord; to teach and admonish, to feed and provide for the Lord’s family; to gather the outcasts; to seek the lost; and to be ever ready to spread abroad the glad tidings of reconciliation with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We have this confidence in you, brethren, that you have all weighed and pondered these things with yourselves many times, and that you have clearly determined by the grace of God to give yourselves wholly to this office, whereunto it has pleased God to call you; so that as much as lies in you, you will apply yourselves without reserve to this one thing, and concentrate all your cares and studies upon the same, and that you will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of Jesus Christ our only Saviour, for the blessed indwelling of the Holy Spirit; that by the daily reading and study of the Scriptures you may be thoroughly furnished, rightly dividing the Word of Truth; and that you so conduct yourselves that you may be wholesome and godly examples for the people to follow.

And now, that the congregation here assembled, in the name of Christ, may also understand your minds and wills in these things, and that this, your promise, may the more move you to do your duty, you shall answer plainly to the things which we, in the name of God and His church, shall ask of you.

Question: Do you believe in your heart that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the office of an Elder?

Answer: I DO BELIEVE SO.

Question: Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine essential to eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: I AM SO PERSUADED, BY THE GRACE OF GOD.

Question: And are you determined out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge and to teach nothing as essential to eternal salvation but that which you shall be persuaded may be contained in and proved by the Scriptures?

Answer: I HAVE SO DETERMINED, BY THE GRACE OF GOD.

Question: Will you then give faithful diligence to administer the sacraments, preach the doctrines of Christ, and observe and execute the *Discipline* of the church as the Lord has commanded you?

Answer: I WILL DO SO, BY THE HELP OF THE LORD.

Question: Will you be ready by all faithful diligence to disprove and banish all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s Word and to use both public and private admonitions and exhortations as need shall require and occasion shall be given?

Answer: I WILL, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Question: Will you be diligent in prayers and in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as are helpful to the knowledge of the same?

Answer: I WILL ENDEAVOR SO TO DO, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Question: Will you be diligent to fashion yourself and your family according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourself and them, as much as in you lies, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?

Answer: I WILL THERETO APPLY MYSELF, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Question: Will you, to the extent of your ability, cultivate and maintain harmony, peace and love among all people, especially among all Christian persons and preeminently among them that are committed to your care?

Answer: I WILL DO SO, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Question: Will you reverently submit to your superiors in office, unto whom is committed the charge over you following with a ready heart and willing mind their godly counsels and admonitions?

Answer: I WILL DO SO, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

(Then shall the Bishop, or the presiding officer, say:)

God Almighty, who has given you this will to do all these things, grant also unto you fullness of ability to perform, that He may accomplish His work begun in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Having duly examined the candidates to be ordained elders, we are now ready to proceed with the ordination of these brethren/persons.

The wives of those to be ordained as elders will please join their husbands at the altar, standing at their left.

All candidates with their wives will kneel at the altar and remain kneeling until the closing prayer and benediction.)

ALL SING THE HYMN: *(Choices for tunes: Duke Street; Maryton; Hamburg; Truro; Mendon)*

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy sev'n fold gifts impart.
Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dullness of our blinded sight.
Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of Thy grace.
Keep far our foes, give peace at home
Where Thou art guide, no ill can come.
Teach us to know the Father; Son
And Thee of both to be but One;
Praise be to Thee, O lord of Hosts,
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
AMEN

PRAYER: Almighty God and Heavenly Father, who, of Your infinite love and goodness toward us, has given to us Your only and dearly loved Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and the author of everlasting life; who, after He had perfected our redemption by His death and resurrection and was ascended into heaven, sent abroad into the world His apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors, by whose labor and ministry He gathered together multitudes in all parts of the world, to set forth the eternal praise of Your holy name: for these unspeakable benefits of Your eternal goodness and that You have vouchsafed to call these Your servants here present to the same office and ministry appointed for the salvation of mankind, we render unto You most hearty thanks; we praise and worship You through Your dear Son, our Saviour, and we humbly beseech You that they may ever continue to show forth Your praise and that they may daily increase in knowledge and all goodness by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Grant that through these Your ministers, as well as through those over whom they shall be appointed shepherds, Your holy name may be forever glorified and Your kingdom enlarged, through Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ORDINATION OF ELDERS

(Then the Bishop, or the presiding officer, shall hand each of them a Bible and with assisting elders, laying their hands upon the head of each candidate shall say:)

The Lord pour upon you the Holy Spirit for the office and work of an elder in the church of God, now committed unto you by authority of the church, through the imposition of our hands. Be a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of the Holy Sacraments; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Scripture - Matthew 28:18-20

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

Let us pray.

PRAYER:

Most merciful Father, we beseech You to impart unto these Your servants the riches of Your grace and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, that, with clearness of discernment and readiness of utterance, they may declare unto all to whom they are sent the whole counsel of God and that, through their ministrations, the church may be quickened and moved to higher attainments in godliness and the lost be converted and gathered in the fold of Christ. Grant that in all things they may seek Your glory alone and the increase of Your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. O merciful Father, our hope is in You. Fill us with Your gracious presence and favor in all our lot, that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in You, we may worthily glorify Your holy name and, finally by Your mercy, inherit eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

205 ORDINATION OF THOSE IN THE ALTERNATIVES TO PASTORAL MINISTRY TRACK

An appropriate hymn may be sung

BISHOP: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord, Jesus Christ. Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid, neither be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you, wherever you go.

Let us pray:

Almighty and Everlasting God, we praise Your Name this day that through the power of Your Holy Spirit, You call men and women into various fields of service in Your kingdom; grant us Your presence in this hour, we pray, as we acknowledge and confirm Your call in the (life/lives) or (this/these) Your servant(s). May we all be encouraged and strengthened through effective service for You, and may You receive much glory through this occasion, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 4:1-7 and 11-16

BISHOP: We rejoice with you that in the good providence of God, a door of opportunity has been opened for you in the service of the church of Jesus Christ. He has endowed you with the gifts and graces necessary for this service, adding thereto priceless prayers of encouragement and support for His people. Your ministry is one which confers great privilege, but also lays upon you a solemn responsibility. What you have done alone with God, in consecrating your life to this service, we now recognize publicly in the presence of His people.

BISHOP: Do you stand before this conference bearing witness that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord, that you are a child of God because of your faith in Christ and that you have peace of heart and mind regarding your relationship with Him?

ANSWER: THAT IS MY WITNESS!

BISHOP: Do you believe that Christ died and rose again for all people and that God, through His Holy Spirit, has called you to be a worker in His fields, bringing the Good News to those to whom you minister?

ANSWER: I DO SO BELIEVE.

BISHOP: Do you bear conviction that your Lord has called you to the Alternate Pastoral Ministry of _____.

ANSWER: I BELIEVE MY LORD HAS CALLED ME!

BISHOP: Will you labor faithfully with this specialized field to be a true servant of the One who has called you to represent Him?

ANSWER: I WILL THROUGH THE WISDOM AND POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BISHOP: Will you, as you serve your Lord and His church be true to the Holy Scriptures, your ministries and the *Discipline* and doctrine of the Evangelical Congregational Church?

ANSWER: I WILL WITH THE HELP OF GOD!

HYMN: "Holy Spirit, Light Divine"
THE CANDIDATE KNEELS (with spouse, if appropriate)

PARTICIPANTS (Bishop, Conference Minister and Pastor) LAY HANDS ON THE APPLICANTS HEAD AND SAY:

On behalf of your Lord, His church and this conference we extend to you the authority to serve as _____. Be faithful, be diligent, be loving - thus helping to make disciples as you teach people to obey His commandments - in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYER: Lord God, we ask your guidance, wisdom and blessing upon _____ whom we have set apart to serve you through the ministry of _____. Through his/her spiritual commitment and the power of your Holy Spirit, may their ministry be fruitful, lives changed and enriched and your kingdom enhanced. Grant _____ the assurance of your presence and the "well done" that comes as the result of faithful service on your behalf, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

HYMN: "I Would Be True"

BENEDICTION: Given by the Bishop.

206 COMMISSIONING OF FULL-TIME AND SHORT-TERM MISSIONARIES

Commissioning Service
Full-time Missionaries of the Evangelical Congregational Church
Global Ministries Commission

(It is suggested that this commissioning be placed at the end of the regular worship service.)

(Bishop or Director of Global Ministries)

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus: We greet you in the name of our God who purposed for the whole world to know His saving grace. In obedience to His command, we meet here for this commissioning service.

As an evangelical denomination, we are persuaded that God would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. We further hold that Christ's death provides atonement for the sins of the whole world. We believe that this gospel should be proclaimed to every tribe and people. You have responded to God's call upon your life to make this truth known in obedience to the Great Commission. "*Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation..*" (Mark 16:15).

We are grateful that your church has a share in this commissioning service with us today. This body of believers will be a means of strengthening you and a source of great inspiration.

(Director of Global Ministries)

Yours is a high calling, for it is a solemn responsibility to share the living Christ. The Bible tells us God appointed apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Our exhortation to you is in the words of Scripture where Paul writes, "*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace*" (Eph. 4:3).

Before the Global Ministries Commission of the Evangelical Congregational Church you have declared your faith in Jesus Christ and expressed your conviction that He has called you to missionary service. This call, we believe, has been confirmed by your talents, by the circumstances of your call, by service in your local church, and by the judgment of the church as expressed through the Global Ministries Commission. You have given satisfactory answers concerning our Articles of Faith and your loyalty to the government and *Discipline* of the Evangelical Congregational Church. Now you are asked to declare publicly your convictions by answering the following questions:

1. Has the love of Christ and a sincere desire to promote His glory through His gospel inspired you to seek this appointment of the Evangelical Congregational Church Global Ministries Commission? If so answer –

I HAVE BEEN INSPIRED TO DO SO.

2. Do you promise to be faithful in guarding yourself against all that is not in harmony with the teaching of God's Word? If so answer –

I PROMISE TO BE FAITHFUL.

3. Will you strive to maintain a regular devotional life of Scripture reading and prayer believing this to be the most effective way to minister to the name of your Savior? If so answer –

I WILL BE DEVOTED TO CHRIST IN WORLD AND PRAYER.

4. Will you faithfully proclaim to others and practice yourself the truths of the commandments of God in accordance with the faith and doctrines of the Evangelical Congregational Church? If so answer –

I WILL BY THE HELP OF THE LORD.

5. Will you be faithful and diligent in the exercises of all your duties, both public and private, laboring cheerfully by a Christ-like life. Will you exemplify Christian love among our fellow missionaries wherever you are assigned? If so answer –

I WILL BY THE GRACE OF GOD.

You are now to be publicly set apart in the presence of this congregation and before the throne of God for this ministry. (The candidates will kneel at the altar.)

(Host Pastor)

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3).

(Director of Global Ministries)

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, and by the authority vested in the Global Ministries Commission of the Evangelical Congregational Church, we now by the laying on of our hands commission you a missionary of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a fellow worker in His church, and send you forth as God's chosen servant. May God, the Father in Heaven, guard and keep you in His love, enrich and strengthen you with His grace, provide and care for you in every trial and need, and permit His presence to be with you as a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations." May the comfort and peace of God uphold you now and forever. Amen.

Prayer for the Missionary while at the altar. (Local Chairperson)

Presentation of the Commissioning Certificate. The candidate(s) then proceeds to the pulpit area to be presented to the congregation by the Missions Committee Chairperson.

Charge to the Congregation: (Missions Committee Chairperson)

You have witnessed the commissioning of _____ for the purpose of carrying out the divine command to make Christ known around the world. We admonish you to encourage him/her/them with fervent prayer and sacrificial giving. As this one (these) has (have) dedicated (herself/himself/themselves) to make disciples, so may you give yourselves to the same task of making Jesus Christ known. The Scriptures admonish us to “*declare His glory among the nations*” (Psalm 96:3).

Missionary’s Testimony

Closing Hymn & Prayer

Short Term Commissioning Service
Evangelical Congregational Church
Global Ministries Commission

Dear Friends in Christ: It is in the name of our God who purposed for the whole world to know His saving grace that we greet you today. In obedience to His command we meet here for this short-term missions commissioning service.

As an evangelical denomination, we are persuaded that God would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. We further hold that Christ’s death provides atonement for the sins of the whole world. We believe that this gospel should be proclaimed to every tribe and people.

(Names(s)) _____, you have been willing to respond to God’s call to help make this truth known in _____.

We are grateful that (name of church) _____ has a share in this special service today. This body of believers will be a means of strengthening you and a source of great inspiration as you go to this assignment.

It is proper that you publicly proclaim your intentions in this commissioning service before these who are standing with you in this work.

1. Will you publicly now express your sincere desire to promote the love of Christ in _____ through this avenue of service? If so, answer:

THAT IS MY DESIRE.

2. Do you promise to guard yourself against all that is not in harmony with the teaching of God’s Word? If so answer:

I WILL DO SO WITH GOD’S HELP.

3. Will you strive to maintain a regular devotional life of Scripture reading and prayer in the conviction that this will enable you to be effective in this assignment? If so, answer:

I WILL STRIVE TO DO SO.

4. Will you be faithful and diligent in the exercises of all your duties, both public and private, laboring cheerfully by a Christ-like life? Will you exemplify Christian love among your fellow missionaries wherever you serve? If so, answer:

I WILL DO SO BY GOD’S GRACE.

We now desire to commit you to the Lord’s care and direction by prayer.

(Pastor)

Your friends and loved ones have now shared in this short-term missions commissioning service for this assignment in _____. I would admonish you to encourage _____ (name or names) in fervent prayer and faithful concern. May each of us give ourselves in the same way to the same

joyful task of making Jesus Christ known in our culture. The Scriptures admonish us to “declare His glory among all the nations.”

Testimony and appreciation: (Balance of program)

207 CONSECRATION OF A BISHOP

(At the time and place appointed during a service of worship, prior to the sermon, a hymn shall be sung; the service shall proceed as follows.)

The Invocation:

Almighty God, who by Your Son, Jesus Christ, did give to Your holy apostles, elders and evangelists many excellent gifts and did charge them to feed Your flock; give grace, we pray, to all the ministers and pastors of Your church, that they may diligently preach Your Word, and duly administer the godly discipline thereof and grant to the people that they may faithfully follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Scripture Lessons:

1 Timothy 3:1-7
St. John 15:15-19

(Read by a former Bishop or other designated denominational official)

Then shall the presiding Bishop address the congregation:

Beloved in Christ, before You stands our brother _____, whom we do earnestly believe has been chosen of the Lord and who has been duly elected by the representatives of the Evangelical Congregational Church to serve as our Bishop. In order that you may know that he is indeed well suited for this office, we shall question him as to his faith and purpose. Before doing so, however, it is well for us to give ourselves to prayer:

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who by Your Holy Spirit has appointed divers offices in Your church; graciously behold Your servant _____, now called to the office and ministry of Bishop. So replenish him with truth of Your doctrine, and so adorn him with the strength of Your Spirit, that both by word and deed he may faithfully serve You in this office, to the glory of Your Name and the building up and governing of Your church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Questions (proposed by the presiding Bishop):

Beloved Brother _____, are you willing, the Lord being your helper, to accept the office of Bishop in the Evangelical Congregational Church?

Answer: I AM WILLING, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all doctrine that is necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the same Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge and to teach or maintain nothing as necessary to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same?

Answer: I AM SO PERSUADED AND DETERMINED, BY GOD’S GRACE.

Will you, then, faithfully exercise yourself in the Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer for a true understanding of the same; so that you may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine and to withstand the opposers of the same?

Answer: I WILL ENDEAVOR TO DO SO, BY THE HELP OF GOD.

Are you ready, with all faithful diligence, to oppose and defend the church against all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God’s Word and, both privately and openly, to call upon and encourage others to do the same?

Answer: I AM READY, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Will you deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, that you may show yourself in all things an example of good works unto others, that the adversary may be ashamed, having nothing to say against you?

Answer: I WILL ENDEAVOR TO DO SO, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Will you maintain and set forward, as much as shall lie in you, quietness, love, and peace among all men and diligently exercise such discipline as by the authority of God's Word, and by the order of this denomination, is committed to you?

Answer: I WILL ENDEAVOR TO DO SO, BY THE HELP OF GOD.

Will you be faithful in the responsibility of administering ordination?

Answer: I WILL SO BE, BY THE HELP OF GOD.

The Prayer for Performance:

Almighty God, who has given you a good will to do all these things, grant also to you wisdom and power to perform the same, that He may accomplish in you the good work which He has begun, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: "Come, Holy Ghost", sung by the congregation.

The candidate kneels.

The Consecration (The Bishops shall gather around the candidate, and if there be present any Bishops of like-minded denominations, they shall be invited to join the gathering. They shall lay their hands on the head of the candidate, and the presiding Bishop shall say:)

The Lord pour upon you the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a Bishop in the Evangelical Congregational Church, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(While the candidate remains kneeling, the senior Bishop shall offer the Prayer of Consecration.)

Prayer of Consecration:

Almighty God, and most merciful Father, who, of thine infinite goodness hast given thine only and dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and the Author of everlasting life; who after that He made perfect our redemption by His death, and was ascended into heaven, poured down His gifts abundantly upon men, making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to the edifying and making perfect of His church; grant, we beseech Thee to grant this, Thy servant, such grace, that he may accept at the church's appointed time, the solemn responsibility of this office of Bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church, that he may evermore be ready to spread abroad Thy gospel, the glad tidings of reconciliation with Thee, and use the authority given him, not to destruction but to salvation, not to hurt but to help; so that, as a wise and faithful servant, giving to Thy family their portion in due season, he may at last be received into everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Then shall a Bishop emeritus give the charge.)

Charge:

Give heed unto reading, exhortation and doctrine. Earnestly engage in the exercise of Christian thought and behavior and the study of the Holy Scriptures. Be diligent in the Christian witness so that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men. Be to the flock of Christ a true shepherd. Hold up the weak; heal the sick; bind up the broken-hearted; bring again the outcasts; seek the lost. Be merciful and yet not remiss in administering discipline, that, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you may receive the never-fading crown of glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The presiding Bishop shall pronounce the grace:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

A hymn shall be sung, chosen by the new Bishop, after which the service shall continue and may consist of the new Bishop's testimony, his charge to the people, etc.

At the conclusion of the entire service, the new Bishop shall pronounce the benediction.