

Spring 2021 Theology Exam

Section I: Reformed Confessional Heritage

You are the pastor of Shalom Presbyterian Church. The young adult Sunday School class you teach is discussing the meaning of Jesus' saying, "Peace be with you," (John 20:19 NRSV) when the following conversation occurs:

Rhonda: War has never been absent from the world. Is there really such a thing as peace?

Sonny: I don't think peace is ultimately about international conflict. I think of peace in terms of personal well-being.

Barbara: I think peace has to do with how we are reconciled to God and others through Christ. Which of us is right, pastor? What is peace?

REQUIRED RESPONSES: *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **peace**. In the essay, identify and discuss at least one (1) citation (e.g., 0.000) from each of three (3) different documents in *The Book of Confessions*. Include at least one (1) citation (e.g., 0.000) for each of the different understandings of peace represented in the class members' comments.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond to the class members.

Section II: Constructive Statement of Christian Doctrine

You are associate pastor at Sixth Presbyterian Church, where you are teaching a class on social justice. Chima and Lucy are both college students participating in the class, and today's discussion focuses on Martin Luther King, Jr.

Chima:	What I find most powerful about Dr. King's teachings is his insistence that we love everyone, even the segregationist, out of a commitment to the inherent value of every human being.
Lucy:	I like that too, but it's not a particularly Reformed idea. Reformed Christians believe that what we do contributes to our worth in the eyes of God. God loves those who do what is right more than those who don't. Not all people are good, and that means not all people have value.
Chima:	Actually, our Reformed tradition teaches that everyone has value in the eyes of God, and what we do in this life has absolutely no bearing on that value. What do you think, Pastor?

REQUIRED RESPONSES: *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **the value of the individual**. In addition to any references to the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. that you may include, the essay must use the Scriptures and classical theology.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond to Chima and Lucy.

Section III: Application to Ministry

You are the pastor of Zion Presbyterian Church. At a recent meeting of the mission ministry team, the group identified several projects in creation care that had been proposed by members of the congregation: reducing energy consumption in the building, investigating solar energy, and ending the use of plastic cups and utensils. The mission ministry team is planning to present these projects to the session for approval.

REQUIRED RESPONSES: (*Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.*)

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of the **stewardship of creation**. In the essay, use at least two (2) of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology, contemporary theology.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, write a brief article for the church newsletter in which you offer theological rationale for the mission ministry team's recommendations. (Do not sign any name to the newsletter article.)