

Spring 2023 Polity Exam

Section I: Constitutional Heritage

F-1.0302d of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, on the topic of the *Apostolicity of the Church*, states in part:

The Church is sent to be Christ's faithful evangelist:

making disciples of all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;

sharing with others a deep life of worship, prayer, fellowship, and service; and

participating in God's mission to care for the needs of the sick, poor, and lonely; to free people from sin, suffering, and oppression; and to establish Christ's just, loving, and peaceable rule in the world.

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

1. For each of the three (3) points in the quote from F-1.0302d, provide two (2) citations from the *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000) illustrating ways in which congregations and individuals can engage in the work addressed in that point (i.e., "making disciples"; "sharing with others"; and "participating in God's mission"). One (1) of the citations within each pair must relate to congregations and the other to individuals. Quote the relevant portion of each citation and clearly indicate which citations go with which point. Citations from the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (F) may not be used.
2. Building on Required Response 1, provide a lesson plan for a 45-minute confirmation class that explores practical ways in which congregations and individuals can engage in the work described in the three points from F-1.0302d. The lesson should be aimed at class participants in grades 7 to 9.

Section II: Constitutional Order for the Particular Church

You are the pastor of First Presbyterian Church. During an ice cream social two weeks before the annual congregational meeting, you hear the following comments:

- Salvator: We spend so much money on ourselves. The congregation shouldn't approve any increase to the pastor and staff salaries unless the session allocates at least 10% of the budget to external missions.
- Indira: While we're talking about staff salaries, the presbytery has salary guidelines for ministers of the Word and Sacrament, but they can't dictate that to the congregation; that's the congregation's decision.
- Amy: I don't think the congregation can amend the session's proposed terms of call for the pastor.
- Min Gyu: At the congregational meeting, I'm going to make a motion to add a staff position in charge of information technology.

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

1. Identify at least one (1) point of polity for each of the four (4) comments above. Provide at least one (1) citation from the *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000) for each point of polity identified, quoting the most relevant portion and clearly associating each citation with its point of polity. A discussion is not required.
2. Building on your work in Required Response 1, write an article for next week's congregational newsletter discussing the roles of the congregation and session in approving church staffing and salaries, including the pastor's terms of call. Do not sign any name to the article.

Section III: Application to Ministry

You are the pastor of Second Presbyterian Church (SPC) and are attending your first meeting of the nominating committee as an ex officio member. The committee is considering Leigh, who completed one term on session ten years ago, to serve on session again. Four years ago, Leigh wrote an angry letter asking to be removed from church membership and started attending a non-denominational church. When the previous pastor at SPC retired, Leigh came back and now attends and volunteers regularly. During the conversation the following comments are made:

Ayana: Leigh's letter caused quite a stir, but I don't know if Leigh's name was ever actually taken off the membership roll.

Chuck: If Leigh wrote to be removed from membership and then started attending a different church, that's renouncing the jurisdiction of this church, isn't it?

Chris: It sure seems Leigh broke the vows to be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, and to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church.

Kelley: But Leigh is a hard worker, comes up with good ideas, and always seemed to be looking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as a member of session ten years ago.

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

1. Identify four (4) points of polity raised by the scenario, one (1) for each of the comments made by the nominating committee members. For each point of polity, provide a citation from the *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000). Quote the most relevant portion of each citation and discuss briefly how it relates to the scenario.
2. Building on Required Response 1, identify the questions to be answered and steps that must be taken before nominating Leigh to serve on session.