

Reformation Principles Re-Exhibited: An Historical Witness & Brotherly Entreaty

Summary and Analysis of Changes within Terms of Communion of the Reformed
Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and America from 1761 to the Present, and a
Particular Analysis and Testimony Against the Present Day RPCNA.

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Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.... When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.... And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (John 17:20-23; Eph. 4:8; 11-16).

Introduction

It is a source of praise and wonder to consider the connection between the High Priestly prayer of Christ and the ministry He has given to His church. Indeed, we find the apostle Paul referring to the ministers and ordinances as among the preeminent benefits purchased by the Lord's sufferings, and the love and majesty of the Trinity shine herein. The Son of God has prayed for the visible unity of His people; the Father who is well pleased with Him in all things will hear and answer this prayer; and the Holy Spirit who institutes and makes effectual the means of grace will establish true unity largely through the ministers given to the church. It thus appears

that all who love their own souls and the true unity of the bride of Christ will give careful attention to the subject.

Complicating matters, however, is the fact that both Scripture and church history demonstrate that one of the primary means of promoting *disunity* in the church has been her ministers. The apostle also declares that even as the ministers of God are “angels of light,” so will the great enemy of Christ attempt to murder souls and defeat His glorious opponent through false teaching and counterfeit “angels” (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Christ warns of the leaven of false teaching (Matt. 16:12), and John exhorts us to “try the spirits” (1 John 4:1). Those who do so with all godly rigor are highly commended (Acts 17:11; Rev. 2:2), while those who merely *tolerate* false teachers are threatened by the Lord with partaking themselves of these teachers’ judgements (Rev. 2:16). False doctrine is referred to as “evil deeds” (2 John 11; Gal. 5:20), and the end result of following ignorant teachers is not bliss, but great spiritual peril (Is. 9:16; Matt. 15:14). In short, Jesus hates false teaching and warns His sheep in the most severe terms of the grave consequences of imbibing it, or of attaching themselves to unfaithful ministries.

It is therefore incumbent upon all Christians to search the Scriptures to understand their criteria for identifying both faithful and unfaithful teachers, churches and denominations; and *to apply* these biblical standards to the churches around them claiming their allegiance and submission. This brief treatment is just such an application to the churches descending from the Covenanted Presbyterian Church of Scotland at the time of the Second Reformation, known as the Reformed Presbyterian Church or ‘Covenanters.’ While this review is not by any means exhaustive (such an evaluation would fill hundreds of pages, if not volumes), nevertheless with God’s help we believe the diligent pupil of Christ will readily discern which bodies throughout the centuries have shown themselves the faithful spouse of Christ, and which, on the other hand, have been manifestly unfaithful to their spiritual Head and Husband.

Faithful terms of communion: preliminary distinctions

In order to the optimal success of our task, we must have some comprehension of the concept and importance of terms of communion, and we shall therefore briefly outline these before examining the history of the various bodies claiming the name, ‘Covenanter.’ To understand terms of communion, however, there are certain fundamental distinctions that must first be solidly grasped.

God the Father and the Son of God covenanted from all eternity, with the witness and agreement of the Spirit of God, that the Son would become a man and redeem from their sins a particular group of men whom the Father freely loved and gave to Him upon condition of this mediatorial obedience and suffering (Is. 53:4-12; John 6:37-39; 10:26-30; 17:2,6,9-11). This group of people, the elect, are all those throughout the history of mankind who have exercised, or will exercise, genuine saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are known as the invisible church. (Note that they were not elected because God saw beforehand that they would exercise faith, but rather they were given faith as a free gift flowing from their election in Christ.) This term, ‘invisible,’ is applied to them because their true identity is not visible, or infallibly known, to the eyes of men. Their exact number and the identity of each individual member has been decreed

from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), and once they pass from the state of condemnation to life in being born again and trusting in Christ, they will never lose the eternal life God has freely given them (John 5:24; 6:39). Excepting certain extraordinary instances (such as elect babies dying before birth, and others likewise incapable of exercising faith in the preached Word), there is one, and only one, way by which a man, woman, or child becomes a member of this invisible church, and this is through faith in Jesus Christ.

Obviously, though, those who come to faith in Christ will evidence this by their profession of faith in Him and by their changed lives (Rom. 10:10). They will profess and attempt to live out the true Christian religion, and it is by this simple, sincere profession that they become members of what is known as the 'Visible Church' (with their children becoming members by virtue of their parents profession of faith [1 Cor. 7:14]; this does *not*, however, render these children members of the Invisible Church). This term, 'visible,' analogously to the term, 'invisible,' is applied to this portion of mankind because their identity is indeed visible to the eyes of men. Much confusion exists concerning the biblical doctrine of the visible church, and it is therefore imperative to draw further Scriptural distinctions.

First, the sole requirements for entry into the visible church are *visible* (in contrast to the *invisibility* of faith, which alone makes one a member of the *Invisible Church*): sincere profession of the fundamentals of the faith, and a corresponding life that is free from known scandal (or being children of one so professing). Such doctrinal knowledge is not extensive, and this explains how the Philippian jailer, the thousands hearing the preaching of the apostles, and others became members of the visible church in very short order.

Second, because the means of entry into the visible church are external (profession and scandal-free life), it is possible for those not truly exercising faith nevertheless to become members thereof (Matt. 7:21-23; Acts 8:9-24). In other words, while those in the Invisible Church will always (excepting some extraordinary cases, as noted) become members of the Visible Church, not all members of the Visible Church belong to the Invisible Church.

Third, as seen in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:27-39, one can become a member of the *general* visible church without actually becoming a member of any *particular* church.

Fourth, the two sacraments, or signs and seals of the covenant of grace, instituted by Christ in the visible church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are distinct in their meaning, and the criteria for receiving each are different. These will be discussed in further detail below.

Fifth, it is evident that the visible church may be considered *from two different angles*: in an *essential* capacity, and in a *more formal, organized* capacity. Examples of the former are those scattered individuals or families upholding the true religion during the various periods of apostasy in the times of the Judges, and in the days of Elijah. Examples of the latter are the churches in the glorious reformations under Hezekiah and other kings, the times of the international synod in Acts 15, and at the height of the reformations in Europe and Britain. The distinction between these two comprises one of the fundamentals of historic Protestantism (e.g., Charles Hodge's *The Church and Its Polity*, pp. 72-73; Calvin's *Institutes*, "Prefatory address to King Francis," pp. 24-27 of the Battles edition; Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 3,

pp. 47-57), and yet is almost universally misunderstood by Protestants today. While different terminology has been used to describe them (e.g., Calvin's *Institutes*, book 4:2.12), perhaps the most helpful is that of the London Presbyterian ministers at the time of the Westminster Assembly:

There are degrees of necessity; some things are absolutely necessary to the *being* of a church, as matter and form, viz., visible saints, and a due profession of faith, and obedience to Christ, according to the gospel. Thus it is possible that a church may *be*, and yet want [lack] both deacons, elders, and pastors too, yea, and word and sacraments for a time. Some things are only respectively necessary to the *well-being* of a church; thus officers are necessary, yet some more than others, without which the church is lame, defective, and miserably imperfect" (*Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici [The Divine Right of Church Government]*, ed. by Thomas Henderson; 1844 edition, republished by Still Waters Revival Books, p. 121; emphases added, and one minor punctuation change made to modernize the language).

Sixth, while there can exist a visible church as to *being* or essence without any ministry or ordinances, Christ has given church officers and their officiations for the *well-being* of His church (Eph. 4:8,11-16). To use the words of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*: "unto this catholic [or universal] visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, [un]to the end of the world: and doth by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto" (Chapter 25:3). These gifts, as shown in passages like Ephesians 4, are only *intended* for the *invisible* church, but are nonetheless partaken of by both true Christians and hypocrites because in the nature of the case they are instituted in the *visible* church.

Faithful terms of communion: the preeminent criterion of a truly faithful ministry

With these scriptural distinctions and observations kept clearly in mind, we must now consider how it is that the ministry given to the visible church effectually promotes her well-being, and how in so doing, her true scriptural unity is secured. A brief look at the purpose and functions – the 'job qualifications' – of her officers will provide us with a concise definition of terms of communion, and will clearly demonstrate that upholding and applying faithful terms of communion is the preeminent criterion distinguishing faithful and unfaithful ministries (and thus faithful and unfaithful denominations).

Paul describes the church's ministers as helpers of the joy of believers, not as lords of their faith (2 Cor. 1:24). They do this primarily by feeding the flock with the sound doctrine of the comprehensive system of faith (Matt. 28:20; Acts 20:27; Jude 3); administering the signs and seals of the covenant of grace (the sacraments; Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 11:23); and overseeing Christ's flock and exercising the authority He has given them for their own protection and the expulsion of known hypocrites (John 20:23; Jer. 15:19; 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10). These and similar passages led to the familiar formulation of the 'marks of a faithful church,' as found in such creeds as the *Scottish Confession of Faith* of 1560, co-authored by John Knox:

The notes, therefore, of the true kirk [church] of God we believe, confess, and avow to be: first, the true preaching of the word of God, into the which God has revealed himself to us, as the writings of the prophets and apostles do declare; secondly, the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus, which must be annexed unto the word and promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our hearts; last, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God's word prescribes, whereby vice is repressed, and virtue nourished.

The ministry of the faithful visible church has other functions as well, which pertain primarily to those outside of her ranks (whether they be outside the Visible Church altogether, or in unfaithful branches of the Visible Church). One is entreating the unconverted, as Christ's ambassadors, to accept of the Lord's authoritative offer of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:20). Another, more comprehensive and often more dangerous to her, is to testify publicly for the truth and against error in both Church and State (Hos. 2:2; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; Gal. 2:11; Ps. 2; 1 Kings 22:17-23; 2 Chr. 19:2). It is in this latter view in particular that she is said to be Christ's 'Witnessing Church' (Is. 43:10-12; Rev. 2:13), a name historically claimed by the various Reformed Presbyterian Churches. It is interesting to note the etymology of the word 'Protestant' means literally, 'those putting forth a witness, or testimony.'

From this brief examination of the predominant functions of the ministers of Christ, we may offer a concise definition of terms of communion. ***Terms of communion are the setting forth in plain, unequivocal language the meaning of Scripture, particularly in the areas of the biblical system of doctrine, proper modes of worship, and church government and discipline; and the faithful application of these to the faithful and unfaithful branches of the visible church, and to the rest of human society.***

How, then, do faithful terms of communion promote and secure the unity of the church? They do so *positively* and *negatively*. *Positively*, by ensuring that Christ's disciples "all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them; but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). It is evident from the apostle's instructions in 1 Cor. 11 and 14 concerning decorum and orderliness in the public assemblies of Christians, and from the international synodical council of Acts 15, that the biblical requirements for coming to the Lord's Table are far more than simply the bare fundamentals necessary to constitute one a member of the Visible Church. This is because members certainly would have been excommunicated had they obstinately refused to submit to these injunctions concerning non-fundamental issues (such as temporarily forbearing to exercise Christian liberty, as in Acts 15).

Thus, David Steele accurately captures the positive aspect of terms of communion:

The primary object of terms of communion in the Church is to exhibit the law and covenant of God, and then agreement of persons in their apprehension of these, together with their joint and declared resolution to walk accordingly" (*The Two Witnesses*, 1859, republished by Still Waters Revival Books; p. 42).

This agreement in doctrine and practice is what we are to declare to God, each other, and the world every time we partake together of the bread and wine of the communion table (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:10 compared with 10:17).

Terms of communion function *negatively* by manifesting to the world a church's reasons for maintaining a separate existence apart from other denominations who profess faith in Christ. In this vein, if one were to ask, "Why have any terms of communion at all. Are they not simply rules of men which truly hinder the unity of the church?" those understanding scriptural terms of communion would reply, "Why should we define the terms of our separate existence as a church body? Why should we openly display the reasons that we have not joined another professing church, but instead believed it necessary to formally maintain a separate existence?"

Thus, to those who examine the question carefully it should become self evident that terms of communion are not only the necessary and paramount work of a faithful ministry, but are an unavoidable reality. This is due to the fact that every church, whether faithful or not, has some lines beyond which access to membership, and the Lord's Table is denied. Every church, whether they are willing to admit it or not, has a formal reason for its separate existence – a formal reason for keeping her judicial courts separate from all others. **The question is not, if terms of communion are being applied in every church, but simply which terms of communion are being applied in regard to the admission and demission of visible church members, and how explicitly these terms are stated and applied.**

Furthermore, it is critical that the church of Christ recognize that there is a clear scriptural distinction made between the bare minimum requirements for church membership, and terms of ecclesiastical communion. For example, infants and young children are baptized as members of the visible church, though not allowed to attend the communion table until they are properly prepared. Likewise, brand new converts are baptized as members of the visible church, though not allowed to attend the communion table until they are properly prepared. Why? Is there a greater scriptural requirement for admission to the Lord's Table than there is for mere membership in the visible church? Yes, certainly!

Membership in the visible church, as already explained, is based upon a simple, voluntary, sincere profession of faith, and this is not to be confused with an examination to come to the Lord's Table, based upon faithful terms of communion. Simple profession of faith, which makes a one an external member of the Visible Church, precedes examination for communion, and those who attempt to mould these two distinct requirements into one, entirely confound the long-standing, scripturally grounded order of the Reformed Churches. New converts are brought into the schoolhouse of Christ (the Visible Church), to receive feeding and instruction from good shepherds who make them ready to partake worthily of the Lord's Table. These babes join the church and are baptized in their simplicity, but must have their ignorance removed so that they might be given the understanding to communicate properly, enabling them to "examine themselves" (1 Cor. 11:28,31) and worthily "remember and discern the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:29). This is done to protect them from their own ignorance and to protect the congregation, as a body, from knowingly tolerating error and false doctrine around the Lord's Table.

Each person who makes a simple profession of faith has a **right** to the signs and the seals of the covenant of grace, viz., Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The fact that one has a **right** to the signs and seals of the covenant **does not mean that they are automatically immediately qualified to enjoy all those privileges**. God requires all professing Christians to meet certain qualifications before they may lawfully partake of certain of His ordinances.

To illustrate, in Canada (assuming that a legitimate government was ruling), each child born within Canadian boundaries has a right to vote. Though they "possess" the right to vote, they cannot "exercise" that right until they meet the qualifications of Canadian law. When they turn 18 years old they may then "exercise" their right because they now are qualified to "exercise" that right. Thus, a distinction is made between "possessing" a right, and "exercising" a right. While little qualification is needed to "possess" a right, more is required for its lawful "exercise".

In the visible church of Christ, membership involves different privileges for which one must be duly qualified. To hear the Word regularly preached does not automatically qualify a person for baptism, nor does being baptized automatically qualify a person to attend the Lord's Table. Each privilege of the church has its own distinctive prerequisites.

Samuel Rutherford explains:

Some be members of the visible church properly and strictly, such as are admitted to all the seals of the covenant and holy things of God. Others are less properly, or in an inferior degree, members of the visible church, such as are baptized and are ordinary hearers of the Word, but not admitted to the Lord's Supper, of old the *Catechumanoi* were such. As there are degrees of citizens, some having all the privileges of the city and some only right to some privileges, but not to all three. Some have right to all and are most properly in the visible church (Samuel Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, p. 268).

What Rutherford has just finished saying gives us an important summary of the privileges of church membership. He explains that all members, as mere members, do not have equal access to the signs and seals of the covenant. Some have a **right** to all privileges while others have a **right to exercise** all privileges. We are here saying the same thing as Rutherford, but in more slightly modernized terms. Though we may "**possess**" the right to all the privileges of the visible church, by virtue of our profession of faith, visible interest in the covenant of grace, and freedom from visible scandal, we are only entitled to "**exercise**" those rights after we have met the visible qualifications written down in the Word of God.

George Gillespie makes the same distinction (remote right vs. proxime [nearest] right):

There is *jus ad rem*, and *jus in re*. There is a remote right, or right in *actu primo*; that is such a right, relation or habitude, as entitleth a person to such a privilege or benefit, to be enjoyed and possessed by him when he shall be capable and fit to enjoy it. Such is the right of a minor to his inheritance. Such was the right of lepers of old to their tents houses and goods, when themselves were put out of the camp, and might not (during their leprosy) actually enjoy their own habitations....

There is again a *proxime* right, or a right in *actuo secundo*, which rendereth a person actually and presently capable of that thing which he is entitled to (George Gillespie, *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, 1646, reprinted by Sprinkle Publications 1985, p. 225).

(Those who desire a more full treatment of this topic may consult, *The Covenanted Reformation Defended*, by Greg Barrow, available from Still Waters Revival Books, and on-line at: <http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualnls/CovRefGB.htm>).

We have thus concisely defined terms of communion, and have seen that upholding and applying them faithfully are the preeminent and primary means by which Christ's ministers preserve and promote the unity for which He prayed in John 17. We have also demonstrated that in comprehending the various duties of the ministry, they thereby comprise the overarching criterion by which faithful and unfaithful ministers, churches, and denominations may and must be judged. As we near the commencement of our analysis it is only necessary that we ponder one final question: *what does the word 'faithful' mean?*

The apostle teaches us that "it is required in a steward, that a man be found *faithful*" (1 Cor. 4:2). Moreover, he expressly commands all of Christ's sheep "to mark" *faithful* ministers, and to follow and emulate them (Phil. 3:17); and likewise "to mark" *unfaithful* teachers and to avoid or shun them (Rom. 16:17). It would be absurd to apply this term, or its opposite, to any minister or ecclesiastical body without clearly understanding what it essentially entails, and yet we fear that many, if not most, who employ it simply apply it, "understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (1 Tim. 1:7). We submit the definition is very simple: ***a church is faithful if she displays a proven track record of obedience to her Lord's commands*** (e.g., Gen. 18:19; Matt. 24:46; 25:14-30; Heb. 2:2). And how is such a track record to be ascertained? Only by a careful examination of her history, which, of course, is in the nature of the case *extra-scriptural*.

We may thus summarize the various biblical distinctions we've briefly considered, and state the conclusions to which they unavoidably drive us.

1. Christ has given the ministry to His church for her well-being and unity.
2. The devil has sown error and erring ministers within her ranks in an attempt to thwart the Lord's intentions.
3. Christ's sheep are commanded to identify the faithful and unfaithful ministers in His church, following the one and shunning the other.
4. The sum total of the ministry is to uphold and apply faithful terms of communion.
5. Faithful ministers and churches are those which have a proven track record of so doing.

6. This track record is only discerned by examining the extra-biblical history of a given church.

7. In evaluating the various 'Covenanter' bodies we are therefore commanded to examine their respective uninspired, extra-scriptural histories to see whether they have a proven track record of upholding and applying faithful terms of communion. If they do, we must regard them as faithful and join with them; if they don't, we must testify against them as guilty of spiritual adultery and corporate schism, and avoid or separate from them.

We now turn to endeavor just such an examination of those churches in Scotland and the United States over the past three centuries bearing the name 'Reformed Presbyterian.'

Summary and Analysis of Changes within Terms of Communion of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and America from 1761 to the Present.

First, we will examine those Terms of Communion that were published among the Reformed Presbyterians in Scotland. Next, we will investigate the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America. Finally, we will exhibit the terms of the faithful witnessing "Covenanters" throughout the past 250 years.

We believe this will clearly demonstrate an historical and systematic pattern of defection among the Reformed Presbyterians in Scotland (from 1822 onward), and The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America--the RPCNA--(from 1806 onward), while additionally demonstrating an historical and systematic pattern of consistency and faithfulness among the Reformed Presbytery in Scotland (1761-1822), and the Reformed Presbytery in America (1774-1780, 1798-1806, 1840-1887 [the so-called Steelites], and 2000-present).

In so doing, we hope to illustrate the difference between faithful and unfaithful churches, as well as reveal the extensive role terms of communion play in regard to maintaining a faithful constitution and godly discipline within the body of Christ. We will attempt to draw the reader to the conclusion that The Reformed Presbytery in North America (RPNA), by upholding the faithful terms of communion passed down through her faithful forefathers, is maintaining the true scriptural testimony of the First and Second Reformation.

Ultimately, we will seek to point out that those who remain in churches who systematically shroud their constitutional principles in ever increasing darkness and ambiguity, are walking amidst a soul ensnaring danger. For the sake of those who have ears to hear and eyes to see – and especially for the sake of the glory of God's Holy

name – we pray that each person who reads these pages will peruse these matters with godly honesty and integrity.

It is not the design of this paper to point a finger at any particular individual within any of these denominations, but rather our intent is to accurately represent and examine the “corporate” actions of the ecclesiastical judicatories in question. While this particular paper will serve to systematically expose the modern day RPCNA as a denomination which has “corporately” and “constitutionally” defected from the faithful testimony of our reformed forefathers, we, nevertheless, hope that the reader will recognize and appreciate that the design of this information is to bear faithful testimony, and bring instruction, correction and reformation to the body of Christ.

Before we begin, it is necessary to state briefly the criteria of judgment – the overarching set of presuppositions and principles by which an examination of this nature ought to be fairly conducted. In so doing, we will use the cogent and biblically sound statement of principle penned by the Reformed Presbyterian Church herself and adopted by her own supreme judicatory in 1807:

The church may not recede from a more clear and particular testimony to a more general and evasive one; but the witnesses must proceed in finishing their testimony, rendering it more pointed and complete, until God shall, according to his promise, overthrow the empire of darkness, and introduce the millennial state, in which the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come (Revelation 2:25, KJV); Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples (Isaiah 8:16, KJV); And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17, KJV); Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing (Philippians 3:16, KJV); And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held (Revelation 6:9, KJV); And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11, KJV); Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Daniel 7:22, KJV); And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived

and reigned with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:4, KJV); Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily (Psalms 74:20-22, KJV);

And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen (Psalms 72:19, KJV).

We condemn the following errors, and testify against all who maintain them:

1. That the Bible is the only proper testimony of the Church.
2. That a Christian is under no obligation to follow Christ's witnesses in their faithful contendings.
3. That it is lawful, in order to enlarge the Church, to open a wider door of communion, by declining from a more pointed testimony to one which is more loose and general (*Reformation Principles Exhibited*, 1807 edition, Chapter 32, "Of Testimony Bearing").

It is upon this biblically sound statement of principle, that we will endeavor to examine the changes which have occurred within the Terms of Communion of the Reformed Presbyterian Church over the past 240 years.

We will also endeavor, by these stated criteria, to demonstrate that those who call themselves Reformed Presbyterians and who formally associate themselves with the modern day RPCNA are here left with the unenviable dilemma of choosing between the faithfulness of those subordinate documents and judgments of their own previous church courts in 1807, or conversely, choosing their present constitution and practice. In our judgment, and on this particular point, the principles and practice of the Reformed Presbyterian judicatory of 1807, and the principles and practice of the present day RPCNA are diametrically opposed, and it is not possible with consistency or honesty to approve of both at the same time. It is our hope that the reader will recognize an inherent fairness in judging these matters by their own official standards--especially recognizing that in these particulars, the standard which was set and published in 1807, was both wise and biblical.

Changes within the Terms of Communion of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

When the original *Act, Declaration and Testimony* was drawn up in 1761, the following six terms of communion were formally published:

I. The acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

II. The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.

III. The owning of divine right, and original of Presbyterian church-government.

IV. The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National, and Solemn League. And, in consistency with this, acknowledging the Renovation of these Covenants, at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable unto the Word of God.

V. The owning of all the Scriptural Testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses; whether martyrs, under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them, in maintaining the same cause; and especially of the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery.

VI. Practically adorning the doctrine of God, our Saviour, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly (Matthew Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland*, p. 213).

In 1806, terms of communion identical to those of 1761 were published by the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland in a book entitled, *Explanation And Defence Of The Terms Of Ministerial And Christian Communion*. These are supplied to demonstrate that up to that time, no alteration of any kind was adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

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II. The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.

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IV. The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National, and Solemn League. And, in consistency with this, acknowledging the Renovation of these Covenants, at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable unto the Word of God.

V. The owning of all the Scriptural Testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses; whether martyrs, under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them, in maintaining the same cause; and especially of the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery.

VI. Practically adorning the doctrine of God, our Saviour, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly (*Explanation And Defence Of The Terms Of Ministerial And Christian Communion Agreed Upon By The Reformed Presbytery [of Scotland]*, p. 159, originally published 1806).

In 1822, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland changed her fourth term of communion by removing the phrase concerning the Auchensaugh Renovation, while adding in its place an equivocal and unfaithful substitute:

IV. The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League; and in consistency with this, **the duty of a minority adhering to these vows when the nation has cast them off; and, under the impression of solemn covenant obligations, following their worthy ancestors in endeavoring faithfully to maintain and diffuse the principles of the Reformation** (Emphasis added).

The following testimony was made against this unfaithful change to their standards:

From the year 1815 and onward, some of the brethren in Scotland began to find fault with their own Testimony, first emitted in the year 1761. These excepted to its prolixity, abstruseness and want of charity towards other denominations. This party grew in numbers and influence so as to change the formula of the Terms of Communion in 1822. At that date, Rev. James Reid, the oldest minister in the body, was constrained to separate from the majority, that he might walk by the rule of former attainments. The majority went on in the way of their own heart, and by the years 1837-9 effected a remodeling of the whole Testimony, in conformity to the advanced stage of the world's progress in the nineteenth century. Many

have thought all along, and perhaps more think now, that the proposed remodeling proved to be a material change of the platform laid down in the original Testimony.

The new Scottish Testimony is received by the four Synods in the British Isles. We consider it defective, as compared with the former, in not recognizing the obligation of the Auchensaugh Renovation of our Covenants. It gives no direction to the people relative to sitting on juries or occasional hearing. Besides, an applicant for fellowship is required to give his approbation of the principles only, contained in the Historical part, with the "proper application of them;" while he is left in uncertainty as to where the proper application is to be found. This uncertainty will account for the late disruption in the body. **Again, both Synods in Scotland adhere to a formula of Terms of Communion from which the Auchensaugh Bond was expunged in 1822; yet one of these Synods holds fellowship with one of the Synods in Ireland, in whose formula of Terms the Auchensaugh Bond is retained!** Add to this, that the Irish Synod has now in overture a new draft of a Historical part of the Testimony; which, if at all necessary, must be presumed to be materially different from that of Scotland. The same Synod, in the year 1853, renewed the Covenants as a Church. Rev. William Anderson, Loanhead, Scotland, was forward in effecting the removal of the Auchensaugh Bond in 1822; while in 1853, he disapproved the mode of covenant renovation ecclesiastically by the Irish Synod, which still retains the Auchensaugh Bond! "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (David Steele, *Declaration And Testimony For The Present Truth*, cited from www.covenanter.org, emphasis added).

Matthew Hutchison somewhat unwittingly describes the height from which the RPC of Scotland from 1761 to 1872 – a mere one hundred eleven years – had fallen:

Among ministers and people there was a widespread sympathy with the spiritual awakening, which was closely associated with the name of Mr. Moody; greater attention was devoted to evangelistic work among the non-churchgoing, alike in larger towns and in country districts; on the floor of Synod open testimony was borne to the reviving of spiritual life in many congregations, while that Court, thankfully acknowledging the genuineness of the work, sought to give guidance and encouragement to those engaged in it... One effect of the revival movement, and of the evangelistic efforts that were connected with it, was to make the Church feel more strongly that it must find a place in its fellowship for those who gave evidence of a saving change, but who, from the circumstances of their previous life, could not be expected to have any special interest in, or

acquaintance with, the public history and contending of former generations. We have already seen that at an earlier date the Reformed Presbytery had made some provision for such parties, in its approval of the "Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion"; and in a passage quoted in an earlier chapter, sought to meet the objection of those who thought that too much was asked from those who desired admission to the fellowship of the Church.

But the difficulty was more strongly felt now, when numbers who had been living in ignorance and sin were awakened, and brought to know the love and claims of Christ, and desired openly to avow Him. This along with other influences, led to an effort **to simplify the terms of admission** to the fellowship of the Church, which issued in 1872 in the **adoption of a series of questions** which might be used in the admission of members; while Sessions were at liberty to employ the old Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion if they saw meet. **These questions differed from the old terms, mainly by omitting all reference to the Covenants, the contendings of past times, and the Judicial Act of 1761, and by requiring a distinct profession of faith in Christ, a promise of submission to the Session, and attendance on and support of ordinances.** By this means a much needed relief [Hutchison should have said, "a lamentable defection," --GB] was afforded, and these questions to a large extent superseded the old Terms (Matthew Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, Its Origin and History 1680-1876*, published in 1893, pp. 357, 358).

In a mere one hundred eleven years the RPC of Scotland dismantled her terms of communion entirely, by adopting a series of membership questions which might be used instead of her original and faithful terms. What Mr. Hutchison called "a much needed relief" was the formal undoing of the constitution of the RPC in Scotland. Even though he correctly states that Sessions were at liberty to employ the old terms, history has borne out the lamentable fact that, in reality, the original faithful terms of communion were entirely forgotten and relegated to a shelf reserved for historical curiosities. What then shall we say about those men who had done this?

Let us now examine them according to our stated criteria.

The church may not recede from a more clear and particular testimony to a more general and evasive one; but the witnesses must proceed in finishing their testimony, rendering it more pointed and complete, until God shall, according to his promise, overthrow the empire of darkness,

and introduce the millennial state, in which the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

We condemn the following errors, and testify against all who maintain them:

1. That the Bible is the only proper testimony of the Church.
2. That a Christian is under no obligation to follow Christ's witnesses in their faithful contendings.
3. That it is lawful, in order to enlarge the Church, to open a wider door of communion, by declining from a more pointed testimony to one which is more loose and general (*Reformation Principles Exhibited*, 1807 edition, Chapter 32, "Of Testimony Bearing").

It is patently obvious that the intended plan of those who introduced these above mentioned church membership questions, was to accommodate, and open wide her door of communion to an increasingly more ignorant group of parishioners. Rather than patiently teaching the people, and bringing them up to "own" and "acknowledge" the testimony of the past contendings of faithful witnesses (as Scripture commands), they opted to "dumb down" their constitutional standards which were originally designed to protect the unwitting, ignorant, and the scandalous from partaking of the Lord's Supper. In so doing they declined from a more pointed testimony unto one which is more evasive, loose and general.

It appears that these so called "constitutional reformers" did not truly recognize the degree to which they had fallen. By eliminating her terms of communion she fundamentally altered her constitution and formal testimony. God judged her when she was swallowed up by that unfaithful daughter of the Revolution Church called the Free Church of Scotland. The RPC's testimony and separate existence was formally ended in Scotland on the twenty-fifth of May, 1877, when the overture to unite with the Free Church was passed into standing law.

Her formal decline began in 1822, when she unfaithfully altered her terms of communion, and ended in 1877 when she demonstrated to the world at large that she no longer recognized the reasons behind her former separate existence from the unfaithful Revolution Church. Her terms of communion, as they systematically became more general and evasive, historically demonstrated her steps of defection – when she said to the world by her formal actions--that it is lawful, in order to enlarge the Church, to open a wider door of communion, by declining from a more pointed testimony to one which is more loose and general. From that which was "more loose and general" she systematically declined to her only self consistent conclusion – “Let us do away

with formal terms of communion altogether, and let us replace them with a vague and evasive set of membership questions.” The testimony that had truly upheld the principles of the Second Reformation was now silenced in Scotland. That which had begun well had ended in defeat. As we shall see shortly, the RPCNA, perhaps not knowing her own history (or worse, understanding her history all too well), was also to repeat the same error.

Changes within the terms of communion of The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America --RPCNA-- 1806 to the present.

When first organized in 1774, and reconstituted in 1798, The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America held to the original Scottish Terms of Communion (1761). That which follows exemplifies the height from which the pretended and backslidden “modern day covenanters” – the RPCNA – have fallen.

On October 7, 1807, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) referred their original terms of communion of 1761 to a committee for revision:

Two committees were appointed. The first to consist of Messrs. Wylie and McLeod, **to report on the state of our Terms of Communion and revise them.** The second to consist of Messrs. Gibson and Black, to report on the state of the Formula of Questions to be put to Ministers and Ruling Elders at their ordination and revise them (*Constitution and Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery of North America*, October 7, 1807, p. 39, emphasis added).

On October 9, 1807, the report was submitted, with a recommendation to adopt, and was accordingly adopted:

The order of the day was calling the respective committees to report. The committee appointed to report on the terms of communion presented a revision of these terms. This with some amendments, **was adopted** (*Constitution and Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery of North America*, October 9, 1807, p. 41, emphasis added).

In the revised terms that follow, the reader is referred to the fact that the first, fourth and sixth terms were significantly changed.

The 1807 Terms of Communion, as revised by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), are as follows:

1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God.
2. The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.
3. The owning of divine right, and original of Presbyterian church-government.
4. The acknowledgment that public covenanting is an ordinance of God, to be observed by Churches and Nations under the new Testament dispensation-And that those vows, namely, that which was entered into by the church and kingdom of Scotland, called the National Covenant, and that which was afterward entered into by the three kingdoms, Scotland, England, and Ireland, and by the reformed churches in those kingdoms, usually called the Solemn League and Covenant, were entered into in the true spirit of that institution-and that the obligation of these covenants extends to those, who were represented in the taking of them, although removed to this or any other part of the world, insofar as they bind to duties not peculiar to the church in the British Isles, but applicable in all lands.
5. The owning of all the Scriptural Testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses; whether martyrs, under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them, in maintaining the same cause; and especially of the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery.
6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union (W. Melancthon Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, 1888, p. 98).

In 1833, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America split into two distinct factions denominated Old Lights and New Lights. Both factions, coming from a corrupted source, are unfaithful churches. However, the Old Lights were, at least for a time, slightly more resistant to further declension. From this point onward we will examine

the changes in Terms of Communion among the Old Light faction only. The New Lights, in our judgment, so wantonly corrupted in both principle and practice, are, for the purposes of this present investigation, unworthy of our further attention.

In 1841, the second statement of the First Term of Communion was restored (albeit unfaithfully), after years of omission.

It was changed from:

1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God.

It was changed to:

1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God **and the only rule of faith and manners.**

In *Reformation Principles Exhibited* (1875, Old Light edition) there were no changes indicated. It is notable how grossly inconsistent these men were as we observe that the unfaithful covenant renewal denominated the Pittsburgh Bond of 1871, was not recognized within the fourth term of communion even though roughly four years had past since it was originally sworn:

1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God and the only rule of faith and manners.
2. An acknowledgment that the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto and founded upon, the Scriptures.
3. An acknowledgment of the divine right of an unalterable form of Church Government and manner of worship-and that these are, for substance, justly exhibited in that form of Church Government and the Directory for Worship agreed upon by the assembly of divines at Westminster, as they were received by the Church of Scotland.
4. An acknowledgment that public covenanting is an ordinance of God, to be observed by Churches and Nations under the new Testament dispensation-And that those vows, namely, that which was entered into by the church and kingdom of Scotland, called the National Covenant, and that which was afterward entered into by the three kingdoms, Scotland, England, and Ireland, and by the reformed churches in those kingdoms, usually called the Solemn League and Covenant, were entered

into in the true spirit of that institution-and that the obligation of these covenants extends to those, who were represented in the taking of them, although removed to this or any other part of the world, insofar as they bind to duties not peculiar to the church in the British Isles, but applicable in all lands.

5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, and of the present Reformed Covenanted Churches in Britain and Ireland, against Paganism, Popery, and Prelacy, and against immoral civil constitutions of civil government, together with all Erastian toleration and persecutions which flow therefrom, as containing a noble example for us and our posterity to follow in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils which may exist in the corrupt constitutions of either Church or state.

6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority of the Synod of the reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union (*Reformation Principles Exhibited*, 1875, Old Light edition, p. 250).

In *Reformation Principles Exhibited* (1875 edition), there is one change noted in a subsequent footnote made on page 250-- the fourth term of communion--which is noted as officially altered and adopted at the meeting of Synod in 1878:

1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God and the only rule of faith and manners.

2. An acknowledgment that the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto and founded upon, the Scriptures.

3. An acknowledgment of the divine right of an unalterable form of Church Government and manner of worship-and that these are, for substance, justly exhibited in that form of Church Government and the Directory for Worship agreed upon by the assembly of divines at Westminster, as they were received by the Church of Scotland.

4. An acknowledgment of public covenanting as an ordinance of God to be observed by churches and nations; and of the perpetual obligation of

public covenants; and of the obligation upon this church of the covenant entered into in 1871, in which are embodied the engagements of The National Covenant of Scotland and of the Solemn League and Covenant, so far as applicable in this land.

5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, and of the present Reformed Covenanted Churches in Britain and Ireland, against Paganism, Popery, and Prelacy, and against immoral civil constitutions of civil government, together with all Erastian toleration and persecutions which flow therefrom, as containing a noble example for us and our posterity to follow in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils which may exist in the corrupt constitutions of either Church or state.

6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority of the Synod of the reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union (*Reformation Principles Exhibited*, 1875, Old Light edition, p. 250, see the note at the bottom of the page which refers to this change, emphasis added).

In 1938 a complete revision was adopted, and in 1948 the new fourth term was amended to fit the revised standards. In connection with the revision of 1938 a Covenant of Church Membership was adopted (cited from, "History of the Standards", <http://www.reformed.com/rpcna/const/history.htm>)

In 1938, the first, third, fourth and fifth terms were altered to read:

1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God and the only rule of faith and obedience.
2. An acknowledgment that the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto and founded upon, the Scriptures.
3. An acknowledgment of the divine right of an unalterable form of Church Government and Manner of Worship-set forth in substance and

outline in the Westminster "Form of Church Government" and "Directory for Worship."

4. An acknowledgment of public covenanting as an ordinance of God to be observed by the church and by nations; that the obligations of such covenants are perpetually binding; and that we are solemnly bound by our Covenant of 1871, and by the covenants entered into by our ecclesiastical forefathers in so far as the ends and ideals of those covenants are as yet unrealized.

5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, particularly in connection with the Reformation of the British Isles, as containing a noble example for us and our posterity to follow, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils which may exist in the corrupt constitutions of either church or state.

6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union.

The present testimony of the RPCNA is next described from a document off of her own website, where a brief historical survey is supplied for the reader:

The Synod of 1969 gave approval to the "rewriting of the Testimony of the Church without change in the system of theology." A committee chaired by James D. Carson completed the task by 1979 when the full document went down in overture. The 1980 Synod declared the revised Testimony to be the law and order of the Church (cited from, "History of the Standards," <http://www.reformed.com/rpcna/const/history.htm>).

The RPCNA has now entirely abandoned the idea of terms of communion, and substituted an innovation entitled the "Covenant of Church Membership."

The Covenant of Church Membership of the RPCNA reads as follows:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule for faith and life?

2. Do you believe in the one living and true God--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as revealed in the Scriptures?
3. Do you repent of your sin; confess your guilt and helplessness as a sinner against God; profess Jesus Christ, Son of God, as your Saviour and Lord; and dedicate yourself to His service: Do you promise that you will endeavor to forsake all sin, and to conform your life to His teaching and example?
4. Do you promise to submit in the Lord to the teaching and government of this church as being based upon the Scriptures and **described in substance in the Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America?** Do you recognize your responsibility to work with others in the church and do you promise to support and encourage them in their service to the Lord? In case you should need correction in doctrine or life, do you promise to respect the authority and discipline of the church?
5. To the end that you may grow in the Christian life, do you promise that you will diligently read the Bible, engage in private prayer, keep the Lord's Day, regularly attend the worship services, observe the appointed sacraments, and give to the Lord's work as He shall prosper you?
6. Do you purpose to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in all the relationships of life, faithfully to perform your whole duty as a true servant of Jesus Christ, and seek to win others to Him?
7. Do you make this profession of faith and purpose in the presence of God, in humble reliance upon His grace, as you desire to give your account with joy at the Last Great Day? (The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, "**Covenant of Church Membership**", **downloadable from--** <http://www.reformedpresbyterian.org/constitution.html>)

According to the RPCNA document entitled, "The Communicant Membership of the Church," any person who has a credible profession of faith, has been baptized, and has given willing assent to the "Covenant of Church Membership" may receive the Lord's Supper:

1. Any person capable of forming moral judgments and of making decisions for himself may be received into communicant membership in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, upon credible profession of faith, baptism, and acceptance of **the Covenant of Church Membership**.

Communicant members have an obligation to present their children for baptism and to do all in their power to rear their children so that they will seek communicant membership in the church.

5. When the candidates have given assent to the Covenant of Church Membership and when their examination has been sustained, they shall, if they have been baptized, be declared in communicant membership and may sign **the Covenant of Church Membership**.

7. The new members should be publicly recognized. This may be done by having them stand before the congregation to give public assent to **the Covenant of Church Membership**.

9. A member of any congregation of any Reformed Presbyterian Church, in this or other lands, may be received into communicant membership of any congregation of the church, upon presentation of a certificate from the session of his congregation. **An applicant from another denomination shall satisfy the session of his acceptance of the basic truths of the historic Christian faith and of the Covenant of Church Membership** (The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, **“The Communicant Membership of the Church”**, downloadable from-- <http://www.reformedpresbyterian.org/constitution.html>).

Notably the same document states:

No one should be admitted [to the Lord's Table] who is ignorant of the plan of salvation, or who gives no credible evidence of having been born again, or who assumes an attitude antagonistic to the principles set forth in the standards of the Church (The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, **“The Communicant Membership of the Church”**, downloadable from-- <http://www.reformedpresbyterian.org/constitution.html>).

As we have already seen, this was not the first time that defecting Presbyterians sought to substitute explicit terms of communion with a series of vague questions regarding admission into the church. As demonstrated earlier, this "widening the door of communion" was also effected by their defecting brethren in Scotland in 1872, as the following citation demonstrates. We do realize that a greater part of the following citation has already been given, but the resemblance between the actions of the RPCNA and her previously noted defecting Scottish brethren roughly 100 years earlier, in our judgment, warrants the repetition.

Among ministers and people there was a widespread sympathy with the spiritual awakening, which was closely associated with the name of Mr. Moody; greater attention was devoted to evangelistic work among the non-churchgoing, alike in larger towns and in country districts; on the floor of Synod open testimony was borne to the reviving of spiritual life in many congregations, while that Court, thankfully acknowledging the genuineness of the work, sought to give guidance and encouragement to those engaged in it...One effect of the revival movement, and of the evangelistic efforts that were connected with it, was to make the Church feel more strongly that it must find a place in its fellowship for those who gave evidence of a saving change, but who, from the circumstances of their previous life, could not be expected to have any special interest in, or acquaintance with, the public history and contending of former generations. We have already seen that at an earlier date the Reformed Presbytery had made some provision for such parties, in its approval of the "Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion"; and **in a passage quoted in an earlier chapter**, sought to meet the objection of those who thought that too much was asked from those who desired admission to the fellowship of the Church

*[The passage referred to in the above citation as "quoted in an earlier chapter" is here inserted for the reader's convenience-GB]-
In proposing the above Terms of communion, we wish a difference to be made between persons holding, proclaiming, and propagating sentiments in religion, opposite to those which are recognized by our Terms, and persons who may be, comparatively, ignorant, or have private views of their own, but are willing to be farther instructed. The former must be positively debarred from church fellowship, whereas milder treatment is due to the latter (Jude, 22, 23. Romans 14: 1).*

Let it also be remembered, that there is a material difference between church-communion, properly so called, and private occasional communion, with those who may agree in the great essentials of salvation, through a crucified Saviour. Church communion, among the professing members of Christ's mystical body, we consider as lying chiefly in their conscientiously walking together, and enjoying mutual comfort in the regular observation of all public Gospel ordinances, in general, and joint participation of the solemn seals of the new covenant, in particular; as these are dispensed by the ministers of religion, who are vested with office, according to the laws of Christ. This, necessarily, requires unanimity in all those things which belong to the constitution of the church in her organized capacity; such as, doctrines to be

believed, a certain mode of worship to be observed a form of government to be exercised, and discipline to be administered. As it doth not appear that the church, in her complete and organized capacity, can exist without any of these articles, so neither is it easy to conceive how persons holding jarring sentiments on these important subjects can consistently enjoy church fellowship with each other. Private Christian communion, we apprehend, consists in the joint discharge of those religious duties which are not peculiar to official characters as such, but are common to them and all Christians at large, in their individual capacity. Of this kind we may reckon reading the Scriptures; religious conversation, as opportunity offers, in the course of providence; occasional prayer with the sick; when desired; praising God in the family, when providentially lodged together; joint craving of Heaven's blessing on the provision of our table, and such like. From private and occasional communion, with Christians of other denominations, in things like these, we never thought of debarring our people; though we cannot help being of opinion, that church fellowship should ever be regulated by some such scriptural terms as those which we have endeavored to exhibit and explain (The Reformed Presbytery, Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion, 1806, p. 50).

But the difficulty was more strongly felt now, when numbers who had been living in ignorance and sin were awakened, and brought to know the love and claims of Christ, and desired openly to avow Him. This along with other influences, led to an effort **to simplify the terms of admission** to the fellowship of the Church, which issued in 1872 in the **adoption of a series of questions** which might be used in the admission of members; while Sessions were at liberty to employ the old Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion if they saw meet. **These questions differed from the old terms, mainly by omitting all reference to the Covenants, the contendings of past times, and the Judicial Act of 1761, and by requiring a distinct profession of faith in Christ, a promise of submission to the Session, and attendance on and support of ordinances.** By this means a much needed relief [Again, Hutchison should have said, “a lamentable defection,” -GB] was afforded, and these questions to a large extent superceded the old Terms (Matthew Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, Its Origin and History 1680-1876*, published in 1893, pp. 357, 358).

Notice the historical similarities between the defection in The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland (1872) and that of the pretended Covenanters calling themselves the RPCNA. Both parties adopted a series of questions materially altering the explicit terms

of communion they had previously held for hundreds of years. Both parties purposely omitted all reference to the Covenants, the contendings of past times, and the Judicial Act of 1761 in these questions. In their place, each party requires a distinct profession of faith, a promise of submission to Church authority, and attendance on, and support of ordinances.

It is hard to imagine how the RPCNA could defend itself against the charge that they virtually copied the defection of their Scottish brethren by framing these questions with the intent to supersede and entirely banish the concept of explicit terms of communion from their Church. Whether they copied the defection or not, in our judgment, they are guilty of the same crime against the body of Christ. It is, in our judgment, only a matter of time before the RPCNA realizes that they do not have a distinct enough testimony to warrant their own separate existence. With the removal of her explicit terms of communion and her intrusion of vague and evasive questions in their place, she too will be swallowed up by further defection both from within and without. Rule by principle will be replaced by the rule of the majority. It is not a matter of if this will happen but only now a matter of when. When she cut herself free from her terms of communion, she cut herself free from any semblance of the faithful constitution that she once briefly maintained. The handwriting is now on the wall. Her days are numbered.

Let it be said at this point that we take no pleasure in pointing out the historical failing and defection of those among our professing brethren who also name the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If it were not our duty to expose such serious public sin, in order that others would not become ensnared in this kind of defection, we would much rather leave such error buried in the past and cover it over by love. But sadly, such cannot be the case.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD (Lev. 19:17-18, KJV).

It is our sincere grief to expose such errors and we do so understanding that if not for the grace of God preserving us in the way we walk, such public error would also be ours to confess. May the Lord grant us all mercy to learn from such past defection, in order that we might protect ourselves and our neighbors from repeating and enacting any schism upon the body of Christ.

Analysis of the changes made within the RPCNA terms of communion from 1774 to 1998.

Again, we resort to the criteria with which we wish to examine these changes, and again we entreat our erring brethren especially to hear what is so important for the church of Christ to understand:

The church may not recede from a more clear and particular testimony to a more general and evasive one; but the witnesses must proceed in finishing their testimony, rendering it more pointed and complete, until God shall, according to his promise, overthrow the empire of darkness, and introduce the millennial state, in which the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come (Revelation 2:25, KJV); Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples (Isaiah 8:16, KJV); And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17, KJV); Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing (Philippians 3:16, KJV); And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held (Revelation 6:9, KJV); And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11, KJV); Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Daniel 7:22, KJV); And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:4, KJV); Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily (Psalms 74:20-22, KJV);

And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen (Psalms 72:19, KJV).

We condemn the following errors, and testify against all who maintain them:

1. That the Bible is the only proper testimony of the Church.
2. That a Christian is under no obligation to follow Christ's witnesses in their faithful contendings.
3. That it is lawful, in order to enlarge the Church, to open a wider door of communion, by declining from a more pointed testimony to one which is more loose and general (*Reformation Principles Exhibited*, 1807 edition, Chapter 32, "Of Testimony Bearing").

The above view of testimony bearing is biblically sound, and since it was approved by the supreme judicatory of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America it is both equitable and reasonable to judge them by their own historical standard.

Is the RPCNA guilty of declining from a more pointed testimony to one which is loose and more general? Have they receded from a more clear and particular testimony and backslidden to that which is more general and evasive? Have they progressively opened the door of communion wider and wider to accommodate their receding testimony and latitudinarian principles? We state emphatically that the answer to each of the questions is a lamentable, yes!

Because the RPCNA is a presently existing body, who claim to be Covenanters (when in fact they are not), as opposed the RPC of Scotland, who were swallowed up by a misguided union with the Free Church of Scotland in 1877, we will therefore examine the historical evidence in more detail.

Let us compare the changes in the RPCNA terms of communion – one term at a time.

1st Term of Communion:

RPCNA from 1774 to 1807--1. The acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

RPCNA from 1807 to 1840--1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God. [The omission of the phrase "and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice" is certainly moving from a more clear and particular testimony to a more general and evasive one--GB.]

RPCNA from 1841 to 1938--1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God and the only rule of faith and manners.

RPCNA from 1938 to 1980--1. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God and the only rule of faith and obedience.

RPCNA from 1980 to present--1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule for faith and life?

2nd Term of Communion.

RPCNA from 1774 to 1980-- 2. The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.

RPCNA from 1980 to the present--As a substitute for a clear and particular term of communion upheld in the church for over 200 years, we now find such equivocal requirements as : "An applicant from another denomination shall satisfy the session of **his acceptance of the basic truths of the historic Christian faith** and of the Covenant of Church Membership. No one should be admitted [to the Lord's Table-GB] who is ignorant of the plan of salvation, or who gives no credible evidence of having been born again, or who assumes an **attitude antagonistic** to the principles set forth in the standards of the Church." (The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, "The Communicant Membership of the Church", downloadable from--<http://www.reformedpresbyterian.org/constitution.html>).

What does it mean to assume an "antagonistic attitude to principles" in the standards of the church? What does it mean to accept "the basic truths of the historic Christian faith?" The RPCNA has adopted these vague and evasive conditions in place of requiring "the acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be [are--GB] founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God" in their entirety! Undeniably, the RPCNA has opened wide the doors of communion by general and evasive requirements contrary to the requirements set forth even in her own previous standards of *Reformation Principles Exhibited* in 1807. In so doing, she condemns the sound judgment of her previous supreme judicatories and has backslidden into the unsound principles of backsliding.

The faithful attainments of previous judicatories must either be owned or repudiated, not ignored or swallowed up by a systematic effort of those who plead for latitudinarian toleration of diverse principle and practice. What was so wrong with the original formulation of this term of communion that subsequent generations sought to cover it over with vague church membership questions? Did distinct and particular acknowledgment of the faithful principle and practice of the Second Reformation not adorn the Church of Christ with integrity and practical holiness? Was the criterion that required all visible church members who desired to commune with one another in the

unity of faith, to openly acknowledge the truth of these subordinate standards, so impotent--so unfaithful and unworkable--that it needed to be completely overhauled into an evasive set of questions for mere membership? Not at all. It is beyond dispute to anyone who historically compares the sad transformation of the RPCNA's terms of communion with their overhauled Covenant of Church Membership, that the RPCNA consciously and systematically buried the principles of her forefathers, and replaced them with a lame and disfigured replica of sound faith and honest practice. What would her forefathers say to the obvious evasions of this present generation? We would venture to guess that the faithful men who once defended the original terms of communion within the RPCNA would assume an "antagonistic attitude" toward their current sons and daughters who have changed their faithful testimony into a wide door of toleration for intercommunion of ministers and people of widely differing principle and practice. Those who come before God to jointly proclaim their one faith, one mind, and one baptism, ought to carefully examine the precepts of the ninth commandment in regard to such a vague and anomalous testimony. How can a group of people who obviously incorporate, inculcate, and tolerate serious differences amongst themselves regarding the doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, come to the Lord's Table professing themselves to be in agreement, and of one mind, before our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, without overtly and highhandedly violating the precepts of the ninth commandment? God is not mocked! This ever changing general and evasive witness of the RPCNA is a monument of sinful toleration which stands as a sad testimony of backsliding and bearing false witness. May the Lord open their eyes and instruct their families to flee the ever widening mouth of toleration that threatens to completely consume the little that is left of their corporate testimony for Christ.

3rd term of communion.

RPCNA Original term of communion-- III. The owning of divine right, and original of Presbyterian church-government.

RPCNA 1875-- 3. An acknowledgment of the divine right of an unalterable form of Church Government and manner of worship--and that these are, for substance, justly exhibited in that form of Church Government and the Directory for Worship agreed upon by the assembly of divines at Westminster, as they were received by the Church of Scotland.

RPCNA 1938-- 3. An acknowledgment of the divine right of an unalterable form of Church Government and Manner of Worship--set forth in substance and outline in the Westminster "Form of Church Government" and "Directory for Worship."

RPCNA Presently--4. Do you promise to submit in the Lord to the teaching and government of this church as being based upon the Scriptures and **described in substance in the Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North**

America? Do you recognize your responsibility to work with others in the church and do you promise to support and encourage them in their service to the Lord? In case you should need correction in doctrine or life, do you promise to respect the authority and discipline of the church?

Little more needs to be said other than that which is obvious. Point 4, of the RPCNA's present "Covenant of Church Membership," has removed an explicit acknowledgment of the "divine right" of Presbyterian church government, and instead requires only a vague promise to submit to the teaching and government of the RPCNA. If the teachers and government of the RPCNA actually and uniformly agreed with, and practiced, the principles set forth in the Westminster "Form of Presbyterial Church Government" or the "Directory for the Public Worship of God," this promise to submit might actually mean something tangible. However, because the RPCNA has such wide variation and toleration regarding doctrine and practice among her own leadership, this promise amounts to little more than window dressing. How different this is from the distinct and particular requirement of her faithful forefathers which would not allow anyone to come to the communion table except they explicitly "owned" the divine right of Presbyterian church government.

4th Term of Communion

RPCNA Original Term of Communion-- IV. The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National, and Solemn League. And, in consistency with this, acknowledging the Renovation of these Covenants, at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable unto the Word of God.

RPCNA 1807--4. The acknowledgment that public covenanting is an ordinance of God, to be observed by Churches and Nations under the new Testament dispensation-And that those vows, namely, that which was entered into by the church and kingdom of Scotland, called the National Covenant, and that which was afterward entered into by the three kingdoms, Scotland, England, and Ireland, and by the reformed churches in those kingdoms, usually called the Solemn League and Covenant, were entered into in the true spirit of that institution-and that the obligation of these covenants extends to those, who were represented in the taking of them, although removed to this or any other part of the world, insofar as they bind to duties not peculiar to the church in the British Isles, but applicable in all lands.

RPCNA 1875--4. An acknowledgment that public covenanting is an ordinance of God, to be observed by Churches and Nations under the new Testament dispensation-And that those vows, namely, that which was entered into by the church and kingdom of Scotland, called the National Covenant, and that which was afterward entered into by the three kingdoms, Scotland, England, and Ireland, and by the reformed churches in those kingdoms, usually called the Solemn League and Covenant, were entered into in

the true spirit of that institution-and that the obligation of these covenants extends to those, who were represented in the taking of them, although removed to this or any other part of the world, insofar as they bind to duties not peculiar to the church in the British Isles, but applicable in all lands.

RPCNA as adopted in the Synod of 1878--4. An acknowledgment of public covenanting as an ordinance of God to be observed by churches and nations; and of the perpetual obligation of public covenants; and of the obligation upon this church of the covenant entered into in 1871, in which are embodied the engagements of The National Covenant of Scotland and of the Solemn League and Covenant, so far as applicable in this land.

RPCNA 1938--4. An acknowledgment of public covenanting as an ordinance of God to be observed by the church and by nations; that the obligations of such covenants are perpetually binding; and that we are solemnly bound by our Covenant of 1871, and by the covenants entered into by our ecclesiastical forefathers in so far as the ends and ideals of those covenants are as yet unrealized.

RPCNA presently-- no mention is made of the Covenants in the RPCNA Covenant of Church Membership.

Let the reader be reminded that the RPCNA states presently that:

1. Any person capable of forming moral judgments and of making decisions for himself may be received into communicant membership in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, upon credible profession of faith, baptism, and acceptance of **the Covenant of Church Membership**. Communicant members have an obligation to present their children for baptism and to do all in their power to rear their children so that they will seek communicant membership in the church.
5. When the candidates have given assent to the Covenant of Church Membership and when their examination has been sustained, they shall, if they have been baptized, be declared in communicant membership and may sign **the Covenant of Church Membership**.
7. The new members should be publicly recognized. This may be done by having them stand before the congregation to give public assent to **the Covenant of Church Membership**.
9. A member of any congregation of any Reformed Presbyterian Church, in this or other lands, may be received into communicant membership of any congregation of the church, upon presentation of a certificate from the

session of his congregation. **An applicant from another denomination shall satisfy the session of his acceptance of the basic truths of the historic Christian faith and of the Covenant of Church Membership.**

Notably the same document says:

No one should be admitted [to the Lord's Table-GB] who is ignorant of the plan of salvation, or who gives no credible evidence of having been born again, or who assumes an attitude antagonistic to the principles set forth in the standards of the Church.

[Note, a small digression is warranted in regard to the topic of whether membership or the admission to the Lord's Table ought to be based upon "credible evidence of being born again". This is the position advocated by the Independents as they stood against the Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly during the Second Reformation. The Presbyterians argued for membership based upon **external profession of faith only**, while the Independents argued for membership **based upon a person giving credible evidence of being born again**. Consider the explicit statement of Samuel Rutherford, who was representative of the Presbyterian position:

... though the church have not a positive certainty of the judgment of charity, that they are regenerated, so they be known **1. To be baptized. 2. That they be free of gross scandal. 3. And profess that they be willing hearers of the Doctrine of the Gospel. Such a profession, as giveth evidences to the positive certainty of the judgment of charity, of sound conversion, is not required to make and constitute a true visible church.** (Samuel Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 1644, p. 251, SWRB bound photocopy, emphases added).

Notice the difference. The RPCNA explicitly states, "No one should be admitted [to the Lord's Table-GB] who is ignorant of the plan of salvation, **or who gives no credible evidence of having been born again,**" while Rutherford explicitly advocates the contrary, viz., "**Such a profession, as giveth evidences to the positive certainty of the judgment of charity, of sound conversion, is not required to make and constitute a true visible church.**" The RPCNA requires credible evidence of being "born again", while Rutherford explicitly requires only a credible "profession of faith." It is plain to see that the RPCNA, and Samuel Rutherford, hold antithetical views upon the doctrine of what constitutes a Visible Church. "Profession of faith" is visible, external, and knowable, while "credible evidence of regeneration" is primarily invisible, internal, and unknowable (except within the individuals themselves). The Baptists seek to ascertain the state of a mans heart, and make that a prerequisite for church membership and admission to the Lord's Supper. Scriptural Presbyterians seek to know the external profession of a man, and base his membership and admission to the Lord's Supper

upon his visible and external doctrine and works. The RPCNA shows here allegiance to Baptist principles when she requires "**credible evidence of having been born again,**" rather than a visible profession of faith and works consistent with that profession. Those who wish to understand what has happened to the RPCNA ought to examine this point very closely, and cause their leadership to explain themselves, repent, and follow the true path set out by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.]

Returning again from this short digression, we evaluate the above cited evidence contained in "The Covenant for Church Membership," to unequivocally demonstrate that the present RPCNA – lamentably denominated '*Covenanters*' – no longer require a positive acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of the National and Solemn League and *Covenant*, or the necessity of acknowledging faithful covenant renewals, among those things necessary to be believed by communicant members. Now, according to them, as long as one is not ignorant of the plan of salvation, gives credible evidence of having been born again, and who does not assume an antagonistic attitude to the "principles" set forth in the church standards, he may freely partake of the Lord's Supper. How can anyone imagine that the faith once held by the RPCNA is even remotely similar to the faith professed by them in our present day? Amidst all her pretended protests that she still upholds the Covenants, the evidence that she indeed allows people to her communion table without any positive indication that one upholds the perpetual obligation of our Covenants is proof positive that these Covenanters have backslidden and fallen away from their own former principles. Read again the fourth term of communion as stated by the RPCNA throughout the years. It begins good, but over the course of time, systematically gets weaker, more general, and more evasive, until finally it is wholly dropped from being a prerequisite for communion. The pattern here is the same for most of her other terms – backwards she goes until she abandons her principles altogether. Her people, at least the ones who might know better, should demand an explanation as to why this is. Were her original terms of communion so wrong that they had to be abandoned altogether? How could the RPCNA say anything other than "yes," and retain even a semblance of honesty? Let the reader decide if serious error regarding admission to the Lord's Table, and a systematic dismantling of the faithful declarations of our forefathers is worth mentioning. It is out of sincere love for Christ and His honor, that we bring these sad facts to public attention.

5th Term of Communion

RPCNA Original Term of Communion--V. The owning of all the Scriptural Testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses; whether martyrs, under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them, in maintaining the same cause; and especially of the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery.

RPCNA 1875-- 5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, and of the present Reformed Covenanted Churches in Britain and Ireland, against Paganism, Popery, and Prelacy, and against immoral civil constitutions of civil government, together with all Erastian toleration and persecutions which flow therefrom, as containing a noble example for us and our posterity to follow in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils which may exist in the corrupt constitutions of either Church or state.

RPCNA 1938--5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, particularly in connection with the Reformation of the British Isles, as containing a noble example for us and our posterity to follow, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils which may exist in the corrupt constitutions of either church or state.

RPCNA present--No mention is made of the fifth term of communion in the "Covenant of Church Membership".

It would be too repetitious to examine the obvious defection of the present RPCNA testimony in this regard. The RPCNA's practical disavowal of historical testimony in relation to terms of communion has already been dealt with. We will therefore leave the testimony of the martyrs of Jesus to proclaim the dissimulation of these pretended witnesses for truth. May those who presently disavow the faithful contendings of those who died for the cause of Christ and those who valiantly carried our bloodstained banner to the end – those who insisted that this was a necessary term of communion – be provoked by shame unto repentance.

6th Term of Communion

RPCNA Original term of communion--VI. Practically adorning the doctrine of God, our Saviour, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

RPCNA 1807--6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union

RPCNA 1875--6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority of the Synod of the reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union.

RPCNA 1938- 6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union.

RPCNA present--no specific mention is made of this term within the "Covenant of Church Membership."

No further remarks need be made upon this term. It is added only for the sake of completeness.

Enough comment has already been made in regard to the RPCNA. General, evasive, receding, and declining are all carved upon the headstone of her testimony. May God grant her leaders ears to hear, and eyes to see, before she is laid beneath that headstone, to be remembered as another glaring testimony of apostasy from biblically faithful reformation attainments. When her terms of communion are laid side by side and compared over the course of time, who will say that she has maintained her youthful purity and remained faithful to her heavenly husband? Let honesty be your guide, dear reader. Look carefully at the evidence and demand answers from those who have clearly defected.

Changes within the terms of communion of The Reformed Presbytery in America (1774-1780, 1798-1806, 1840-1887)

1. The Reformed Presbytery in America constituted itself in 1774 (Ministers, Cuthbertson, Linn and Dobbin), under the 1761 Scottish terms of communion.

The number of witnesses of the Reformation has been gradually increasing during the eighteenth century, and before the close of the year 1774, a court of judicature had been erected in America (*Reformation Principles Exhibited*, Old Light edition, Philadelphia, 1861, p. 92).

Although it is not stated in the above quotation, that the Reformed Presbytery erected in America in 1774, adopted the above terms of communion [the original Scottish terms of 1761-GB] as a basis for its organization, yet it is presumably certain that such was the case; because the manner in which it is spoken of in connection with the Reformed

Presbytery in Scotland implied this, where it is said, "And before the close of the year 1774, a court of judicature had been erected in America." (*The Original Covenanter*, "T. S. and the Interchange of Pulpits", p. 186).

2. The Reformed Presbytery dissolved. (1780-1782)

Three ministers, Messrs. Cuthbertson, Lynn and Dobbin, who had emigrated from the British Isles to North America, in conjunction with some Seceders, formed a union in 1782, called the Associate Reformed Church. The Reformed Presbytery of Scotland animadverted on their Basis of Union with becoming severity, as a "jumble of principles without definite application." (David Steele Sr., *A Concise History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church from the Middle of the Sixteenth Century and of the Reformed Presbytery from 1840 Till the Present Time*, Circular No. 3, emphasis added).

3. The Reformed Presbytery was Reconstituted 1798, again under the original Scottish terms of communion of 1761.

We come to the second organization of the Reformed Presbytery in North America, which took place in 1798. Of the basis upon which this Presbytery was organized, history is even more obscure than it was in relation to its erection in 1774; but from the character of the men engaged in it, we may safely assume it was upon the same basis from which the ministers who organized the first presbytery apostatized: and that they were in entire harmony in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, with the presbyteries as constituted in Scotland and Ireland. This is fully confirmed in *Reformation Principles Exhibited*, Old Light edition, page 115: "The constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States was fully recognized by the ecclesiastical judicatories of the Church in Scotland and in Ireland." (*The Original Covenanter*, "T. S. and the Interchange of Pulpits", p. 187).

4. The Reformed Presbytery reconstituted in 1840.

In 1840, the Reformed Presbytery in America reconstituted, and reference is made in their *Deed of Constitution* of their adherence to *The Terms of Ecclesiastical Communion* in of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The question is – what terms of communion did they originally adopt? We conclude, based upon the evidence to follow, that they, in 1840, adopted the original Scottish terms of 1761.

Their Deed of Constitution states:

We acknowledge the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of his church; the binding obligation of the solemn deeds of our covenanted forefathers-resting upon our souls, by our own,

voluntary engagements, viz.: besides the word of God, the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, larger and shorter, the Directory for Worship, as they were received by the Church of Scotland in her purest times, i.e., between the years 1638 and 49 inclusive, the Covenants, National and Solemn League, Reformation Principles Exhibited, in agreeableness to the aforesaid Standards; together with the faithful contendings of our covenanted fathers: in a word-all the documents contemplated, regarded, and **as engaged unto in the Terms of Ecclesiastical Communion in the Reformed Presbyterian Church** (Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery, June 27, 1840, cited from *The Reformation Advocate*, p. 239, emphasis added).

Again, the original Scottish terms of communion were as follows:

I. The acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

II. The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.

III. The owning of divine right, and original of Presbyterian church-government.

IV. The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National, and Solemn League. And, in consistency with this, acknowledging the Renovation of these Covenants, at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable unto the Word of God.

V. The owning of all the Scriptural Testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses; whether martyrs, under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them, in maintaining the same cause; and especially of the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery.

VI. Practically adorning the doctrine of God, our Saviour, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly (Matthew Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland*, p. 213).

5. The Reformed Presbytery of 1844.

The minutes of Presbytery on May 8, 1844 state:

Moved and carried, that in view of yesterdays action on the historical part of Ref. Prin. Exhibited, the words – “also historical,” be inserted in the fifth term of communion in the proper place (*Minutes of Proceedings of the Reformed Presbytery, May 8, 1844*).

Later in the same meeting, after further changes and qualifications to the terms of communion were proposed and adopted, the Presbytery states:

The Terms of Communion, as adopted, are the following:-

Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion in the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

I. An acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God; and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

II. An acknowledgment that the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, larger and shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon the Scriptures.

III. An acknowledgment that presbyterial Church Government is of divine right and unalterable; and that the most perfect model as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory for Worship, as adopted by the Church of Scotland, in the Second Reformation.

IV. An acknowledgment that public, social covenanting is an ordinance of God, and obligatory upon churches and nations, under the New Testament dispensation-and that the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of Scotland, England and Ireland, were an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these solemn deeds are of perpetual obligation upon the moral person, as continued by representation and accession:-And in consistency with this, acknowledging the renovation of these Covenants, at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable to the word of God.

V. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; and against immoral constitutions of civil government,-Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow therefrom; the Judicial Act Declaration and Testimony emitted by the reformed Presbytery in North Britain in 1761, also the Declaratory* and Historical** parts of *Reformation Principles*

Exhibited, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North America in 1806;- as containing a noble example for their posterity to follow, in contending for all divine truth and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either church or state.

VI. Practically adorning the doctrine of God, our Saviour: by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

*Any defects in this instrument are to be supplied from the foregoing standards.

** The Presbytery approve the Historical Part, only so far as it accords with the other standards of the church, and the formal nature of such an instrument.

On motion the following preamble and resolution was adopted-

Whereas the addition of explanatory notes to the formula of our terms of communion is at all times cumbersome; and whereas the addition is the necessary consequence of innovations, which, in the judgment of many, were long since made upon the public faith of the church; and whereas it is desirable that the occasion for these notes should be removed as soon as practicable:-therefore Resolved, That the Declaratory and Historical parts of *Reformation Principles Exhibited* be, and they thereby are submitted in overture before our people and they are earnestly desired to give them a careful and prompt examination and forward their remarks to the court (*Minutes of Proceedings of the Reformed Presbytery, May 8, 1844, emphasis added*).

At the next meeting of Presbytery, June 2, 1845, the following petition was received and deliberated upon:

Rev. Fathers and Brethren,

Your petitioner would require you to repeal your act "submitting the Testimony in overture" passed in May last. Your petitioner would farther ask, that if, in your judgment there are sentiments in the American Testimony contrary to other standards of the church; you would appoint the ministerial members of the Presbytery to make the proper corrections and submit these in overture for the people's consideration.

Thomas Ralston

To this petition the Presbytery replied:

In relation to the petition presented by Mr. Ralston the following order was taken:-

Inasmuch as sufficient time, it is thought has elapsed since the documents contemplated, were laid before the people for their consideration and although verbal amendments on the Declaratory Part have been frequently suggested; yet none have been presented in writing;-And whereas former action of this court in relation to "Reformation Principle Exhibited" have been by some misapprehended- notwithstanding the rule furnished for judgment in the case;-And moreover, the Declaratory part having been previously in overture, and objections for a length of time obtaining against obvious defects in that document: it would appear that action in the case cannot be considered premature.

As to the "Historical View" the facts of the case are different-

First, it came to the people aside from the channel of Presbyterian order, not having been presented for their examination, so far as we have legal evidence in the case.

Second, The "Historical view" is declared to be "no article of faith," and moreover-"should not be incorporated with the confession of the church's faith" (See Preface of Ref. Prin. Ex.) and yet it is declared in the same "Historical View" that history was a component part of the "bond of connection"-and of one of the terms upon which "our fathers joined together in ministerial and Christian communion."(Page 115, Edition 1835).

Third, Some important and prominent doctrines of the Church are by this instrument rendered void in their application. According to this principle the Church would be deprived of a rule to direct her members in relation to the civil and ecclesiastical communities of our time:--Such as the oath of allegiance-holding office-exercising the elective franchise-acting as jurors-and what is usually denominated occasional hearing.

In order to supply the deficiencies in the declaratory part: let the following amendments be inserted: viz.,

Chapter 2, Section 2, - Man is a free agent, *unconscious of restraint in his volition by the execution of the immutable decree of God*: and it is not possible &c.

Chapter 21, Section 4, - " It is the duty of a christian to pray for the Church of Christ: *to inquire diligently into her scriptural character, and to seek covenant blessings in her communion*"

Chapter 21, Section 5, - If the majority should violate the terms upon which church members were united: it is lawful for the minority to testify against the defection, and to walk by the rule of their former attainments. And when any community assuming to be the Church of Christ, impose sinful terms of communion-when the constitution is antiscritptural-when the administration is corrupt and attempts at its reformation have proved ineffectual; it is the duty of Christians to separate from it-Come out of her, Rev 18:4.

Chapter 26, Section 4, - Add, "It is competent to the civil magistrate in a heathen land, to call to national fasting or thanksgiving; but to the Church it pertains as imperative duty, where the nation is organized on scriptural principles" Jonah 3:7, Jer. 13:18.

Same Chapter and Section-Error 3, Add, "in a heathen nation"

Chapter 29, Error 3, -"That the civil governments is not to be regulated in constitution, and administration by the Word of God.

Deeming it proper for the time to confine the "Historical View" in overture, it is thought expedient to furnish the following general rules to aid in forming an estimate of such a document.

First-The history of the Church should be a record of the faithfulness of God in His dealings with His own covenant people.

Second-Her faithfulness amidst manifold trials in keeping covenant with God.

Third-Her ingenuous confession of sin committed, and acknowledgment of guilt contracted; and these before God to the world.

Fourth-Her holding fast attainments and pressing on for perfection, together with a consistent and faithful testimony against all opposition.

While thus applying these, or the like rules, in the examination of the "Historical View" let it be borne in mind, that the application of the doctrines of the church is still binding. We therefore deem it proper, as in other case, to reiterate the declaration-That no member of the church, without contracting guilt, in the present state of society, can take the oath of allegiance to the government of these United States, hold office, exercise the elective franchise, act as a juror, or hold communion in other bodies, by what is commonly styled Occasional Hearing.

In the mean time it is requested that the members of the Church forward their remarks on the "Historical View" in writing to this court at next meeting (*Minutes of Proceedings of the Reformed Presbytery*, June 2, 1845.).

The Reformed Presbytery dissolved due to the death of Robert Lusk on December 14, 1845. From December 14, 1845 to June 5, 1854 the Presbytery remained dissolved. With the accession of Rev. James J. Peoples, Presbytery was reconstituted on June 5, 1854. During this interval the remaining members joined together as a General Correspondent Society.

A summary statement of principles by the General Correspondence (Societies), on May 25, 1846.

On May 25, 1846, some members met and after prayer proceeded to organize themselves into a General Correspondent Society. They defined their existence by restating their principles in a form that approximated the six terms of communion. Points 5 and 6, are especially relevant to our present investigation.

In prosecuting this object, our present standing may be ascertained in the first place, from this declaration of our adherence to the following principles;-

1. We adhere to the Holy Scriptures-the Old and New Testament, as the supreme standard and only infallible criterion by which to test principle and practice, whether in individual standing or social relationship.
2. The Westminster Confession of faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, as received by the Church of Scotland 1647, and still received by the same moral person.

3. The divine original and unalterable nature of church Government- believing the Presbyterial form thereof and the directory for the worship of God, framed and adopted by said church, to be the nearest attained, to the divine rule.

4. The divine institution of public social covenanting; and the moral nature and perpetual obligation of the National Covenant and the solemn League and Covenant; as also the renovation of these, with additional attainments in 1712.

5. The scriptural contendings and testimonies of individuals and judicatories, in Britain, Ireland, **and America**-and especially the judicial attainments emitted in North Britain and **the United States**, in behalf of the foregoing standards.

6. The Terms of Ecclesiastical Communion, and the declaratory Part of Reformation Principles Exhibited, as these were ratified by the Reformed Presbytery in this land 1845 (Minutes of a General Correspondence, May 25, 1846, "Brief Statement of the Present Standing, and Relative Position, of a few who would desire to be witnesses for truth, in this generation," emphasis added).

In 1850, the General Correspondent Society reissued, *The Act Declaration and Testimony* with two new supplements. The first was a supplement to Part 3, "Containing an application of the principles of our Covenanted Testimony to the existing condition of society in these United States." The preamble to this document states:

The following supplement, having been a competent length of time before the church in overture, was adopted in Logan county, Ohio, May, 1850. And, although without the formality of a judicial sanction, we trust it will not be found destitute of divine authority. The design of it is to show the application of the principles of our Testimony to society, as organized in the United States. For although conventional regulations, civil and ecclesiastical, in this land, are very different from the condition of society in Great Britain, where our Testimony was first emitted, yet the corruptions of human nature: embodied in the combinations of society, are not less visible in this than in other lands, nor less hostile to the supreme authority of the Lord and his Anointed. "The beast and the false prophet" continue to be the objects of popular devotion: Rev. 19:20 (Cincinnati, Nov. 12th: 1850).

The second supplement was a series of judicial declarations intended to correct deficiencies within the "Declaratory Part" of the subordinate standard entitled, *Reformation Principles Exhibited*, and to uphold those "real attainments" of the witnessing church in the United States. The preamble to this document reads:

The late Reformed Presbytery: June 2d, 1845, adopted the following doctrinal and practical declarations. They have therefore a judicial sanction: and having been in overture before the people prior to the action of Presbytery, we subjoin them as a suitable supplement (Cincinnati, Nov. 12th, 1850).

Accordingly, both these supplements were introduced into the Terms of Communion, as listed on page 175, of the 1850 edition of *The Act, Declaration and Testimony*.

The Terms of Communion, as issued in 1850, read as follows:

1. An acknowledgment of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.
2. That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, larger and shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.
3. An acknowledgment that Presbyterian Church government is of divine right, and unalterable: and that the most perfect model as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory for Worship, as adopted by the church of Scotland, in the Second Reformation.
4. An acknowledgment that public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, and obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament dispensation; and that the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of Scotland, England and Ireland were an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these solemn deeds are of perpetual obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this- acknowledging the renovation of these covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable to the Word of God.
5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, against paganism, popery, prelacy, malignancy and sectarianism; and against immoral constitutions of civil government-Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow therefrom: the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, **together with the Historical and Declaratory Supplements adopted by**

the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, 1850- as containing a noble example for their posterity to follow, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or State.

6. Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Savior, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

In 1876, the Reformed Presbytery in America published another edition of *The Act, Declaration and Testimony*, originally emitted in 1761 by the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland. In it they amended and added to their previous document entitled, "A Historical and Declaratory Supplement" and published their terms of communion in the following form:

TERMS OF MINISTERIAL AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNION IN THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

1. An acknowledgment of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.
2. That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.
3. That presbyterial Church Government and manner of worship are alone of divine right and unalterable; and that the most perfect model of these as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory For Worship, adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation.
4. That public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these Deeds are of continued obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this-that the Renovation of these Covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712, was agreeable to the word of God.
5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; immoral civil governments; Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them; and of the Judicial Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, and adopted by this church, with supplements; as containing a noble example to be followed,

in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states.

6. Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Savior, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

In 1996 Puritan Reformed Church of Edmonton (PRCE) adopted the following terms of communion, and the Reformed Presbytery in North America (of which the PRCE is a member) likewise ratified them in their deed of constitution, August, 2000:

1. An acknowledgment of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.
2. That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.
3. That presbyterial Church Government and manner of worship are alone of divine right and unalterable; and that the most perfect model of these as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory For Worship, adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation.
4. That public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these Deeds are of continued obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this-that the Renovation of these Covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712, was agreeable to the word of God.
5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; immoral civil governments; Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them; and of the Judicial Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, **and adopted by this church, with supplements**; as containing a noble example to be followed, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states.
6. Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Savior, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

Comparison of Changes in the Terms of Communion.

Term #1

1761--The acknowledgment **of the Scriptures** of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

1844--An acknowledgment **of the Scriptures** of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God; and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

1850--An acknowledgment of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

1876--An acknowledgment of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

Present RPNA--An acknowledgment of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

The dropping of the phrase, "of the Scriptures," in 1850, simplified the sentence without substantially affecting its meaning. Thus, there were no appreciable changes made to term #1, from 1761 to the present.

Term #2

1761--**The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith**, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.

1844--**An acknowledgment that the whole doctrine** of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, **larger** and **shorter**, are agreeable unto, and founded upon the Scriptures.

1850--That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, larger and shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.

1876--That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.

Present RPNA--That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.

The only change was the alteration of the phrase "The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith," (1761), to a more clear statement indicating, "That the 'whole doctrine' of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1844, 1850, 1876, presently)," is

to be acknowledged. The addition of the term "whole doctrine" is an important distinction useful for protecting the church against any who wished to pretentiously claim adherence to the Confession of Faith while only holding to "some" of the doctrines contained therein. While both the earlier and latter statements were faithful, the latter more pointedly protects the important concept of a "full subscription" to these subordinate standards. Thus, we see here a clear movement toward the direction of a more pointed and particular testimony. Unlike those who systematically dismantle her terms of communion, inventing evasive phrases to widen the door of access to the Lord's Table, we see here the exact opposite trend – if the language of the terms of communion is changed at all, it is made more pointed and less evasive. May the people of God recognize the indispensable importance of these matters and join with us in testifying against evasion and equivocation at the Holy Table of our King.

Term #3

1761--The owning of divine right, and original of Presbyterian church-government .

1844--An acknowledgment that presbyterial Church Government is of divine right **and unalterable; and that the most perfect model as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory for Worship, as adopted by the Church of Scotland, in the Second Reformation.**

1850--An acknowledgment that Presbyterian Church government is of divine right, and unalterable: and that the most perfect model as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory for Worship, as adopted by the Church of Scotland, in the Second Reformation.

1876--That presbyterial Church Government and **manner of worship are alone** of divine right and unalterable; and that the most perfect model **of these** as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory For Worship, adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation.

Present RPNA--That presbyterial Church Government and **manner of worship are alone** of divine right and unalterable; and that the most perfect model **of these** as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory For Worship, adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation.

Again, we see continuity and clarity in the statement of our constitutional principles. Nothing is subtracted unless it serves to make the term of communion more pointed and less evasive. Note that not only the divine right of Presbyterial church government is owned and acknowledged, but the divine right of "the manner of worship" has been added and maintained over the years. Why? This is to protect the church from those who assail the regulative principle of worship, and replace it with innovative schemes

of invention and confusion. The beauty of this addition is that it provides a positive means by which leaders who would confound the church with English/Popish ceremonies may be kept from the pulpit and places of authority within the church. It also explicitly purges the communion table of all those who desire innovation over institution when it comes to the worship of God.

Term #4

1761--The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National, and Solemn League. And, in consistency with this, acknowledging the Renovation of these Covenants, at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable unto the Word of God.

1844--**An acknowledgment that public, social covenanting is an ordinance of God, and obligatory upon churches and nations, under the New Testament dispensation--and that the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of Scotland, England and Ireland, were an exemplification of this divine institution;** and that these solemn deeds are of perpetual obligation upon the moral person, **as continued by representation and accession**:-And in consistency with this, acknowledging the renovation of these Covenants, at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable to the word of God.

1850--**An acknowledgment** that public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, and obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament **dispensation**; and that the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of Scotland, England and Ireland were an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these solemn deeds are of perpetual obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this- **acknowledging** the renovation of these covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable to the Word of God.

1876--That public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these **Deeds** are of **continued** obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this-that the Renovation of these Covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712, was agreeable to the word of God.

Present RPNA--That public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these Deeds are of continued obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this-that the

Renovation of these Covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712, was agreeable to the word of God.

Nothing of any significance has been altered or omitted. The grammar has changed slightly over the years to accommodate modern usage, but notice that the principle of the term never recedes – if anything it becomes more clear and more pointed. What more could we expect from an honest and consistent testimony? We proclaim and practice the same thing as all those who upheld these terms from 1761 onward. Lest anyone think that terms of communion were a mere innovation in 1761, we simply say that those who wish to examine the justification behind each of the RPNA's constitutional and subordinate documents will find more than sufficient proof that these terms of communion were inherently present in the doctrinal and practical formularies, and acts of assemblies, in the faithful churches of the first and second reformation.

Term #5

1761--The owning of all the Scriptural Testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses; whether martyrs, under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them, in maintaining the same cause; and especially of the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery.

1844--An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; and against immoral constitutions of civil government,-Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow therefrom; the Judicial Act Declaration and Testimony emitted by the reformed Presbytery in North Britain in 1761, also the Declaratory* and Historical** parts of *Reformation Principles Exhibited*, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North America in 1806;- as containing a noble example for their posterity to follow, in contending for all divine truth and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either church or state.

*Any defects in this instrument are to be supplied from the foregoing standards.

** The Presbytery approve the Historical Part, only so far as it accords with the other standards of the church, and the formal nature of such an instrument.

1850--An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, against paganism, popery, prelacy, malignancy and sectarianism; and against immoral constitutions of civil government-Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow therefrom: the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, **together with the Historical and Declaratory Supplements adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, 1850-**

as containing a noble example for their posterity to follow, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or State.

1876--An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; immoral civil governments; Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them; and of the Judicial Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, **and adopted by this church, with supplements**; as containing a noble example to be followed, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states.

Present RPNA--An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; immoral civil governments; Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them; and of the Judicial Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, **and adopted by this church, with supplements**; as containing a noble example to be followed, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states.

As testimony for truth and against error continues, so does the need to add to the judicial documents which faithfully interpret the contending of the witnesses of Christ. We, too, must in time add more pointed and exacting supplements to our testimony, and to our terms of communion.

Term #6

1761 to Present RPNA--Practically adorning the doctrine of God, our Saviour, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

Term #6 has never been changed.

Conclusion: Is it a sin to be a member of the RPCNA?

We have seen that it is vital to true, scriptural unity that Christ's church have faithful church officers. Moreover, we have seen that the paramount requirement for such officers to be considered faithful is that they set forth and apply scriptural terms of communion. Therefore, one need only ask: is this being done in the RPCNA? Or are they not rather guilty of dividing the body of Christ with their abandonment of not only prior variably faithful terms of communion, but of the whole concept itself? Are they a faithful branch of the Visible Church, or have they not been egregiously unfaithful to the Lord and become guilty of corporate schism?

How different is the progress of the RPC in Scotland and America compared with the testimony of faithful Covenanters on both continents. The RPC in Scotland (after 1822) and America (RPCNA) both systematically abandoned the concept of terms of communion and replaced them with vague and evasive questions for church membership, while those Covenanters (sometimes called Cameronians, Steelites, and a variety of other names) who steadfastly maintained the true testimony only altered her terms so as to increase clarity and further her witness to the nations. We think it beyond coincidence that both bodies, the RPC in Scotland in 1872, and the RPCNA in 1980, abandoned their terms of communion by replacing them with a vague set of church membership questions. These bodies recognized that their principles had changed to such a degree that terms of communion were no longer practical. Rather than protecting the Lord's Table they protected their own interests by loosening the requirements established by their more vigilant and faithful forefathers. Deliberately removing the landmarks set by men evidently more endued with integrity and sound doctrine, they proceeded upon a course of defection which has issued in a myriad of incalculable evils. These bodies are now drunken with tolerationism, and those who would refrain from imbibing the same polluted cup must separate from their midst, and testify against their spiritual adultery – not out of malice, nor out of high-minded revenge, but out of love and a hope for better things for those who are presently in error. Most of all, and first and foremost, we must honor God and those ordinances which He has instituted, by exposing the darkness of dissimulation to the light of truth.

We believe it is important that people understand the seriousness of this discussion. The admission to the Lord's Table is no small matter to the Lord who bought us. Consequently, the terms upon which officers of the church allow others to partake must be maintained, and guarded, with unswerving vigilance and integrity. When integrity is wanting the result is always the same. These terms of communion will disintegrate into a wide and promiscuous door of tolerance and pseudo-forbearance, while the purity required by God in His own institution of the ordinance will ultimately be mocked and practically abandoned. This, ultimately, is the means by which Antichrist seeks to destroy the purity, unity, and peace of the body of Christ, **and hence we see, as noted at the beginning of our treatment, how the ministers in the Visible Church actually become the most potent promoters and maintainers of disunity.** Those who would fear God more than man should take heed to the evidence presented in this paper. It is no light thing to join yourself to, or remain associated with, those who dismantle the faithful constitution of the church.

To drive home this point more clearly from Scripture, and thereby conclude our brief analysis and testimony, we refer again to the duty of Christ's sheep to submit to and learn from faithful ministers, and to shun those churches and denominations which are found unfaithful. Paul commands in Romans 16:17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark** them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid** them." Notice that there are three commands here: two *explicit*, and

one *implicit*. The *implicit* command is that we ensure that we ourselves know the apostolic doctrine, the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26), “the doctrine which we have learned.” The first *explicit* command is **to mark** – that is, to identify, to make careful note of – those who deviate from this doctrine, thereby causing schisms and all manner of damage to the Church of Christ. The second *explicit* command flows from it: we are **to avoid**, shun, or eschew, all such teachers, churches, or denominations (for it is obvious that if one teacher who thus causes schism is to be avoided, how much more an entire church or denomination which is causing such division by its false doctrines). Note that the command, “to mark,” in this passage is the same Greek word used by Paul in Philippians 3:17, where he commands us “to mark” *faithful* teachers, and to emulate their faithfulness. Finally, observe how serious a matter it is for us to identify and separate from such false teachers and teachings. Paul “beseeches” us, earnestly entreating that we do so, and commands us by invoking the terrible Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This single consideration alone, the invocation of the Name of the Lord (recall the language in Exodus: “I am the LORD thy God,”), should overwhelmingly compel us to follow through carefully on this command.

Thus, there is no option for the faithful Christian. The RPCNA must be accounted guilty of extreme spiritual adultery, and must be testified against. Christ’s people within this body must follow the apostle’s command and exercise their right of private Scriptural judgment, following Christ outside the camp and suffering reproach if necessary (Heb. 13:13), rather than following a multitude to do evil (Ex. 23:2). Let us then not be those who, like the RPCNA (whether it be wittingly or unwittingly), oppose the prayer of our great High Priest (John 17:20-23), maintaining and even widening the breaches in the walls of God’s Jerusalem. Let us instead be those faithful children of our Heavenly Father who “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3) by upholding faithful terms of communion. May God’s blessing be upon all those who thus go their way forth by the footsteps of the flock (Song 1:8), there finding rest for their souls (Jer. 6:16).