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RE: Statement concerning faith, sense of call, and motivation to pursue ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament

Statement of Faith (abbreviated)

I believe in one God, who loves, creates and sustains all things. As a Reformed Christian, I hold that God's act as Creator forms an eternal unity with God's will as Spirit and God's decree as Word, all of which serve as the guarantee of God's covenantal action in history. I confess that I and all of creation regularly pursue our own desires ahead of and at the cost of the well-being of our human neighbors and non-human fellow creatures. My faith is grounded in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, Lord of all Creation and only Son of God the Creator. Through his life, death and resurrection from the dead, Jesus revealed to all the way of liberation from the bonds of sin, that is, the way of true life as the creation in accordance with the Spirit of God. I believe the Spirit of Christ remains with and in and for the creation, continuing to reveal to all of creation the Creator God's love and goodwill toward it, guiding it in pursuit of the Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed. I believe that the Spirit of God in Jesus is uniquely revealed in the confession and mission of the Christian churches, particularly through their witness to God's love for all as recorded in the Scriptures, their promise of forgiveness and new life as proclaimed in Baptism, and their commitment to peace and advocacy for justice as solemnly reaffirmed in the Lord's Supper. In all of these ways, the Christian churches reflect the Spirit of the Creator. I believe God will finally renew and restore the whole of creation with new and eternal life.

Sense of Call

In our Reformed tradition, we believe God calls to the individual through the Spirit of Christ speaking in the spirit of the community, the Church. Calling is related to gifting, in this way. Not in the sense of a natural talent, however, but in sense of the gifts one has been given by others: opportunities, resources, and skills that have been invested into one's life by others and that, in turn, equip one with a certain outlook and certain abilities. So also with one's "calling". I was counseled by a mentoring pastor several years ago that I should recognize the gifts I had been given by others as "calling" to me, and to prepare myself accordingly to be able to receive a ministerial call should the time and need arise. If no opportunity or need for a call ever came, then I nevertheless would have exercised due diligence in listening for the Spirit's leading. I now recognize in the gifts others have entrusted to me a strong and clear call to theological education: I have been blessed to receive a strong education in Christian life and witness, to travel extensively, and now to live abroad and work in an ecumenical setting.

Motivation to Ministry

In July 2016, I was offered a position as Research Associate in Practical Theology in the Faculty of Protestant Theology at the University of Bonn, Germany, a position I held from 08/2016 to 04/2021. In that position, I was privileged to work under the mentorship of Prof. Eberhard Hauschildt, an ordained Lutheran minister and one of the leading researchers in the fields of pastoral and spiritual care in Germany. In 04/2021, I was appointed to lead the development of a new department in Intercultural Theology in our faculty. In these roles, I teach bachelors, masters, and doctoral students who are training for ordained ministry in the Protestant Church in Germany (*Evangelische Kirche Deutschland*) in the fields of practical and intercultural theology, as well as masters level students in Bonn's unique English-language Ecumenical Studies degree program.

Further ministry and mission-related emphases are integrated into my role as a theological educator. First, I teach international students in our Masters in Ecumenical Studies Program (MEST), and many of these students are already ordained ministers in their home denominations. Teaching in the MEST is the part of my work that energizes and inspires me the most. Second, I have been invited by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to teach in its Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) in 2022. It would be a privilege to officially and not only incidentally represent the PC(USA) and its commitment to ecumenical partnership in this capacity. Finally, I lead Sunday worship services at least once per semester in the Schlosskirche (the ecumenical chapel of the University of Bonn), where Protestant services are conducted every Sunday during the semester. This includes the preaching of the Word and would also include celebration of the Lord's Supper once I am ordained. At present, we do not celebrate communion on Sundays where I preside or an ordained minister conducts this portion of the worship service. The University chaplain (Universitätsprediger) has expressed his desire for my partnership in planning regular english-language services for the international members of the University community.

My motivation to pursue ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA) is therefore to be able to to serve the Church in an official and more complete capacity in ministry as a theological educator, ecumenical partner, minister of the Word and now also of Sacrament. SSPC and the Carlisle Presbytery have invested their faith in the Spirit in me, walking with me in this journey the past five years. I am joyfully looking forward to formally receiving a call to ordained ministry from the presbytery to serve the PC(USA) in Bonn, Germany as an ecumenical theological educator with duties in the Schlosskirche.