

## RESOURCE PAPER REPORT

### Freedom, Unity and Responsibility

#### Inception

On June 21, 2018, the Annual Meeting of the ECC commissioned the writing of a resource paper entitled Freedom and Responsibility. The paper's commissioning was initiated by a recommendation from the Board of Ordered Ministry to the Executive Board. The process of adopting a Covenant Resource Paper is found in Article II, Section 2.1 of the ECC Bylaws. In October of 2018, the ECC Executive Board with the counsel and conference of the Council of Superintendents, the Council of Administrators and the Covenant Offices Leadership approved the establishment of a Writing Team which met for the first time on February 11, 2019.

#### Progress

The purpose of the initial meeting of the Writing Team was to establish intent, direction and process. Out of this meeting came a request to the Executive Board for a title change and to approve additional members of the Writing Team and Scope Team selection process. The requested change in title was to "Freedom, Unity and Responsibility" from the previous "Freedom and Responsibility." The addition of "Unity" to the title speaks to our traditional value of relationality as Covenanters. It also refers to President Wenrich's vision of the addition of another "P" to the Five-Fold Test: Practicing Solidarity. In March of 2019, the Executive Board, with the concurrence of the Council of Administrators (COA) and COLT (Covenant Offices Leadership Team) approved both the paper's title change and membership selection processes.

#### Writing Team

In actively Practicing Solidarity, our selection process entailed the recruitment of Covenanters who vary in their gender, contexts, ecclesial practices and ethnicities. The team includes the following persons:

**Howard Burgoyne**, Superintendent of the East Coast Conference  
**Dr. Hauna Ondrey**, representing the faculty of North Park Theological Seminary  
**Donn Engebretson**, Covenant Administrator and participant on the writing team of the two previous Covenant Resource Papers  
**Stephen Bilynskyj**, Covenant Pastor and participant on the writing team of the two previous Covenant Resource Papers  
**Doug Bixby**, Covenant Pastor and author  
**Nilwona Nowlin**, representing the Ethnic Commission  
**Lance Davis**, Executive Minister of Develop Leaders/Ordered Ministry  
**Angela Yee**, Executive Director of Ministry Development

These individuals will be the ultimate drafters, editors and presenters of the third resource paper to be produced in Covenant history, all under the auspices of the Holy Spirit.

The scope team is a larger group of people who will speak into the content of the paper, first reflecting and giving input on the scope and direction of the paper, and later reading drafts and suggesting revisions. The hope is to have 20-30 members as part of the scope team.

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### Next Steps

This fall, the Writing Team will meet to discuss the final formation of the Scope Team and the agenda for the first collective meeting of the two teams. Please pray for our efforts and that this process brings us closer together.

**Submitted by:** Lance Davis, Executive Minister - Develop Leaders / Ordered Ministry

## Addendum

### **Covenant Resource Paper**

The By-laws provide for the development of occasional Covenant Resource Papers, which are designed to provide context and clarity on key matters where deeper exploration may enhance common understanding throughout the Covenant as we seek to walk faithfully as disciples of Christ. A Covenant Resource Paper is not a policy statement, but an educational opportunity to deepen engagement and reflection around history, values, background, and principles of practice. The By-law provisions for the writing of a Covenant Resource Paper are below.

Two such papers to date have been commissioned and adopted, one on the ECC and the Bible and the other on the theological foundations of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice.

The Board of the Ordered Ministry approved a motion asking the Executive Board to commission the next paper on the theme of freedom and responsibility. Such a paper is additionally supported by the Council of Administrators. Freedom and responsibility have never meant to be opposing tracks, but rather mutually-refining values generating better biblical reflection and fruitful ministry practice.

Freedom is a long-cherished and important marker of the Covenant, and it has always been understood to have limits and responsibilities. Yet it is tempting to camp on one side or the other, failing to see the generative value of these themes leaning towards each other. This is particularly true when a subject might be contentious, with one voice championing freedom, and another responsibility, and vice versa depending on the matter at hand at any given point. This paper would provide an opportunity to articulate the interplay of both: understanding the important role of freedom in the life and vitality of the ECC, while also articulating principles that mediate the boundaries of freedom.

We believe such a paper will help in navigating not a single issue, but broad matters both current and future, by bringing to the fore underlying principles that have historically given the *Covenant the ability to stay both gracious and grounded.*

#### ***Section 2.1 Covenant Resource Papers.***

*a. The ECC may adopt Covenant Resource Papers to provide context and clarity on critical issues of concern in matters of faith, doctrine, and conduct for the ECC, ECC congregations, and corporations established by the ECC.*

*b. The purpose of a Covenant Resource Paper is to inform ongoing discipleship and practice in the lives of members of ECC congregations in matters of faith, doctrine, and conduct. Since the ECC confesses that scripture is the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct, a Covenant Resource Paper is not binding*

*and is not to be used as a basis for the discipline of ordained and licensed ministers of the ECC, commissioned staff ministers of the ECC, or consecrated missionaries of the ECC; the dismissal of an ECC congregation from membership in the ECC; or the discipline of members of ECC congregations.*

*c. The ECC may adopt a Covenant Resource Paper only upon a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting at an Annual Meeting of the ECC. Amendments to a proposed Covenant Resource Paper shall not be in order; however, a proposed Covenant Resource Paper may be referred back to the Executive Board of the ECC for the purpose of addressing specific questions concerning its substance or wording.*

*d. All proposed Covenant Resource Papers must initially be commissioned by a two-thirds vote of either (i) the delegates present and voting at an Annual Meeting of the ECC or (ii) the Executive Board of the ECC. Once commissioned, a proposed Covenant Resource Paper must be adopted or rejected by an Annual Meeting before another proposed Covenant Resource Paper on any topic may be commissioned. The commissioning of a Covenant Resource Paper may be requested by a member congregation, regional conference, board, commission, corporation, institution, or department of the ECC.*

*e. All proposed Covenant Resource Papers shall be drafted according to a procedure approved by the Executive Board of the ECC.*

*f. A proposed Covenant Resource Paper may be brought to the Annual Meeting of the ECC only upon the joint recommendation of the Executive Board of the ECC, the Board of the Ordered Ministry, the Council of Superintendents, and the Council of Administrators.*

*g. After adoption by an Annual Meeting, a Covenant Resource Paper shall remain in effect until its replacement or removal by a subsequent Annual Meeting. A Covenant Resource Paper shall have the nature of a resolution under the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.*

### **Covenant Resource Paper Process**

The overarching by-law provisions for the purpose, commissioning, writing, and approval of a resource paper are appended in their entirety below\*. While the by-laws provide the general flow, by-law 2.1.e. also provides for the executive board to approve a particular procedure within that framework: "All proposed Covenant Resource Papers shall be drafted according to a procedure approved by the Executive Board of the ECC."

Each of the first two resource papers have proceeded accordingly:

1. Upon commissioning, a writing team is nominated by the Council of Administrators and approved by the Executive Board. The writing team would ordinarily include a member of the North Park Seminary faculty. *Note: the writing team has been 6-8 in size in addition to the Executive Vice President (who provides coordination and staff support), and the Executive Minister of Ordered Ministry. Given the reconfiguration of EVP roles during Organizing for Mission, the Executive Director of Ministry Development most approximates the EVP role in this process.*
2. The writing team in turn convenes a scope team meeting inclusive of itself and other invited guests. The purpose of the scope team is to identify biblical and historical themes that can provide impetus for the development of content and outline. *Note: this has been in a 24-hour retreat setting, with roughly 20 people.*
3. The writing team develops a first draft. *Note: the previous teams have appointed a principal author from among its members.*
4. The draft is circulated to a representative group of "readers" for comment and feedback. Redrafts may be undertaken. *Note: the "reader" group has been around 40 people.*

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5. A draft is then forwarded to the Board of the Ordered Ministry (OM) for comment, reflection, and approval. Redrafts may be undertaken.

6. The approved draft is then forwarded to both the Council of Administrators (COA) and Council of Superintendents (COS) for comment, reflection, and approval. Redrafts may again be undertaken based on feedback by these two bodies. Redrafts are routed again first through OM for approval before action by these councils.

7. That approved draft is forwarded to the EB for comment, reflection, and approval. Redrafts may again be undertaken based on feedback of the EB. Redrafts are routed again first through OM and both Councils for approval before action by the EB. Redrafts are repeated as often as necessary to reach final action by all four entities.

8. The final approved draft goes to the Annual Meeting in draft form for one year engagement and feedback. Any adjustments must again be approved by each of OM, COA, COS, and EB.

9. Action by the Annual Meeting occurs the year subsequent to the draft being presented.