

## Spring 2024 Theology Exam

### Section I: Reformed Confessional Heritage

You are the pastor of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church. You regularly teach a Bible study for teens. Today the class is discussing John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (NRSV). You ask the students what that verse might mean, and you receive the following responses:

Cole:	Of course the Word of God is the Bible, so I assume that means that the words of the Bible were written in God’s head from the beginning. All God was waiting for was to find the right people to channel them through.
Erin:	No, that’s not right. John’s referring to the gospel itself, not the words of the Bible. It means that the good news of Jesus’s coming was God’s idea from the very beginning.
Mukui:	I thought Jesus was the Word of God. Isn’t that why John doesn’t just say the Word was with God, but that the Word was God? God and the Word are the same thing.

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

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of the **Word of God**. In the essay, you must identify and discuss at least one (1) citation (e.g., 0.000) from each of three (3) different documents in *The Book of Confessions*.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond directly to Cole, Erin, and Mukui.

## Section II: Constructive Statement of Christian Doctrine

You are the pastor at Old Oak Presbyterian Church and lead a Sunday school class for middle schoolers. In a discussion of Genesis 1:26-27, the following conversation ensues:

Anna:	Why does it say we are made “in the image of God”? We don’t know what God looks like, and we don’t all look the same.
Safira:	Some people don’t exactly act like they are related to God. How can terrible people be made in the image of God?
Zane:	Doesn’t the Bible say somewhere that Jesus is the image of God, since he’s the Son of God?

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

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **the image of God**. In the essay, you must use **all three** (3) of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology (sources before 1900), modern theology (sources since 1900). Genesis 1:26-27 may be used, but it will not count as one of the required resources.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond directly to Anna, Safira, and Zane.

### Section III: Application to Ministry

You serve as pastor of Third Presbyterian Church and are teaching an adult class on the theme of forgiveness. Today's topic is practicing forgiveness in the broader society. The following conversation ensues:

Helmuth: I love the idea of forgiveness as a social practice! Forgiveness isn't just relevant to our relationships. We can forgive people who don't even know they've hurt us.

Sean: If they don't know they've hurt us, they can't repent; and if there is no repentance, there can be no forgiveness.

Midori: I don't think forgiveness means anything unless it leads to reconciliation.

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

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **forgiveness**. In the essay, you must use at least two (2) of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology (sources before 1900), modern theology (sources since 1900).
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond to the class. You must address the comments of Helmuth, Sean, and Midori.