

- III. Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from the like offenses; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.
 - IV. For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord's supper for a season, and by excommunication from the Church, according to the nature of the crime and demerit of the person.
- g. The *Savoy Declaration* (1658), Articles 18 and 19, states
- XVIII. Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed and instituted as a means of Edification that those who walk not according to the Rules and Laws appointed by him (in respect of Faith and Life, so that just offense doth arise to the Church thereby) be censured in his Name and Authority: Every Church hath power in itself to exercise and execute all those Censures appointed by him, in the way and Order prescribed in the Gospel.
 - XIX. The Censures so appointed by Christ are Admonition and Excommunication; and whereas some offenses are or may be known only to some, It is appointed by Christ that those to whom they are so known do first admonish the offender in private (in public offenses where any sin, before all), and in case of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offense being related to the Church, and the offender not manifesting his repentance, he is to be duly admonished in the Name of Christ by the whole Church, by the Ministry of the Elders of the church; and if this Censure prevail not for his repentance, then he is to be cast out by Excommunication, with the consent of the Church.
- h. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1689), Chapter 26, sections 7 and 12, states:
- "7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he hath given all that . . . power and authority, which is any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe, with commands and rules for the due and right exerting and executing of that power.
 - 12. As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, are also . . . under the censures and government thereof, according to the rule of Christ."
2. It seems rather curious, in view of the emphasis on church discipline during the Reformation and post-Reformation periods, to find little or no emphasis on discipline in so many of the churches today, including those that trace their heritage to the Reformation. It is also intriguing to