

**1. Do you believe you are called of God to be a Commissioned Pastor? Please explain.**

Yes. Since I was 12 years old, I've felt a call to pastoral ministry. Everything I've done since that age (aside from copious amounts of sin) has been with an eye toward that goal.

**2. Tell us about your gifts for ministry and how the Lord is equipping you for the work of a Commissioned Pastor.**

I, my community, and my family have sensed preaching, teaching, and leadership gifts in myself. The Lord has equipped me through blessing me with two theological degrees (BA; MDiv) as well as many opportunities to preach, teach, and counsel believers.

**3. What has the Lord called you to specifically as a Commissioned Pastor?**

To preach, teach, administer the sacraments, counsel believers, visit the sick, and, by the grace of God working in me, set a godly example worthy of emulation.

**4. Name a character in the Bible whom you admire most, and share why you do so.**

I've always admired Peter because he made real mistakes that I can identify with. He forsook our Lord and gave into the pretense of preferring Jews to Gentiles. Despite this, our Lord gave Him grace like He did to me.

**5. What do you believe about the inspiration and authority of the Bible? Where in the Bible do we find evidence for the doctrine of inspiration?**

The Bible is infallible and inerrant. Nothing written in the original manuscripts can err in any way whatsoever regarding the propositional content it means to convey (i.e. taking into consideration grammatico-historical context and genre). A key text in this regard is 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17, ESV)

**6. Describe the circumstances that gave rise to the Protestant Reformation.**

Heuristically, indulgences. They were the impetus for Luther's 95 theses. However, reform within the church started decades, even centuries before. In addition to indulgences, papal licentiousness and priestly hypocrisy were key instigators. People understood that the spiritual leaders were capitalizing on their poverty and that priests were taking "concubines" which denigrated their role as leaders and brought about the need for reform. Further, and perhaps most importantly, the use of Scripture by the layman was key. Translating the Bible into the vulgar tongue and printing it cheaply on the newly invented printing press helped people see that God's standards were not being kept by His ministers. This movement of the Bible into the hands of the people can be traced back to John Wycliffe and Jan Huss (late 14<sup>th</sup> century) if not even earlier.

**7. Mention and summarize the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church.**

The confessions of the CRC are collectively called the "Three Forms of Unity." Individually they are the Heidelberg Catechism, The Canons of Dort, and the Belgic Confession. They summarize the teaching of the Protestant Reformed church in the Netherlands following the Reformation. They are similar to the Lutheran standards, but diverge on key points like the sacraments. They are even more similar to the later Westminster Standards but are earlier and less technical.

**8. What do you understand by the term "Covenant Theology" and why is it important? Biblically defend infant baptism.**

Covenant theology describes the way of reading the Bible and understanding God's dealings with man as set down in Scripture. Namely, God makes covenants with His people. Before the fall, this was the covenant of works (Adam had to do certain things to earn God's blessing) and after the fall this was the covenant of grace (God unilaterally, monergistically blesses His children). The covenant of grace is administered in two administrations: the Old Covenant (OT) and the New Covenant (NT, cf. Jer 31) in which we now live, waiting for the consummation at the second advent of our Lord. This is key for infant baptism because God's dealings with people are, in the Bible, done by way of corporate covenant. God blesses His people and their offspring (cf. Peter's sermon in Acts 2). In the Old Covenant, this was sacramentalized by circumcision and by baptism in the New Covenant.

**9. What do you understand by the "Providence of God"?**

Providence of God is essentially His kind sovereignty. It is His utter control of all things to the betterment of human beings. Providence can be applied to unbelievers (e.g. common grace) but it is most commonly attributed to Christians. By His providential hand, God gives every good gift as the Father of lights.

**10. Who is Jesus and what does He mean to you? Cite some Biblical passages that teach the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ.**

Jesus Christ is the eternal Logos made flesh who was with God at the creation of the world and born, according to His human nature, in Jerusalem around 3 AD. He is one Person hypostatically united to two natures, one human and the other divine. He is God made flesh as promised throughout the whole OT (Luke 24:44-45). His humanity is evidenced by His birth and infancy narratives in the Gospels (Matt 1; Luke 2) as well as His death (Matt 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19). His divinity is taught in many passages like John 1:1-18; Heb 1:1-8; Col 1:15-17.

Jesus means everything to me. Without Him, I honestly have no reason to live. Life is hard and disappointing and after that we die. But with Jesus, my life has meaning. What's more, His ultimate sacrifice saved me from an eternity of God's just wrath. He is the beauty from which every good thing was made. Each sunset, laugh, and moment of joy is just a shadow of being in the presence of my Beloved for eternity.

**11. What thinking in our culture most challenges the gospel and how would you address it?**

Now that answer is the LGBTQ+ community. The Bible clearly teaches that homosexuality is a sin, and the world teaches that the disapproval of homosexuality is a sin. We are at polar opposites.

I would address this by expressing my own sinfulness and asking God to help me to present the gospel with gentleness, humility, and respect. Further, I would seek to *invite* people into the grace of God, rather than *commanding* that they quit sinning first. To use the title of Thomas Chalmers's famous sermon, they must experience the expulsive power of a new affection before their sin can die. That can only happen by experiencing the incomprehensible riches of Jesus Christ.

**12. Here are two erroneous views of salvation. Please critique them.**

- **All roads lead to heaven.**

This is universalism and is clearly unbiblical. Not only is Christ the only name by which people can be saved (Acts 4:12) but there is also no chance of salvation in that name after death if we do not cling to it beforehand (Luke 16:26; Heb 10:27). Christian universalism is a more nuanced argument which I have written on before.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Golding, "A Critique of David Bentley Hart's 'That All Shall Be Saved,'" *The Southern Reformed Theological Journal* 5.1 (2021): 97–131; Robert D. Golding, "Making Sense of Hell," *Themelios* 46.1 (2021): 145–62.

- **God comes half of the way to meet us- we must go the rest of the way.**  
This is Pelagianism. This is unbiblical because we are *dead* in trespasses and sins when God saves us (Eph 1-2). Dead people don't do things like help God.

**13. How would you lead a non-believer to Jesus Christ and what basic truths of the Gospel would you share with them in that process?**

There is no pat answer to this because it needs to be contextualized and individualized. But, generally, I would indicate all of our sinfulness and the need for God's forgiveness. I would then discuss God's perfect holiness and why it requires a perfect sacrifice. Then I would discuss the beauty of Christ and share that my interlocutor could enjoy Christ forever if he would but repent and believe. Then I would offer him baptism, church membership, and communion.

**14. Briefly explain the terms: regeneration, justification and sanctification: How do they relate to each other?**

Regeneration is the process by which the Holy Spirit removes our sinful hearts of stone and replaces them with pure hearts of flesh. Or, to use another biblical image, it is the means by which we are made alive from being dead. Justification is the process by which we are declared guiltless because of Christ's passive obedience *and* declared righteous because of Christ's active obedience, before God. Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit works in us from one degree of glory to another and we become less and less sinful and more and more righteous. Many people see these items as part of a "golden chain." I do not see it that way (in what follows I'm following Sinclair Ferguson and many WTS East faculty). I think these aren't purely chronological steps but are rather facets of our union with Christ. That is, justification takes place before sanctification, but it also takes place after (when we are justified at the final judgement). Also, regeneration and sanctification overlap since they are both aspects of our being "new creations" (2 Cor 5:17). Most importantly, these are not mysterious entities that Christ's gives to us. Rather, these are facets of who *Christ is* which we participate in as we are united to Him by grace through faith.

**15. Who is the Holy Spirit and what does He do?**

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead who eternally proceeds (or spirates) from *both* the Father and the Son. He applies the redemption that the Father decreed and that the Son won for His elect.

**16. What is the place of baptism in the life of a new convert and what process would you follow towards such an event?**

Baptism is the sacrament of ingrafting by which converts are brought into the family of God. The process is different for infants and adults. For the former, the parents must be members in good standing (baptized and credible professions of faith; i.e. communicant members). For the latter, a credible profession of faith must be made and a legitimate previous baptism must be ruled out (I would not re-baptize adults who did not see their infant baptism as legitimate for credobaptist reasons).

**17. How would you "disciple" a new convert?**

First, I would invite him to undergo the membership process at our church. I would also give him my contact info and invite him to contact me if there are any questions I can help him find answers to. Finally, I would encourage him (and our members) to get connected with one another so that, through fellowship in the Spirit, all of our faith can grow.