

**FOOTHILLS PRESBYTERY  
EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION**

**QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION**

(Revised Oct. 16, 2014)

*(Questions in bold are required; other questions may also be asked as well as questions that are not shown here)*

**PERSONAL FAITH AND CALL TO MINISTRY**

- 1. Briefly tell us about yourself. Include comments about your family of origin, education, sense of call to ministry, spouse and family, and ministry service.**
- 2. Tell us about your sense of call to this new ministry position, and the specific duties to which you are being called. In what ways do you see this as a good fit for you personally and professionally?**
3. What do you believe is the greatest challenge facing the PC(USA) today?
4. Tell us about what you do to take care of yourself and your family outside your ministerial work.
5. Where do you receive spiritual inspiration other than the church?
6. Who are some Christian authors or theologians who are inspirational to you?
7. Tell us about a book you have read or a movie or play you have recently seen and its impact on your work as a pastor.

**THE BIBLE**

- 1. Briefly describe how you approach the Scriptures in preparation for a sermon or a Bible study.**
- 2. Tell us about a Scriptural verse or passage that particularly inspires you or that you find particularly meaningful.**
3. What are some of the pertinent issues/questions of biblical interpretation in light of modern understanding of the world? Use an example.
4. Share with us the different literary genres found in the Bible, and how you approach each when studying or preparing.

**THEOLOGY**

- 1. The New Testament ascribes to Jesus many names, titles, and metaphorical descriptions. Name two or three of these and explain their meaning.**
- 2. What does it mean to you and the church that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of all, and Head of the Church?**
- 3. Tell us the Essential Tenets of the Reformed Tradition and discuss how they guide your ministry.**
4. If someone in your church approached you and asked, "Is my Hindu friend going to hell because he does not believe in Jesus?" how would you respond? (In other words, discuss the relationship of Christology to soteriology.)

5. Loving us, God demonstrates fidelity, and graciously gives boundaries for our lives to flourish (e.g., the Ten Commandments). How do you understand fidelity and boundary-keeping in personal relationships like marriage, and in relationships with others you have in ministry?
6. The statement, “Unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, and charity in all things” has sometimes been used to describe the Reformed Tradition. How do you understand this statement? What might some of the non-essentials be?
7. A woman in your church loses her husband after a severe heart attack. As she struggles through her grief she asks, “Was it God’s will for him to die? How should I understand God’s sovereignty in the midst of this?” How would you respond?
8. If someone in your church approached you and asked, “Since God has saved us by grace alone and not based upon our good works, why should we do good works?” How would you respond?

## **SACRAMENTS**

1. **What are the two Sacraments affirmed in the Reformed Tradition? Why are they sacraments? Why not foot washing or marriage?**
2. **Someone approaches you from your congregation and says, “I’ve just had a powerful spiritual experience and I want to be baptized again.” How would you respond and why?**
3. What are the ordinances of our church and how do they relate to the sacraments and the ministry of the church?
4. A member approaches you and asks, “When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, does the bread really become the body of Christ?” How would you respond? (Tell us about the affirmation of the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacraments according to the Reformed Tradition.)
5. A former Baptist member approaches you and asks, why do you baptize babies? How would you respond?

## **POLITY**

1. **Why does our polity require the manner of life of ordained leaders to demonstrate the Christian gospel in the church and the world?**
2. **A member approaches you and says, “I think the Session has way too much authority. I think all major decisions should be made by the congregation.” How would you respond?**
3. Can a pastor perform the Sacraments without a Session’s — or as is appropriate — a Presbytery’s approval? **(Required for those who will be engaged in specialized ministries)**
4. What are the issues that can be voted on by the congregation?
5. During a Session meeting an elder complains, “I don’t like the scripture passages you’re choosing for your sermons. I move that we alternate between the Old Testament and the New Testament each week.” How would you respond?
6. In simple terms, what is the procedure for making decisions according to Robert’s Rules of Order?
7. How is the quorum for a Session meeting established?
8. Who owns the church property?

9. Describe the importance of these foundational polity affirmations:

- Christ is Lord of the Church
- Presbyterian Polity is Representative
- Presbyterian Polity is Democratic
- Presbyterian Polity is Connectional
- Presbyterian Polity affirms Ecumenism

**GENERAL QUESTIONS OF ALL CANDIDATES AND MINISTERS**

1. **Are there any aspects of our church's Constitution to which you wish to declare objections of conscience? By "objection of conscience," we mean not merely intellectual disagreement but an unwillingness to conform your behavior and/or practice of ministry to a particular aspect of the Constitution?**
2. **Are you now willing to affirm (or reaffirm) your commitment to "be governed by our church's polity and abide by its discipline?" (W-4.4003e).**