

**ORDINATION GUIDE  
FOR SOVEREIGN GRACE CHURCHES**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The goal of this Ordination Guide is to assist you, local elderships, in the ordination process by providing information and materials related to ordination in Sovereign Grace Churches (SGC). It includes an overview of the process, evaluation forms, assignments, recommended study resources, and more.

As a first step, the elder candidate and his local elders should familiarize themselves with Sections 2 and 3 of the Book of Church Order (BCO), which address the office and qualifications of elders, including a recommended process for ordination.

Your Regional Ordination Committee (ROC) will be able to serve you with any questions you may have. When a local eldership desires to move toward ordaining a man, they should inform and involve the ROC at the outset. It is recommended that you contact the ROC at least 6 months in advance of the desired date of ordination, prior to initiating the ordination process. This allows sufficient time for evaluations, writing assignments, and ordination exams to be completed.

The ordination process is valuable not only for the evaluation it provides, but also for the edification and equipping the candidate experiences. It also functions as a reminder of Christ's love for his church. The one who gave up his life in love for the church has ascended to heaven. From that position of authority, and motivated by the same love, he now gives gifted men as leaders to the church. May churches be built up, our partnership be strengthened, and the glory of Christ be promoted through the appointment of faithful shepherds in the churches of Sovereign Grace.

## **2. RATIONALE FOR ORDINATION STANDARDS IN SOVEREIGN GRACE CHURCHES**

God's Word presents the role of a pastor as a high calling and privilege. There is a unique authority and responsibility entrusted to Christ's under-shepherds. Every pastor is to be a skilled teacher of Scripture and must be capable of feeding the flock from God's Word. Every pastor is also a governing elder in the affairs of the church, a spiritual overseer, a guardian of sound doctrine, and a refuter of false doctrine.

Therefore, to be ordained as a pastor, a candidate must be a proven student of God's Word, "rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). The candidate must be "able to teach" (1 Tim 3:2). "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9). He must be able to protect the flock from false doctrine and from wolves (Acts 20:28-30).

The Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order (BCO), following biblical standards for eldership, states that all of our elders must possess an aptitude for sound doctrine: "Elders must possess as aptitude for sound doctrine..." (2.2.5). This entire section of the BCO expounds on those requirements and their basis in Scripture.

The ordination process for the churches of Sovereign Grace is intended to protect the integrity of our doctrinal commitments and values, to guard against being hasty in the laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22), and to ensure that called and qualified men are filling our pulpits, leading our church plants, and pastoring our churches. All current elders in the churches of Sovereign Grace have a vested interest in the quality of our future elders. The theological maturity and biblical fidelity of our pastors is fundamental to the health of our union of churches.

For this reason, there must be ordination standards that accurately assess a man's knowledge and handling of Scripture, his ability to understand and apply sound doctrine, and his fundamental doctrinal commitments. There must be doctrinal standards for eldership that are higher than what is required of church members (Jas 3:1). There should be a process of careful study, preparation, and examination. Candidates should be assessed for their ability to bring God's Word to bear on a range of theological, pastoral, and contemporary issues. The examination should also cover our Statement of Faith, BCO, and our shared values.

Such a process is faithful to the standards of Scripture, is in keeping with the Sovereign Grace BCO, and promotes the future health of the churches of Sovereign Grace.

### 3. SUMMARY OF THE ORDINATION PROCESS

1. Identify a Qualified Candidate: The responsibility for identifying and training elders rests on each local eldership (see 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:7-9 for the qualifications; also 2 Tim 2:2 for the responsibility to identify potential elders). The section “Local Evaluation Questions” below will help you as you identify and evaluate potential elders. Any potential reservations or disagreements with the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith must be identified at this point.
2. Gather Congregational Feedback: Local church members must be given an opportunity to submit observations, affirmation, or critique of an aspiring elder in writing. BCO 2.8.2.3 provides a list of helpful suggestions for how to do so without propagating gossip or slander. Intentional, informal interaction with the congregation is a vital for the congregation to assist the elders in evaluating the suitability of an elder candidate. Written feedback must be finalized at least 30 days in advance of the ordination service.
3. Complete an Ordination Study Period: The length of time required for this will vary. The goal is to use the recommended resources list as needed to help each man best prepare for both the written and oral exams, and to write his ordination papers. The length of time will vary depending on the candidate’s background, ability, and prior theological training.
4. Submit the Required Documents: As the candidate’s study period ends, the Regional Ordination Committee (hereafter ROC) should be notified of the candidate’s status and desired timetable for taking the ordination exams. The eldership of a local church is responsible for ensuring all documents in the section entitled “Documents Required by the ROC” are submitted when required by the ROC.
5. Pass the Ordination Exams:

*a. The Bible knowledge exam* is an online exam consisting of multiple choice and fill in the blank questions with a 3-hour time limit. If a candidate fails the exam, he will be informed only of his overall score, and not be informed of which questions were right and wrong. Failing the exam requires waiting at least a month and taking the same exam again. The number of times a candidate may take the exam is up to the discretion of the ROC. A score of 75% or higher is required to pass.

Note that in the case of misspelled answers or typos, the ROC may manually update a candidate’s scores to accept an answer that was marked as incorrect by the grading system. This should be done only if the ROC graders agree that the answer should be received as correct.

*b. The theology exam* will also be supplied to the candidate by the ROC. It is a two-part written exam, taken online, and covers the essential content of our Statement of Faith. Each exam covers roughly half of the Statement of Faith, and the candidate may study for and write each exam separately. The normal time limit for each part of the exam is 4

hours; however, the ROC may provide extra time, or separate the exams into more than two, 14 question exams, in certain special cases (e.g., a non-native English speaker, or a person with a learning or physical disability). No alteration of the exam itself may be made. The ROC should grade each part of the exam within two weeks of receiving it and will inform the candidate of his score. A score of 75% or higher is required to pass.

If a candidate fails either part of the exam, he will be informed only of his overall score, and which of the thirteen numbered main headings of the *Statement of Faith* require(s) further study. Failing either part of the exam requires waiting at least a month before retaking the exam, which will cover similar content albeit through a different sampling of questions from the online question bank. The number of times a candidate may take the exam is up to the discretion of the ROC.

c. **The oral exam** is administered by the ROC. Churches that are farther apart from each other may want to consider conducting the oral exam either at the annual Council of Elders or a regional assembly. The oral exam focuses on 1) personal background, calling, and convictions, 2) polity and Sovereign Grace shared values, and 3) pastoral ministry. During the exam, the candidate may be questioned by the ROC on his written exam, ordination papers, evaluations, or bible knowledge should the ROC deem it helpful.

6. Secure Approval by the Regional Assembly of Elders (RAE): Upon successful completion of the written and oral exams, the candidate is presented to the RAE by the local elders. The ROC will give its recommendation regarding the man's ordination to the assembly, including a signed statement of subscription to the Statement of Faith and submission to the BCO (BCO 2.8.2.8). Any applicable exceptions or reservations must also be submitted in writing before approval by the RAE. BCO 2.8.2.7 and 2.8.2.8 describe this process.
7. Schedule an Ordination Service. After these requirements are met, the local church publicly announces a date for an official ordination service. In that service, the candidate and congregation publicly affirm a series of questions stipulated in BCO 2.8.2.9. Then the elders lay hands on the candidate and publicly commend him to God through prayer.

#### **4. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY THE REGIONAL ORDINATION COMMITTEE**

The following documents must be submitted as an ordination packet to the ROC 60 days prior to the candidate's oral exam. The candidate will provide his eldership with all of the following items except #2, which will be completed by the eldership, and #s 4-5, which will be proctored by the local eldership. The entire ordination packet will then be sent by the local eldership to the chairman of the ROC.

1. Self-evaluation questions from the elder candidate (evaluation guide provided)
2. Local elder team evaluation questions of elder candidate (evaluation guide provided)
3. Statement of any reservations or disagreements the candidate may have with the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith.
4. Bible knowledge exam (provided by the ROC; proctored by local eldership, graded by ROC)
5. Graded Theology exam (provided by the ROC; proctored by local eldership, graded by ROC)
6. Ordination paper 1 (750-1000 words): Soteriology<sup>1</sup>
7. Ordination paper 2 (750-1000 words): Continuationism
8. Ordination paper 3 (750-1000 words): Expository preaching
9. Ordination paper 4 (750-1000 words): Complementarianism
10. Ordination paper 5 (750-1000 words): Sexual ethics
11. Ordination paper 6 (750-1000 words): Mission of the church
12. Sermon manuscript and audio/video recording of the sermon

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 6, p. 17, for the specific topics for Ordination Papers.

## 5. LOCAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The following sets of questions are for use by the candidate and also by the local eldership. The purpose is to help a man think through his strengths and weaknesses, and to give the elders a comprehensive evaluation. But remember: we all stumble in many ways! The goal here is not the documentation of perfection, but an honest assessment of where God is at work and where growth is needed. Be honest, be open, and remember: only the chief Shepherd receives a perfect grade!

### Self-Evaluation Questions

Each elder candidate should provide written answers to the following questions. These will be reviewed by the local eldership, as well as sent on to the ROC prior to taking the written and oral exams.

#### *Personal*

For questions 1-9, answer yes or no. If the answer is yes, please provide an explanation.

1. Are there any current battles with sin that, in your opinion, would potentially prevent you from being an elder?
2. Are there any previous sins or situations that, in your opinion, if they were to become known would prevent you from being able to continue as an elder?
3. Do you have a current parenting situation that we should be concerned about?
4. Were you previously married?
5. Are there any specific marriage conflicts or struggles that we should be concerned about?
6. Have you been convicted of a crime other than minor traffic citations?
7. Have you been accused of a crime involving a child?
8. Have you ever declared bankruptcy?
9. Would another church be offended, have objections, or have any concerns and/or questions if they heard that you were to be an elder in our church?

#### *Ministry*

- What is your ministry experience?
- What formal training have you had, including any degrees earned?
- Do you desire to be an elder provided the evaluation process goes well?
- Are you willing to walk through this process with an open attitude, trusting the Lord with the final result?

**Local Elder Team Evaluation Questions**

These will be completed by the local eldership and submitted to the ROC with the ordination packet (see section 4: “Required Documents by the Regional Ordination Committee). The reason for including personal character and a man’s leadership in the home is not because the ROC is responsible to evaluate the candidate in these areas (although the personal knowledge/experience that a regional pastor may have of the candidate is legitimate to explore). This evaluation functions *primarily* as a commendation from the local elders and ensures that a thorough evaluation has been done locally.

**Desire for Pastoral Ministry: "If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." (1 Tim 3:1)**

*The goal here is to assess whether the man feels a personal sense of calling and whether others can also attest to that calling. However, the role itself is demanding enough that a man must have a strong sense of calling and desire.*

Category	Very Strong	Strong	Average	Weak	Very Weak
1. Has a desire to be an elder (1 Tim 3:1)					
2. Has a personal sense of calling					
3. Spouse also confirms this sense of calling					
4. Other leaders—family, friends, home group, elders of SGC, pastors, regional leader, regional ordination committee, etc.—affirm this sense of calling					
Any additional comments on this section:					

**Personal Character, "Above Reproach" (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)**

*The goal here is to assess the man's character. There are specific areas of character mentioned in the pastoral texts, but the New Testament gives us other areas that should also be included in the evaluation (e.g., Matt 22:36ff.). Moreover, since pastors are to be examples to their congregations (1 Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:3), there is particular application to them of the full range of Christian virtues. As with all areas, the requirement is not*



*perfection, but there should be clear evidence that the man possesses exemplary character.*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Very Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Very Weak</b>
1. Spirituality: An evident love of God demonstrated by a spiritual mindset, spiritual disciplines, and passion in worship (Matt 22:36ff.)					
2. Prayer/Spiritual Disciplines: Has a long track-record of regular prayer and personal Bible reading.					
3. Hospitality: Committed to fellowship and consistent with hospitality (sharing his life and resources with others)					
4. Humility: Sees need for input and then asks for it and acts on it; receives correction well; confesses sin regularly; postures himself as a learner, a student; not controlled by selfish-ambition and a "title" (1 Peter 5:5-6; Prov 28:13)					
5. Servant: Demonstrates a servant's heart (Matt 20:25-26)					
6. Life: Diligently watches his life and teaching and demonstrates growth in both (1 Tim 4:12-16)					
7. Sexual purity: Not addicted to pornography, has been faithful to his wife, and relates to the opposite sex in a godly manner (1 Tim 3:2-3, 5:2)					
8. Self-control: Time, physical health, finances, personal habits, and other miscellaneous areas all demonstrate self-control					
9. Gentleness: Able to be gentle and self-controlled in conflict (1 Tim 3:3; 2 Tim 2:24-25; Titus 1:7)					

10. Love: Proactive with people, takes interest in others, listens and converses well, not aloof or preoccupied or unable to relate (Phil 2:1-4; 1 Cor 13; etc.)					
Any additional comments on this section:					

**Marriage (Eph 5:25ff.; 1 Tim 3:2, 4; 1 Peter 3:7)**

*The goal here is to assess the man's marriage. There should be unity, affection, understanding, love, and the fruit of godly leadership. How long the man has been married, the spiritual journey of the husband and wife, and other factors will be weighed.*

Category	Very Strong	Strong	Average	Weak	Very Weak
1. Faithful to his wife for their entire marriage					
2. Not addicted to pornography or given to other areas of sexual sin					
3. Takes initiative in the marriage to build their relationship (e.g., creates time alone for them as a couple, etc.)					
4. Wife would testify that the husband both loves her affectionately and leads her well					
5. Husband takes initiative in spiritual matters in the marriage (e.g., makes decisions for the sake of their spiritual health such as inquiring about her Bible reading and prayer, initiating spiritual conversation, etc.)					
6. Wife can testify that the husband honors and cherishes her with his actions and his words—both in public and in private					

7. Wife submitted to her husband appropriately—not cowering as a doormat, but complementary as a helpmate					
Any additional comments on this section:					

**Parenting (1 Tim 3:4-5; Titus 1:6; Eph 6:4)**

*The goal here is to assess the man as a father. The primary fruit to examine is his children. Their submission to him reveals his godliness and faithfulness as a manager of his home. This is an area that is difficult to assess infallibly because the heart of the child is a factor along with the father. Yet, the Bible clearly and emphatically holds up our children as part of the evidence of our calling as an elder.*

Category	Very Strong	Strong	Average	Weak	Very Weak
1. Children are submitted to his leadership—not in cowering fear, but in a willing sincerity					
2. Discipling his children in the fear of the Lord—incorporating formal elements like family Bible reading and informal elements like spontaneous conversations and situational guidance/counseling					
3. Children are submitted to the spiritual direction of the father—attending the church where he attends, complying with the spiritual initiatives of the father, even if they are not regenerate					
4. Does not lead in anger but with self-control and humility					
5. Faithful to discipline his children in age-appropriate and situation-appropriate ways					
6. Manages his home well generally—caring for his family’s financial health, stewarding well their physical property, family schedule is under control; a general appearance of wise leadership in all domestic matters					
Any additional comments on this section:					

**"Able to teach" (1 Tim 3:2; 2 Tim 2:15; Titus 1:9)**

*The goal here is to assess the candidate's basic teaching ability. It is assumed that he will be evaluated based on his Sunday preaching ability, yet we also understand that different elders will be called upon to teach in a variety of settings. Some will not teach at all on Sundays, some in a mix of venues, some exclusively on Sundays. Although certain qualities that point to an authentic spiritual gift should be present, there is a wide range of gifting that constitutes being "able to teach."*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Very Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Very Weak</b>
1. Demonstrates the ability to clearly communicate the truth of God's Word					
2. Able to exegete a text of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments					
3. Able to apply the truth from God's Word to the lives of those in his church					
4. The power of the Spirit is evident (i.e., there is apparent unction and effect when he preaches; he preaches sermons, does not give lectures)					

5. A track-record of consistent study (recognizing we all differ greatly in our particular interests and energy in our studies)					
6. Broad grasp of the Bible, systematic theology, biblical theology, and church history (see below for more on the ordination exams)					
Any additional comments on this section:					

**"Overseer" (Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 3:5; 5:17)**

*The goal here is to assess the leadership of the candidate. Different roles on a church staff require different levels of leadership gifting, but since leadership is inherent to the task of being an elder (Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 3:5; 5:17), this gifting must be present in some measure.*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Very Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Very Weak</b>
1. Able to create and execute a plan for ministry					
2. Able to organize people—defining their tasks, communicating the vision, building a team					
3. Able to communicate clearly in general matters (typical conversation, informal advice, etc.)					
4. Able to follow-through on a ministry plan					

5. Has a track-record of discipleship and building into others, especially those on his team					
6. Makes good decisions about groups of people—identifying the needs, creating a way to meet those needs, anticipating the impact of decisions					
7. Able to manage tasks well					
8. Able to both lead a team of people and be a contributing member of a team					
9. Able to steward resources: thinking through the budget of the church with some amount of wisdom and skill					
Any additional comments on this section:					

**"Shepherd": "Shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28, NASB; 1 Peter 5:1-4)**

*The goal here is to assess the candidate's ability to shepherd the sheep God might entrust to him. The role of a shepherd is a combination of anticipating and meeting needs, leading, protecting, and possessing a sincere concern for God's sheep. All must be present for an elder to serve well.*

Category	Very Strong	Strong	Average	Weak	Very Weak
1. Cares for people (carries them on his heart and expresses that personally)					
2. Can relate to a broad spectrum of people					
3. Ministers to encourage, edify, and serve, not to domineer or control.					

4. Does not manipulate to win the loyalties of people					
5. Ministers for the sake of others, not personal ambition or reputation					
6. Able to counsel those who are struggling with wisdom from the Bible					
7. Able to help others grow by incorporating the truth of the Bible					
8. Able to identify the needs of a particular sheep and the whole flock					
9. Able to see the dangers inside and outside the church that could hurt the sheep entrusted to him					
10. Able to see the dangers for a particular sheep					
11. Fulfills his role as shepherd with an awareness that he is merely an under-shepherd who is serving the "Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4)					
Any additional comments on this section:					

**Doctrine: "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." (Titus 1:9)**

*The goal here is to assess the general knowledge of the candidate. To teach and defend sound doctrine requires a broad knowledge of the Bible, theology, church history, and the distinctives of SG churches. A candidate does not need a PhD in theology to be ordained, but he does need to be able to function well in the common tasks of pastoral ministry, which have at their root the truth of God's word. These include counseling, teaching, evangelizing, and the defense of the faith that happens on such occasions. As with teaching (see above), there is a spectrum of abilities and giftings that would constitute meeting the requirement here.*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Very Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Very Weak</b>
1. Has a good grasp of the Old and New Testaments.					
2. Has a good command of systematic theology (see section XII for more on this issue)					
3. Has a good knowledge of the key moments of church history					
4. Understands and is in full agreement with the SGC Book of Church Order					
5. Understands and is in full agreement with the SGC Statement of Faith					
6. Any reservations or disagreements with the SG Statement of Faith have been identified, explored, and determined to be acceptable: Yes or no.					
Any additional comments on this section:					



## 6. ORDINATION PAPERS

To help evaluate a candidate's qualifications, the following papers should be written and submitted to the ROC. The paper topics are drawn primarily from the shared values of Sovereign Grace Churches. Each paper should be between 750-1000 words, typed and double-spaced, and supported with Scripture. A written sermon manuscript, and audio or video recording of the sermon, is also required. (Note: this does not necessarily mean a Sunday morning sermon, although that is ideal. The only requirement is that the sermon that is submitted reflect the man's own exegesis and study.)

1. Describe your views on soteriology using the traditional components of the *ordo salutis*.
2. What does it mean to be continuationist in pneumatology? Explain your beliefs about the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the church.
3. What is expositional preaching, and why does it matter in the life of the church?
4. What is your view on the respective roles of men and women? Include how this applies in the church and in the home. Is it appropriate for a woman to address a mixed-gender audience? How about preaching to the entire congregation?
5. Discuss your view of the Bible's position on sexual ethics, briefly addressing the issues of homosexuality, same-sex attraction, and transgenderism. Include in your paper whether terms like "sexual orientation" or "gay Christian" are helpful categories.
6. What is the mission of the church? Does the local church have any responsibility for the advance of the gospel in other nations? Does it have any responsibility to transform the culture of its own nation? What is your role as a pastor in these areas?
7. Sermon manuscript and audio/video recording of the sermon.

## 7. STUDY GUIDE FOR ORDINATION EXAMS

### 1. Bible Knowledge Exam

The Bible Knowledge exam is an online, 166 question, 3-hour exam. All questions are short answer or multiple choice in format. This exam will test your general biblical literacy (genre awareness, location of major events in Scripture, main messages of books, general awareness of biblical theology/redemptive history). The following resources will serve as useful general introductions.

- *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Tremper Longman and Raymond Dillard, ch. 1
- *An Introduction to the New Testament*, D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo: ch. 1
- “The Theology of the Old Testament” in *ESV Study Bible*: pp. 29-31
- “Introduction to the Pentateuch” in *ESV Study Bible*: pp. 35-37
- “Introduction to the Historical Books” in *ESV Study Bible*: pp. 385-387
- “Introduction to the Poetic and Wisdom Literature” in *ESV Study Bible*: pp. 865-868
- “Introduction to the Prophetic Books” in *ESV Study Bible*: pp. 1229-1232
- “The Theology of the New Testament” in *ESV Study Bible*: pp. 1803-1805
- “Reading the Gospels and Acts” in *ESV Study Bible*: pp. 1811-1813
- “Reading the Epistles” in *ESV Study Bible*: pp. 2147-2149
- Introductions to individual books of the Bible in *ESV Study Bible*
- *An Introduction to the New Testament*, D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo.
- *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, Jason DeRouchie.
- “Biblical Theology” (pp. 3-11) in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy
- “Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology” (pp. 89-104) in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy
- “Biblical History” (pp.43-51) in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy

Here are 15 sample questions that will give you a feel for the nature of the test:

*Multiple choice – Select the best answer*

1. On what day of creation did God create man?  
a) First b) Fourth c) Sixth d) Seventh
2. Which prophet anointed David as king?  
a) Isaiah b) Jeremiah c) Samuel d) Hosea
3. When the kingdom divided after King Solomon’s reign, which two tribes were part of the southern kingdom?

- a) Manasseh and Ephraim
- b) Benjamin and Judah
- c) Gad and Asher
- d) Billy and Bob

4. Which section of Genesis focuses on Abraham?

- a) Chapters 6-9
- b) Chapters 12-24
- c) Chapters 27-36
- d) Chapters 37-50

*In what book and chapter do the following appear? Both must be correct to receive credit.*

- 5. The armor of God \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. The words "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" in the OT  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7. A vision of Christ among the lampstands \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. "An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels."  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Name the person who said or did the following:*

- 9. The religious leader to whom Jesus says "You must be born again"? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Who said "I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish"?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 11. To whom did God make the promise "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." \_\_\_\_\_

*Fill in the blank:*

- 12. What book of the Bible comes after Ezra? \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Which prophet said "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Which book of the Bible is best summarized by the following: "The ascended Lord continues his activity of growing his church and saving the lost through the empowering Spirit of God and the unstoppable Word of God"? \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. In which covenant does God promise to preserve his creation and say he will never again curse the ground because of man? \_\_\_\_\_

The Theology Exam is a written exam that focuses on explaining and/or defending the SG Statement of Faith from the Scriptures. All questions are derived from categories and doctrines in the Statement of Faith, including terminology and concepts in the footnotes of the Editor's Edition. We strongly encourage all candidates to master the specific affirmations and denials highlighted in the Editor's Edition of every section of the Statement of Faith as part of their study process.

The exam is a two-part written exam that must be taken online. Part 1 covers material from "The Scriptures" through "The Person of Jesus Christ." Part 2 covers material from "The Saving Work of Christ" through "Last Things." Each part contains 14 essay questions which the candidate must complete in 4 hours or less, which comes to about 17 minutes per question. Questions do not give equal weight to every section of the Statement of Faith; some receive more attention than others. For example, in Part 1, 3 of the 14 questions focus on "The Scriptures" and in Part 2, only 1 of the 14 questions focuses on "Life in Christ."

### **Theology Exam Part 1**

*14 questions total, 4 hours*

- The Scriptures
- The Triune God
- God's Sovereign Purposes
- Creation, Providence, and Man
- Man's Sin and Its Effects
- The Person of Jesus Christ

### **Theology Exam Part 2**

*14 questions total, 4 hours*

- The Saving Work of Christ
- The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit
- The Gospel and the Application of Salvation by the Holy Spirit
- The Empowering Ministry of the Spirit
- Life in Christ
- The Church of Christ
- The Last Things

It is important that you pace yourself; the online exam portal will close when the 4-hour time limit has expired. Answers should be concise and in paragraph form (not in bullet point or outline form) and include sufficient Scriptural support, including chapter references. The candidate is permitted to use an unmarked Bible during both Part 1 and Part 2.

Part 1 must be taken and passed before Part 2, and candidates are not allowed to take both parts at the same time. Study for Part 1 and pass the exam. Then study for Part 2 and pass the exam. The Regional Ordination Committee will assign a grade to each question on a 10-point

scale, using the sample responses provided for each question as a baseline. There are 140 points possible for each exam. A score of 105 (75%) is a passing grade.

The exam below represents the kind of questions that are included on both parts of the Theology Exam. It is intended to serve two purposes: first, to give the Council of Elders an example of what the new proposed Theology Exam will be like, and second to be used as a study resource for future ordination candidates.

## **The Scriptures**

Question 1: Can Scripture ever contradict itself? Include reference to the doctrine of God and the nature and purpose of Scripture in your answer.

Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?

- God is the ultimate Author of Scripture, and thus the trustworthiness of God is the guarantor of the trustworthiness of Scripture.
- Scripture is not a human document, but a divine revelation; and its purpose is to reveal God's plan of salvation – hence contradictions would imply an inability in God to achieve his purpose through this chosen means.

Question 2: What does it mean to say the canon of Scripture is closed? How do both the closing of the canon, and the authority of Scripture, relate to the gift of New Testament prophecy?

Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?

- Demonstrate awareness of the climactic nature of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension/Pentecost, and the apostolic witness to these events, as marking the close of the canon and the fullness of revelation.
- Distinction between Scripture as final revelation, and all spiritual gifts (prophecy, tongues, etc.) as under the authority of Scripture.

## **The Triune God**

Question: what does it mean to say that God is transcendent? Include in your answer whether or not the transcendent God can reveal himself to finite human beings.

Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?

- Defining transcendence in relation to the Creator-creature distinction, who creates all things and for whom all creation exists. See the SoF subsection, "The Nature of God" and its references to the relationship between God and his creation.
- The distinction between God's incomprehensibility in himself, and his ability to reveal himself truly (though not exhaustively) to us. See the last sentence in "The Nature of God" and the explanation in the Editor's Edition of the SoF.

## **God's Sovereign Purposes**

Question: does God elect individuals to salvation based on his foreknowledge of their belief? Defend your answer from Scripture.

Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?

- The gracious and free nature of God's election, as explained in the subsection "God's Grace in Election."
- Adequate Scripture references (for examples, see the Scriptural footnotes in the SoF under the subsection "God's Grace in Election")

## **The Saving Work of Christ**

Question: are repentance and faith in Christ a gift from God, or a human work that merits salvation? Give Scriptural support for your answer, and address whether repentance and faith in Christ are necessary for salvation.

Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?

- Repentance and faith are a gift secured by Christ's death for his people. (See the Scripture references in the paragraph on "The Efficacy of Christ's Work" in the SoF.
- If repentance and faith were meritorious, this would contradict Scriptures such as Romans 3:27, 4:5; Galatians 2:16, etc.
- However, Scripture also makes clear that no one will be saved apart from repentance and faith (e.g., Romans 10:9-11). Repentance and faith are not works, but they are necessary responses to the saving work of God which demonstrate the reality of true regeneration.

## **The Church of Christ**

Question: What are the marks of a true church? In what sense are true churches still imperfect?

Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?

- A true church is characterized by three things: the right preaching of the Word, the right administration of the sacraments, and the right exercise of church discipline
- A true church may contain a mixture of genuine believers and those who think they are believers, but are actually not, despite her best attempts to guard the spiritual integrity of her members
- Even genuine believers stumble in many ways and the congregation as a whole is no different. In a corporate sense, we remain prone to believing what is false (doctrinal error) and doing what is wrong (moral failure)

- The Lord’s sanctifying work will not be complete until the wedding supper of the Lamb where he will present the church to himself in spotless radiance

### 3. Study Resources for Theology Exam

In what follows below you will find suggested resources organized by each section heading in the Statement of Faith. However, remember that your primary resource should be the Statement of Faith itself! Make sure especially that you use the “Editor’s Edition” (available online at <https://webelieve.sovereigngrace.com/editors-edition>). The footnotes in this version explain the rationale behind each major section heading, as well as subheadings. A useful study procedure incorporating the Statement of Faith, the Editor’s Edition, and the recommended resources might look something like this:

1. Read the text of the Statement of Faith for a major section (e.g., “The Scriptures”), looking up each the Scripture reference.
2. Read the Editor’s Edition for this same section, noting the rationale and explanations given for each major section and sub-section.
3. Assess yourself: are there issues involved in either the Statement of Faith text, or the Editor’s Edition explanations, that you do not understand? Do you understand the Scriptural references, and the theological terms used?
  - a. If you generally understand the section but want to go deeper on a specific issue, consult one of the Supplemental resources listed below.
  - b. If the Scriptural basis or theological terminology used is very new to you, or if there are still significant issues of confusion after completing steps 1 and 2, then begin with the Foundational resources, reevaluate your understanding, and then consult Supplemental resources as needed.

Our standard reference remains Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*. The second edition, published in 2020, is the more current resource, and would be first choice if you are purchasing the book new. However, all chapter references remain the same between the first and second editions, so the recommended chapters will be the same if you already have the first edition and do not wish to purchase another volume. Grudem’s chapters are the basic Foundational resource recommended for each section.

As a companion to Grudem, we have also recommended Gregg Allison’s *Historical Theology*. This volume is designed to parallel the chapters in Grudem’s first edition (though the parallels remain fairly close with Grudem’s second edition), and it provides a basic historical survey of the doctrine in question. Knowing the historical context, the range of legitimate theological formulations, and what the church has historically regarded as heretical departures of any given doctrine is always helpful, and in many places will help you understand specific language in our Statement of Faith.

While Grudem remains our first choice for deeper study of the Statement of Faith, candidates will benefit tremendously from familiarity with other systematic theologians, especially in the Reformed tradition. Hence we have recommended relevant chapters in the works of Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck in our Supplemental reading sections. There are three different Bavinck volumes listed below. Except in cases where maximum breadth of reading is desired, we recommend you choose one volume and use the appropriate sections in that work. The annotations below will help you decide which Bavinck work to choose. (It is worth noting that, as a Reformed theologian, Bavinck's position on baptism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit is markedly different than our Statement of Faith. Be aware of this difference as you read. We have not included in our recommendations references in his texts that deal explicitly with these topics.)

- a. Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* in four volumes is the largest, most comprehensive of his works of systematic theology. The chapters are demanding, but greatly rewarding. Choose this as your source if time is not an issue in your study plan, or if you want greatest exposure to the historical development of the doctrines in question.
- b. *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume* manages to significantly reduce the four-volume work, while retaining much of Bavinck's insights. A primary way this reduction takes place is by removing most of the historical theology from the larger four volume series. If time is an issue, or you want clear theological articulation without the historical discussion, choose this volume of Bavinck.
- c. *The Wonderful Works of God* is a recently republished (2019) volume (originally entitled *Our Reasonable Faith*) which Bavinck wrote for a broader Christian audience of his day. This means that, in some cases, Bavinck treats a number of doctrines under one larger chapter heading, so the reader looking to go by chapter title alone may have trouble locating the relevant discussion. Choose this volume for a concise, but still masterful, exposition of the Reformed faith.

Beyond Grudem, Allison, and Bavinck, we have recommended selections from what we think to be the best resources on the doctrines in question. Choose as many (or as few) of these as you think necessary on areas you desire further study or need extra reinforcement.

## THE SCRIPTURES

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 2-8
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 2-8

### Supplemental:

- *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin, Book 1, chs. 1-7
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol 1: Prolegomena*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 10, 11, and 13



- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 4-5.
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 7-8.
- *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, Goldsworthy, "The Canon of Scripture," "Scripture."
- *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, B.B. Warfield: esp. chs. 1 and 3
- *Taking God at His Word*, Kevin DeYoung
- *God Has Spoken*, J.I. Packer
- *Words of Life*, Timothy Ward

## THE TRIUNE GOD

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs. 9-14
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 9-13

### Supplemental:

- The Apostle's Creed and The Nicene Creed (contained in Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p.1169)
- *The Holy Trinity*, Robert Letham (chs. 1-3, 17)
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 2: God and Creation*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 3-6.
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 9.
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 9-10
- *Delighting in the Trinity*, Michael Reeves
- *The Deep Things of God*, Fred Sanders
- *Doctrine of God*, John Frame, chs. 17-29
- *The Trinity: An Introduction*, Scott R. Swain

## GOD'S SOVEREIGN PURPOSES

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, ch. 16
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 21

### Supplemental:

- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 2: God and Creation*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 7.
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 9.

- *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin, Book 1, Chs. 16-18; Book 3, Chs. 21-24
- *The Doctrine of God*, John Frame, ch. 5.
- *Providence*, John Piper, chs. 2-4
- *Chosen for Life: The Case for Divine Election*, Sam Storms
- *Chosen by God*, R.C. Sproul
- *Chosen in Christ*, Cornelis Venema

## **CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND MAN**

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 21-25
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch.15

### Supplemental:

Note: because of the wide variety of challenging current issues related to complementarianism and sexual ethics, we have divided these supplemental resources into separate categories. These resources will help you both with preparing for the first Theology Exam, as well as with writing ordination papers #4 and 6.

### General Treatments of the Doctrine of Creation, Providence, and Man:

- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 2: God and Creation*, Herman Bavinck, chs.11-12.
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 11.
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 12.
- *Providence*, John Piper
- *Created in God's Image*, Anthony Hoekema, chs. 1-6
- *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy: "Image of God," "Man and Woman," "Marriage."

### Complementarianism:

- *What's the Difference?*, John Piper
- *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem
- *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, Wayne Grudem
- *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction*, Kevin DeYoung
- *God's Design for Man and Woman*, Andreas & Margaret Köstenberger
- *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, eds. Köstenberger and Schreiner

### Sexual Ethics and Current Issues:

- *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*, Robert Gagnon
- *What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?*, Kevin DeYoung

- *God and the Transgender Debate*, Andrew Walker
- *When Harry Became Sally*, Ryan Anderson
- *Gender Ideology: What Do Christians Need to Know?* Sharon James

## **MAN'S SIN AND ITS EFFECTS**

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: Ch. 24.
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 16

### Supplemental:

- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, Herman Bavinck, chs.1-4.
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 12-13
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 13
- *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, edited by Christopher W. Morgan & Robert Peterson: chs. 1 & 4-6.
- *Created in God's Image*, Anthony Hoekema, chs. 7-9
- *Not the Way It's Supposed To Be*, Cornelius Plantinga: Ch. 1-7.
- *What is Evil?*, Scott Christensen: Ch. 3.

## **THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST**

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 26
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 17

### Supplemental:

- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 6
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 14
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 16
- The Chalcedonian Creed and the Athanasian Creed (contained in Grudem, pp. 1169-1170)
- *God the Son Incarnate*, Stephen Wellum
- *The Person of Christ: An Introduction*, Stephen Wellum
- *The Person of Christ*, Donald Macleod

## **THE SAVING WORK OF JESUS CHRIST**

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 27-29
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 18-19

Supplemental:

- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 7-8
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 15-16
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 17-18
- *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray: Part 1, chapters 1-5
- “What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution,” J.I. Packer, in *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, J.I. Packer & Mark Dever, pp. 53-100
- *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin: Book 2, chs. 12-17
- *The Cross of Christ*, John Stott (esp. chs. 5-7)
- *Christ Crucified*, Donald Macleod (esp. chs. 4-11)
- *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, eds. Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach (esp. chs. 1-4, 6-7, 11)
- *The Work of Christ*, Robert Letham
- *Christ Alone: The Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior*, Stephen Wellum, chs. 7-8
- *The Atonement*, Leon Morris

## THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: ch. 30
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 20

Supplemental:

- *The Holy Spirit*, Sinclair Ferguson: chs. 1-2
- *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy: “The Holy Spirit,” pp. 551-558
- *He Who Gives Life*, Graham Cole, chs. 2-8
- *The Holy Spirit*, Gregg Allison & Andreas Kostenberger

## THE GOSPEL AND THE APPLICATION OF SALVATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs 32-38, 40

- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 22-25

#### Supplemental:

- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 9
- *Reformed Dogmatics Vol 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 1-4
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 17-20
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 20-22
- *Institutes of Christian Religion*, John Calvin (Book 3)
- *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray: Part 2, chapters 1-10
- *Saved by Grace*, Anthony Hoekema
- "Reformed View," Sinclair Ferguson, in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald Alexander
- "What is the Gospel?—Revisited," D. A. Carson, in *For the Fame of God's Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper* (pp. 147-70), eds. Sam Storms & Justin Taylor ([http://tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/carson/2010\\_gospel.pdf](http://tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/carson/2010_gospel.pdf))
- *What is the Gospel?*, Greg Gilbert
- *Finally Alive*, John Piper
- *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology*, Robert Letham
- *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification*, Thomas Schreiner
- *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine*, J.V. Fesko (chs. 5, 7, 9-12)
- *Run to Win the Prize*, Thomas Schreiner
- *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, J.I. Packer
- *Progressive Covenantalism*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (chs. 2-3)

## **THE EMPOWERING MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT**

#### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs. 39, 52-53

#### Supplemental:

- *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, ed. Wayne Grudem
- *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, Wayne Grudem
- *Showing the Spirit*, D.A. Carson
- *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, Max Turner, esp. chs. 10, 15
- *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, Gordon Fee

## **LIFE IN CHRIST**

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, ch. 43

### Supplemental:

- *Holiness*, J.C. Ryle
- *How Does Sanctification Work?* David Powlison
- “Reformed View,” Sinclair Ferguson, in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald Alexander
- *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor
- *How Long, O Lord*, D.A. Carson

## **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 44-46, 48-50
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 26, 28-29

### Supplemental:

Note: because of the large number of doctrinal issues discussed here, the recommendations below are grouped by topic.

### General Treatments of Doctrine of the Church:

- *Reformed Dogmatics Vol 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 5
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 21
- “The Biblical Theology of the Church,” Edmund P. Clowney, in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D.A. Carson
- “The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Reality,” P.T. O’Brien, in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D.A. Carson
- *What is the Mission of the Church?* Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert
- *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*, Mark Dever
- *The Church*, Edmund Clowney
- *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*, Gregg R. Allison, chs. 1-6
- *The Church: An Introduction*, Gregg R. Allison

### Church Offices:

- *40 Questions About Elders and Deacons*, Benjamin Merkle
- *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, Alexander Strauch
- Note also the relevant chapters in, e.g., Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (ch. 47); Allison, *Sojourners* (ch. 7); and Allison, *The Church* (ch. 7)

#### Baptism:

- *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy: "Baptism," pp. 395-397
- *Believer's Baptism*, eds. Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright (see esp. Introduction, chs. 3-4)
- *Baptism in the New Testament*, G.R. Beasley-Murray

#### The Lord's Supper:

- *The Lord's Supper: Eternal Word in Broken Bread*, Robert Letham
- *Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper*, ed. John Armstrong
- *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ Until He Comes*, eds. Thomas Schreiner and Matthew Crawford

## THE LAST THINGS

#### Foundational:

- *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs. 54-57
- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 31-33

#### Supplemental:

- *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, Herman Bavinck, chs.12-18
- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 23-25
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 24
- *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin, Book 3, chs. 18, 25
- *The Bible and the Future*, Anthony Hoekema
- *Christ and the Future*, Cornelius Venema
- "Amillennialism," Anthony Hoekema, in *The Meaning of Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert Clouse
- *The Meaning of Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert Clouse
- *Kingdom Come*, Sam Storms
- *The Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*, Dennis Johnson

#### **4. Oral Exam**

The Oral Exam focuses on personal, polity/partnership themes, and pastoral ministry. Follow up questions on the Bible Knowledge Exam, Theology Exam, and written papers may also be asked in the Oral Exam.

The exam will be taken with an open Bible. Candidates should be prepared to identify and support the seven shared values of SGC, have a general understanding of the Book of Church Order and SG polity, and be prepared to answer a broad range of questions related to pastoral ministry.

The goal of the pastoral ministry and counseling questions is to determine how well the candidate understands the nature of pastoral ministry according to Scripture, and to assess his ability to apply God's word in various situations.

Here are a few sample questions. These are not necessarily on the exam, but they give you a feel for the nature of the test:

1. Personal: Describe how God called you to pastoral ministry, and why you desire to be a pastor.
2. Polity/partnership: Describe the polity of Sovereign Grace. Include elder governance and plurality, extra-local leadership, and the role of the congregation.
3. Pastoral Ministry: What is the purpose of the weekly gathering of the church, and what should the church do when it gathers?
4. Pastoral Ministry: A gentleman in the New Members Class is having a hard time with the doctrine of election. He asks "Are you saying that some people cannot be saved? If that is true how could they also be judged for not believing in a God who did not predestine them to believe?" How do you answer him?