



Pastoral Ordination Exam

2023 EDITION

This resource is intended to be used by District Exam Board Leaders or INSPIRE representatives to Evaluate men for Pastoral Ordination.

Examination Procedure

(Step 3 of Ordination Procedure on the Website)

WRITTEN EXAM

Each candidate will complete a written exam based on questions relating to the **Charis Fellowship Identity Statement** and **Positions Statements**. This exam is intended to aid and protect local churches by assessing the candidate's theological understanding, doctrinal convictions, ministerial skills, personal life, integrity, and understanding of the mission of the church. This exam will be updated annually to reflect any changes in our Position Statements.

Typical exam length is 8 hours, but accommodations can be made for special circumstances. The candidate may use only a Bible without notes. For the integrity of the candidate, we suggest they take the exam under supervision or at a place where they can be monitored.

ORAL EXAM

Each candidate will prepare for and follow through with an Oral Exam where the district (or national) Examination Team will evaluate the candidate's application, references, written exam and report from the mentor. The focus of section one of the oral exam will be on areas of weakness, insufficiency, or clarification on the written exam (allow 60-90 minutes). The second section of the oral exam will focus on his personal life and ministry, which may include the application, references, and report from the mentor (allow 60-90 minutes).

The candidate should be told at the outset of the exam, that the district's decision to recommend them for ordination may be that same day or take up to a week to further communicate, pray, and clarify the examining team's decision.

The Examination Team's final recommendation will be based on the following Standard for Affirmation.

STANDARDS FOR AFFIRMATION

1. The candidate has a mastery level understanding of Scripture, the Gospel, theology and doctrine so that he can adequately teach others.
2. The candidate has a clear understanding of the mission of the church.
3. The candidate has solid Christian character, discernment and ability in ministry.
4. The candidate has the support of his spouse (if married) and has healthy relationships.
5. The candidate has a clear understanding of his calling in pastoral ministry.

6. The candidate agrees to cooperate harmoniously and walk with integrity within the Charis Fellowship Family:
 - a. That is part of the Evangelical community.
 - b. Whose ordinances are triune immersion and threefold communion.
 - c. Whose eschatology follows a pre-millennial hermeneutic.
 - d. That believes the eldership of the church has been given to men.
 - e. That believes in the security of the believer.
7. The candidate intends to be intentional about his relationships with the Charis Fellowship Family.



INSPIRE

Written Ordination Examination

Endorsed Nationally in 2017 (Updated 2023)

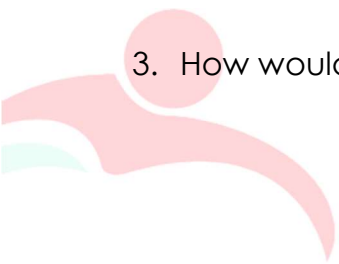
This exam is designed to measure your ability to think theologically and to measure your orthodoxy. Your answers should be concise and you should use Scripture wherever possible (listing Bible references is acceptable). However, show how that passage establishes your point whenever you can. This is an open Bible exam. You have 8 hours to complete it.

The One True God (Theology Proper)

1. How has God revealed Himself?

2. How would you defend the statement, "There is only one God"?

3. How would you explain the doctrine of the tri-unity of God.



INSPIRE

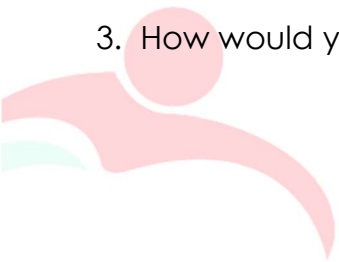
4. How would you explain the word attribute as it relates to God? What are some of the attributes of God we see in Scripture?

The Lord Jesus Christ (Christology)

1. Scripture from both the Old and New Testaments, how would you defend the deity of Christ?

2. How would you explain the fact that Jesus is both divine and human?

3. How would you explain the theological implications of Jesus' virgin birth?



INSPIRE

4. How would you explain the importance of Jesus' death?

5. How would you explain the significance of Jesus' resurrection?

6. How would you explain Jesus' ministry today?

The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

1. How would you explain the personhood of the Holy Spirit?

INSPIRE

2. How would you explain the deity of the Holy Spirit?

3. How would you explain the following ministries of the Holy Spirit? Please include the time when each ministry takes place, its duration, whether it is a one time or repeated experience, and its purpose.

a. baptism of the spirit

b. sealing of the Spirit

c. filling of the Spirit

d. indwelling of the Spirit

e. convicting of the Holy Spirit

f. illumination of the Spirit

g. gifts of the Spirit



INSPIRE

The Bible (Bibliology)

1. How would you explain the following terms as they relate to the Bible?

a. Inspiration

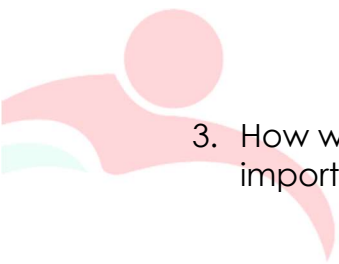
b. revelation (including both special and general revelation)

c. inerrancy

d. canon

2. Citing specific passages, what claims does the Bible make for itself?

3. How would you explain your hermeneutical approach to Scripture, and why is it important?



INSPIRE

1. How would you explain the origin of the human race?
2. How would you explain your understanding of roles in God's design for marriage?
3. How would you explain the creation design for human sexuality?



INSPIRE

4. How would you explain the phrase "image of God" in Genesis 1:26-27? What does this look like at creation, after the fall of man, and at the new birth?

5. In what ways are men and women created equal? In what ways are they created differently?

6. How would you explain the doctrine of total depravity? How does it affect your understanding of our need for salvation?



INSPIRE

Salvation – (Soteriology)

1. How would you explain the roles each member of the Trinity plays in our salvation?

2. How would you explain the following terms as they relate to our salvation?

a. Election

b. Regeneration

c. Redemption

d. Adoption

e. Justification

f. Sanctification



INSPIRE

g. Glorification

h. Grace

3. How would you explain the statement, "salvation is by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ alone"?

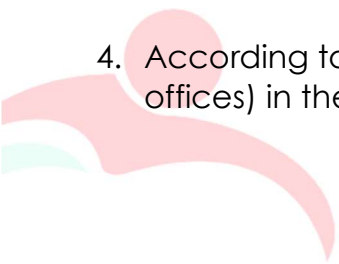
4. How would you explain the doctrine of eternal security?



INSPIRE

Church – (Ecclesiology)

1. How would explain the meaning of the word, “ekklesia” (church)?
2. How would you explain the similarities and distinctions between Israel and the church?
3. What is the mission of the church?
4. According to the New Testament, how would you explain the positions of authority (ie. offices) in the local church? What are their responsibilities?



5. How would you explain the difference between the local church, the universal church, and a fellowship of churches (ie. Charis Fellowship)?

Christian Life

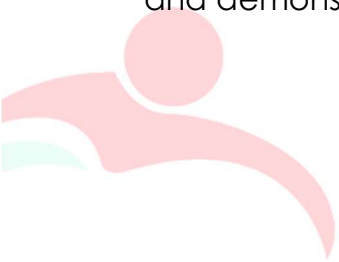
1. How would you explain what it means to be separate from the world but not of the world?
2. How does Scripture describe how a Christian grows to be more like Christ?
3. How would you explain our role as heavenly citizens living under the authority of an earthly government?



INSPIRE

Angels, Satan, Demons

1. How would you explain the origin and role of angels? Please include how angels are different from humans.
2. How would you explain Satan's origin, his current work in the world, as well as his ultimate destiny?
3. How would explain the limitations that God has placed upon Satan?
4. How would you explain the spiritual battle believers face, especially as it relates to Satan and demons? How do we win this battle?



INSPIRE

5. How would you explain the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27?

6. How would you explain any future for the nation of Israel in the plan of God?

Ordinances

1. What is an ordinance?

2. How is an ordinance different from a sacrament?



INSPIRE

3. Concerning the ordinance of Baptism:

a. How would you explain the significance of baptism?

b. How would you defend the practice of trine immersion?

c. How would you maintain the importance of baptism without unduly elevating it?

4. Concerning the ordinance of Communion:

a. How would you defend the practice of three-fold communion?

b. How would you explain the meaning behind each part of a three-fold communion service?



INSPIRE

History of The Charis Fellowship

1. What would you consider to be the watershed moments in the Charis Fellowship's history? Why are they important? What lessons (whether good or bad) should we learn from them?
2. How was the Charis Fellowship movement influenced by the Anabaptists and Pietists?
3. What are some of the philosophies and/or values that shape us as the Charis Fellowship of churches?



INSPIRE

Oral Exam Questions

After a candidate has taken the written portion of the ordination exam, his exam should be graded/assessed for theological accuracy and how his answers reflect the doctrinal positions of the Charis Fellowship as outlined in section two of the *Commitment to Common Identity*. This may be assessed and graded by the district ordination coordinator, and/or several pastors in the district. The district should give the candidate enough time to benefit from feedback on his written exam, before entering the oral exam.

The oral exam gives the candidate the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings/mistakes from the written exam, as well as demonstrate how his theology is practically applied to life and ministry. It is suggested that the first section of the oral exam be centered on the candidate's ability to communicate doctrine succinctly and accurately as per the Charis Identity Statement.

The second section of the exam should be centered on personal habits and relationships, as well as ministry practices. While mostly observed firsthand by the candidate's mentor, the district examining team will want to ask some specific questions in these areas as well. The proposed questions below reflect both aspects of the oral exam.

Suggestion: Each section of the oral exam should be kept to 60-90 minutes so that the exam does not exceed three hours. A break may be given between the two sections.

*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do,
you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

1 Timothy 4:16



INSPIRE

SECTION ONE: DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS

This first section reflects the theological portions of the STANDARD FOR AFFIRMATION:

- The candidate has a mastery level understanding of Scripture, the Gospel, theology and doctrine so that he can adequately teach others.
- The candidate agrees to cooperate harmoniously and walk with integrity within the Charis Fellowship Family:
 - That is part of the Evangelical community.
 - Whose ordinances are triune immersion and threefold communion.
 - Whose eschatology follows a pre-millennial hermeneutic.
 - That believes the eldership of the church has been given to men.
 - That believes in the security of the believer.

The district examining team will determine their use of these questions for this first section.

- The district ordination coordinator will inform the examining team of any areas of weakness or confusion from the written exam. The examining team will take this time to ask questions that allow the candidate to clarify, correct or expound on their written response.
- The following questions may help assess the doctrines covered in the written exam in the context of a ministry setting.

The One True God

- Is it possible to prove that there is a God? Can you do that without using a Bible?
- How can God be a God of love and a God of justice?
- How can you say you believe in one God when the Bible actually calls each member of the trinity "God."
- Many Christians believe the world was created in a literal 6 days. What do you think?

The Lord Jesus Christ

- Jesus was a great religious leader but so was Mohammed, Buddha and Brigham Young. How is he any different?

- The Bible says Jesus was tempted just like we are. First, there are a lot of things that Jesus didn't experience. And second, if you say he was God and could not sin then how could he really be tempted?
- If Jesus was really human, how can you say that he was never tainted by a sinful nature or that he didn't sin?
- How can Jesus actually pay for the sins of everybody?

The Holy Spirit

- The word spirit is synonymous with breath or air. How can you say the Holy Spirit is actually a person? Isn't he more like a ghost?
- How would you respond to someone who told you that a Christian is baptized with the Holy Spirit after he gets saved?
- If David prayed asking God not to take away the Holy Spirit from him should I be concerned about something like that?
- What is your understanding of sign gifts (tongues, miracles, prophecy, healing, etc.)? What is the role/application of sign-gifts in the church today?

The Bible

- I've been told that the KJV of the Bible is the only version that contains the true word of God. Is this true? How do I know what version to use?
- The Bible is true when it discusses spiritual matters. But is it always accurate when it comes to history and science?
- If the Bible was written so long ago, and in a different culture, how can we trust that it is still relevant today?
- Postmodern hermeneutics raises the question: "all interpretation, including the Bible, depends more on the person interpreting and not the intent of the author." Evaluate this statement.

Humanity

- My child is struggling with their identity. Where does a person's identity come from?
- Some people are really in need of forgiveness. We are not all the same when it comes to sin. Don't some people need God more than others?
- How can God call me accountable for Adam's mistakes?
- My last church ordained both male and female pastors and it seemed like a good thing. Why don't we have women as pastors?

Salvation

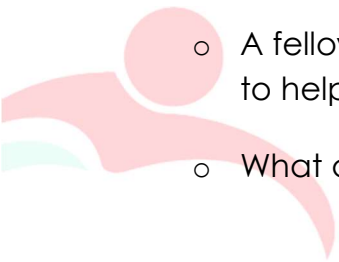
- Did I choose God or did God choose me?
- How can I be confident and assured that I'm going to heaven?
- Since Christ died only for the elect is there any reason we need to evangelize?
- I'm scared that I might commit the unpardonable sin and lose my salvation. How can I tell if I'm still saved?

Church

- The church I go to wants me to become a member. Is church membership in the Bible?
- Why are there so many different kinds of churches in my community? If we're all Christians, shouldn't we all just attend the same church?
- I went to one church and it was run by a pastor. Another church I went to was run by elders. What is the difference?
- How would you explain the process of church discipline? What is the desired outcome of this process?

Christian Life

- What advice would you give to someone who says they are "deconstructing their faith"?
- What advice would you give to your church congregation navigating political and ethical issues such as abortion, immigration, capital punishment, racial issues, etc.?
- A fellow Christian hit my car in the church parking lot and he hasn't done anything to help fix it. What should I do?
- What does practical discipleship look like in a church context?



Angels, Satan, Demons

- How would you respond to the following, "Satan and God are two cosmic forces. God of course is good and Satan is evil. How do we know who will win?"
- Can a believer be demon possessed? Explain.
- How would I respond to the following, "I just ignore Satan altogether because I know he has been defeated."
- How would you respond to the following, "Should we really be concerned about Ouija boards, seances and casting spells, isn't that all just for fun?"

Future Life

- Respond to the following, "I recently read a book that said God had so much love that he really wouldn't send people to hell. That really makes a lot of sense to me. Would you agree?"
- How would you respond to the following, "At the end of our lives, won't God give us a second chance?"
- How would you counsel someone who has just lost a loved one, who was a follower of Jesus? What if the loved one was an unbeliever?
- How would you respond to someone who says, "Won't hell with my friends be a lot more fun than heaven?"



SECTION TWO: QUESTIONS ON PERSONAL AND MINISTERIAL PRACTICES

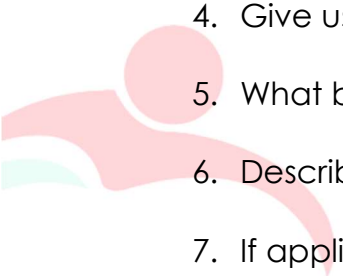
This second section reflects the practical, ministerial and personal portions of the STANDARD FOR AFFIRMATION:

- The candidate has a clear understanding of the mission of the church.
- The candidate has solid Christian character, discernment and ability in ministry.
- The candidate has the support of his spouse (if married) and has healthy relationships.
- The candidate has a clear understanding of his calling in pastoral ministry.
- The candidate intends to be intentional about his relationships with the Charis Fellowship Family.

The district examining team will determine their use of these questions for this second section.

*And David shepherded them with integrity of heart;
with skillful hands he led them.
Psalm 78:72.*

- The district ordination coordinator will inform the examining team of any items of note or areas of concern from the candidate's application, references, or mentor report. The examining team will take this time to ask questions that allow the candidate to explain or expound on any concerns or items of note.
- The following questions are to be used to evaluate the candidate's competency, skills, integrity, family, marriage, and personal and ministerial practices.
 1. Have you led a three-fold communion service? How did it go?
 2. What do you do to keep learning?
 3. How do you stay on top of cultural issues?
 4. Give us the steps you take to prepare a sermon.
 5. What books have you read recently? What did you learn?
 6. Describe your daily spiritual habits (bible reading, study, prayer, disciplines, etc.)
 7. If applicable, how do you keep your marriage healthy and thriving?
 8. If applicable, what do you do to intentionally train up your child(ren) in the Lord?
 9. How do you maintain integrity in your finances?



10. What is your understanding of the mission of the church?
11. Describe your relationship with your wife. What part does she play in your ministry as a pastor? What steps do you take to protect your marriage?
12. Describe your desire to shepherd God's people in His church? How certain are you that this is what you should be doing?
13. What is your relationship with the Charis Fellowship? How do you intend to connect, network and assist with the functioning and strengthening of the Charis Fellowship of pastors and churches?
14. What are some of your strengths and weakness in ministry and leadership?



INSPIRE