**Northwest Conference Ministerial Association**

**Committee on Ministerial Standing**

**Suggestions re: Ordination Paper Sections and Questions**

**Part One: Calling and Character**

* In addressing the “permanent credential”, address the question of your understanding of ordination specifically—its essential theological and professional significance, as well as its significance for you personally.
* Consider the difference between a call to vocational ministry generally and a call to a specific church or ministry. How will you honor the first recognizing that you can’t control the second?
* When addressing the issue of “pastoral identity,” how do you balance the concept of “call” with the potential for co-dependency (the personal “need” to be a pastor).
* Be specific in addressing ways you actively seek to build and maintain trust, and how you actively pursue and maintain personal and professional ethical standards. Articulate an understanding of why these issues matter. Remember that ethics are both *what* we do and *how* we do it.

**Part Two: Theological Competencies**

* Be clear and direct in your discussion of biblical inspiration and authority. What does it mean that the Bible is “inspired?” What are the nature, extent, *and implications* of biblical “authority?” Recall/reflect on our Covenant Affirmation regarding the Bible, and its relationship to the related issue of our affirmation concerning “Freedom in Christ.”
* When addressing the Kingdom of God, be able to address basic biblical teaching, the broader theological concept, as well as practical pastoral and missional implications.
* In addressing the Atonement, be able to demonstrate both an awareness of various “theories” as well as articulate your own conviction about the issue. Show that you have actively interacted with Waldenström’s work and understand its implications for both Covenant history/thought as well as practical ministry.
* Who is the Holy Spirit? Why do we affirm a “conscious dependence” on him? How does that affirmation inform your own work and the work of the Church as a whole?

**Part Three: Practical Pastoral Competencies**

* When addressing evangelism, consider the “both/and” nature of it—demonstration and proclamation. Be specific in addressing its role in your ministry. Why is evangelism even important?
* In discussing suffering and grief, be careful to not overemphasize your own personal experiences. Look for a balance between the two parts of the question and how personal experience can (appropriately) inform pastoral practice.
* When addressing preaching and teaching, be careful to distinguish between the two (what is one vs. the other?).
* In discussing human sexuality, be honest and direct in expressing your own understanding of the basic issues and how it does or does not align with the Covenant’s position and perspective. Remember that there are at least four basic areas that intersect here: biblical teaching, theological understanding, pastoral care, missional focus. Recognize also that lack of alignment with the ECC will likely result in more extensive engagement in the interview process.

**Part Four: Covenant Compatibility**

* Be sure to articulate an understanding of what a sacrament is (as opposed to an ordinance). Be clear on both similarities and difference between infant baptism and infant dedication, as well as infant and believer baptism.
* In discussing congregational polity, be sure to distinguish between the general principle(s) of congregational polity as opposed to specific governance structures (e.g. model constitutions). Be aware of both strengths and challenges associated with congregational polity, as well as other factors which can affect how it can function differently in different contexts. In addressing issues of pastoral authority, consider biblical, theological, and practical issues.
* When discussing issues of “advocacy,” consider both the responsibility to advocate for those on the “margins” as well as appropriate and necessary limits of advocacy (i.e. biblical mandates to not show “favoritism”).

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