

CORE TRAINING ORAL INTERVIEW PREPARATION QUESTIONS

Thank you for actively participating in the growth and development of a Core Training Leader (CTL) through focused mentorship.

As you are aware, the culmination of the CT process is an oral interview where the CTL will have the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to be theologically conversant on core Christian doctrine, Alliance distinctives, and culturally relevant issues.

The following is a suggested timeline over a 3-year period in which to help prepare and equip your CTL to not just 'cram for the right answer' in order to 'pass' an interview, but rather to help them integrate their theological understandings and convictions into their everyday life and ministry.

The following assumes a total of 12 sessions (once a quarter over a 3-year period). The hope/expectation is that your CTL will do some advance study & reflection on the questions pertinent to the agreed upon session timeline. The intention is that you as the mentor can ask any of the assigned questions for that session.

NOTE: As of February 2023, these questions are under review by the President and DS's – some changes could be coming to a finalized list.

This is only intended as guide to help maximize the preparation of your CTL. Please adapt timelines and priority topics at your discretion.

Session #1 – Year 1, Quarter 1 (Y1 Q1)

1. Personal History

Objective: Understanding the story of God at work in your life and how that connects to your ordination journey.

Key themes to explore: family, conversion to Christ, filling of the Spirit, baptism, call to ministry, fruit in ministry, journey with Jesus, spiritual gifting, discipling of people.

Primary Questions:

- a) Tell us about the significant events in your journey of faith (conversion, baptism, calling, etc.). What has brought you to this moment?
- b) What spiritual rhythms and practices keep you growing and abiding in Christ?
- c) How has God gifted you for ministry and how do you live out your giftedness in your current ministry role?
- d) Consider adding: "Tell us about any changes in your thoughts, beliefs, or practices since your licensing interview."

Supplemental Questions:

- a) Describe your experiences with local churches in prior years (positive or negative)?

- b) What does the Bible say about the nature of spiritual leadership? How do you embody these principles in your life and ministry?
- c) Why are you in ministry today?

Session #2 (Y1 Q2)

2. Alliance Theology, Missions, Polity, and Ethos

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of Alliance theology, missiology, polity, and practice.

Key themes to explore: Four-fold Gospel, deeper life and mission, missions, constituted authority, Statement of Faith

Primary Questions:

- a) Historically speaking, what has the Alliance been known for in theology and practice?
- b) Describe the Fourfold gospel as A.B Simpson articulated it.
- c) The Alliance is built upon the interplay of the deeper life and mission. What does this mean? How have you experienced this integration in your own life and ministry?
- d) Describe the structure of authority in an Alliance church. What is your attitude toward submitting to this authority?
- e) How will you lead your specific ministry into a focus on Alliance Missions?

Supplemental Questions:

- a) What do you consider to be the purpose and mission of the C&MA?
- b) In what sense does the Christian calling involve a missionary obligation for every believer and every church?
- c) Have you read and are you in full agreement with the current Statement of Faith? Have you struggled with any part of our Statement of Faith?
- d) How does the Word of God recognize and set up constituted authority in the church?

Session #3 (Y1 Q3)

3. Holy Scripture

Objective: Ordinand expresses and explains a thorough understanding of Holy Scripture and how they engage with it.

Key themes to explore: Revelation, Canon, Illumination, Inspiration, Inerrancy.

Primary Question(s):

- a) Describe the grand narrative of Scripture.
- b) What is your understanding of the importance of Holy Scripture, how it was created/compiled, and its authority for life and ministry?
- c) Explain the statement: "Divinely inspired Holy Scripture is infallible and inerrant?"
- d) What does Holy Scripture teach us about hearing God's voice?
- e) How do we disciple people to hear God's voice?
- f) How has your theological understanding been shaped over time?

Supplemental Questions:

- a) What is revelation?
- b) What is your understanding of the relationship between the Word of God and Holy Scripture?
- c) What is your opinion of extra-biblical contemporary revelations?
- d) How do you understand the relationship between revelation and divine guidance?
- e) How do you distinguish between revelation, inspiration, and illumination?
- f) What does the concept of 'canon' mean? Explain your concept of canon.
- g) How do you ascertain the canonicity or non-canonicity of specific books?
- h) What is the relationship between canonicity and inspiration?
- i) How would you respond to the charge that the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is irrelevant since 'all we possess are imperfect copies and translations of the original autographs'?
- j) In light of your understanding of the relationship between inspiration and translations, how would you advise your congregation respecting the value and use of translations?
- k) Define progressive revelation.

Session #4 (Y1 Q4)

4. The Trinity

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, and how its development came to be.

Key themes to explore: Persons of the Trinity, communal aspects of the Trinity, development of the doctrine, importance of the doctrine.

Primary questions:

- a) Utilizing Scripture, why do we confess that there is one God?
- b) Utilizing Scripture, why do we confess that God exists in three persons?
- c) How was the doctrine of The Trinity developed and why is it important? (Consider alternate question: "What is the doctrine of the Trinity, why does it matter in the life of the believer, and how has it shaped your mission and ministry?")
- d) How have you grown in your relationship to each person of the Trinity?

Supplemental questions:

- a) Which common attributes of the three persons are evident in the Scriptures?
- b) Are there any attributes truly unique to each person of the Trinity?
- c) How do the three persons relate to creation? revelation? salvation? the church?
- d) Which contemporary theological positions are raising serious questions for the traditional doctrine of the Trinity?
- e) Which contemporary cultic groups evidence deviation from the traditional doctrine of the Trinity?
- f) Describe the Trinity.
- g) Is there a hierarchy within the Trinity?

Session #5 – Year 2, Quarter 1 (Y2 Q1)

5. Person of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Part 1)

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of the persons of the Trinity and how they relate to each other and to us.

Key themes to explore: Attributes of God, arguments for the existence of God, hypostatic union, relationship between members of the Godhead, personhood of the Holy Spirit, gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Primary questions:

- a) How would you explain the existence of God to a non-believer?
- b) Who is God the Father? Why do we call Him “Father”?
- c) Utilizing Scripture, name some of the attributes of God.
- d) Describe the relationship between the Father and the Son.
- e) What is the relationship between the Father and us, his children?
- f) Who is Jesus? What are some of the titles given to Him in Scripture and what do they mean?
- g) Trace the “development” of Christology through the major ecumenical councils. What was decided at each council?
- h) Explain how Jesus was conscious of His divinity.
- i) Prove from Scripture that Christ had both a divine nature and a human nature.
- j) Why are both nature’s essential to the person of Christ?
- k) Who is the Holy Spirit and what does He do?
- l) How do the references of the Lord Jesus to the Holy Spirit indicate that He is a Person?
- m) How has the Holy Spirit equipped each born again believer? Consider revising to reflect something more like: “What does Holy Spirit empowerment look like in the in the life of the believer? What are possible indicators that someone is truly walking in Spirit empowerment? What might indicate someone is not walking in empowerment? What are some tangible indicators in your own life that you are walking in Spirit empowerment?”

Session #6 (Y2, Q2)

5. Person of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Part 2)

Supplementary questions:

Person of Father God

- a) Who is God the Father? Why do we call Him “Father”?
- b) What is the basis for the Christian concept of God as person?
- c) Give some New Testament definitions of God. (1 John 1:5, 4:8; Hebrews 12:29)
- d) What underlies all else in the character of God?
- e) Explain the terms: theism, deism, atheism, monotheism, polytheism, pantheism, and agnosticism.

- f) How does God maintain a personal relationship with humankind?
- g) What are some of the evidence and arguments for the existence of God?
- h) What is your belief concerning God and evolution?
- i) How do you reconcile the goodness of God and the presence of evil?

Person of God the Son

- j) State some of the names referring to Christ and explain their meanings (such as: Messiah, Lord Jesus, etc.)
- k) Why do you believe Christ is God?
- l) What is meant by the pre-existence of Christ? Is He eternal? Does He have a beginning or an end?
- m) How is the person of Christ dealt with in the Old Testament? What are some Old Testament prophecies pertaining to Him?
- n) How may it be proved that Christ was really a man?
- o) How do you know that Christ is alive today?
- p) Was the virgin birth necessary to the atoning work of Christ?
- q) Where is Jesus today? Does he have a body?

Person of God the Holy Spirit

- r) How does His identification with the Father and Son suggest His personality?
- s) What ministries, possible only for a person, are attributed to Him?
- t) What is indicated, relative to His personality, by His activity in the early Church?
- u) How does the Old Testament reflect His personality?
- v) What is revealed by His associations with other persons?
- w) How is He affected by the same things and in the same manner as other persons?
- x) Why is belief in the personality of the Holy Spirit essential to orthodoxy?
- y) Which biblical passages speak of the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Name these gifts.
- z) How are these gifts given to believers and consequently to the church? How does a person find their spiritual gift?
- aa) In what measure are the gifts that were exercised by the Apostles manifest today? Discuss the apostolic gift and office.
- bb) Which biblical passages speak of the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Name them.
- cc) What was the role of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times?
- dd) What is the role of the Holy Spirit regarding conviction of sin? Comment on the place of conscience as it relates to conviction and guilt.
- ee) Comment on the filling of and baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- ff) What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?
- gg) How do you test the spirits to determine if they are from God?

Session #7 (Y2, Q3)

6. Salvation (Atonement, Justification, Regeneration)

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of the doctrine of salvation through the lens of the atonement, justification, and regeneration.

Key themes to explore: redemption, plan of salvation, biblical foundation for the doctrine of atonement

Primary questions:

- a) How does Jesus redeem sinful humanity?
- b) Explain the term “in Christ.” What does it mean to have union with Christ?
- c) What is the extent of Christ’s redemption?
- d) Your friend is a sincere seeker after God. Using the Scriptures, lead your friend into an adequate knowledge of the plan of salvation, covering the following main points:
 - why they need a Saviour
 - what Christ did for them on the cross
 - how they can be changed by the life and power of Christ’s spirit
 - how they may receive the gift of salvation
- e) Using Scripture, define the terms: atonement, justification, and regeneration.
- f) Trace the concept of atonement throughout biblical history.
- g) How do Romans 3:21-25, Romans 5:8, and 2 Corinthians 5:21 shape our understanding of Christ’s atonement?
- h) Discuss various historical views of the atonement. What is your view of the atonement?
- i) What is the nature of spiritual change brought about by justification?
- j) Describe the relationship between justification and regeneration.
- k) How did the Reformers help shape the Protestant Church’s understanding of “justification by faith”?
- l) What is regeneration? Where does Jesus speak about it? What does he say?
- m) Who performs the work of regeneration?

Supplemental Questions:

Atonement

- n) What does the atonement teach us about God's love? God's mercy? God's justice? God's holiness?
- o) Where did the plan of the atonement originate?
- p) Why is the atonement necessary as far as God is concerned?
- q) What makes the atonement necessary as far as man is concerned?
- r) What qualified Christ to be the offering for sin?
- s) Could anyone other than Christ have made an acceptable offering?
- t) Can the atonement be effective in human lives in any way where the Gospel is unknown?
- u) Where did sin originate? Did God create evil?

Justification

- v) What is the basis of God's justification of sinners?
- w) What is the nature of spiritual change brought about by justification?

Regeneration

- x) Who performs the work of regeneration?
- y) What attitudes must be present in the individual before regeneration can take place?
- z) What is the nature of the change brought about by regeneration?
- aa) What is the continuing purpose of regeneration in a Christian?
- bb) How were Old Testament believers saved?

cc) Why do we need regeneration rather than reformation?

Session #8 (Y2, Q4)

7. Sanctification

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of the doctrine of sanctification.

Key themes to explore: The C&MA perspective, filling of The Spirit, the positional and experiential nature of sanctification

Primary questions:

- a) Utilizing Scripture, what is sanctification?
- b) When does sanctification start? When does it end?
- c) What does sanctification mean in your personal and ministry life?; Consider rephrase: "We believe the filling of the Spirit is a distinct event and progressive experience that takes place subsequent to salvation. Tell us how you have experienced this in your own life and how biblically you would lead someone to experience the filling of the Spirit as both a decisive act and a progressive experience."
- d) What is meant by positional and experiential sanctification?
- e) What are the evidences of a Spirit-filled life?
- f) How would you help someone experience greater Spiritual renewal if they're 'thirsty'?

Supplemental Questions:

- a) In what way is the believer 'dead to sin and alive to God'?
- b) What is meant by the phrase 'the indwelling Christ'?
- c) Describe Simpson's concept of spiritual breathing.
- d) What significance does baptism hold in sanctification?
- e) What does it mean to be 'wholly sanctified'?

Session #9 – Year 3, Quarter 1 (Y3, Q1)

8. Healing

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of the doctrine of healing and how this doctrine integrates into the life of the church.

Key themes to explore: healing in the atonement, divine healing, theology of suffering

Primary Questions:

- a) What is your position on divine healing? What does the Bible teach about it?
- b) What is meant by the statement, "healing in the atonement"?
- c) Describe a time when you have had the opportunity to pray with someone for healing.
- d) When God chooses not to heal, how do you deal with this?
- e) What is your theology of suffering? How might this play out in the life of the church?
- f) How might we practically equip someone in how to pray for healing?
- g) Utilizing Scripture, how do we release the healing ministry of Jesus in the life of the church?
- h) Consider: "When healing is not experienced as hoped for, how do you deal with this?"

Supplemental Questions:

- a) What do you believe concerning the relationship of spiritual gifts to the ministry of healing?

- b) In the anointing and prayer ministry for the sick by the elders, what is meant by ‘the prayer of faith’?
- c) How do you explain the fact that all Christians who are prayed for are not healed? What are potential reasons that an individual may not be healed?
- d) How is the problem of sin related to the problem of sickness?
- e) What is the difference between divine healing, medical healing, and faith healing?
- f) As one with the gift, what was Simpson's approach to healing?

Session 10 (Y3, Q2)

9. Eschatology (Return of The Lord, Resurrection, Lostness of Humanity)

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of their eschatological framework including resurrection and the lostness of humanity.

Key themes to explore: Christ's return, resurrection, doctrine of heaven, doctrine of hell.

Primary questions:

- a) Discuss your present convictions about the nature of, and circumstances surrounding, Christ's return to earth. What biblical passages support your convictions?
- b) What will happen when Christ returns?
- c) Historically speaking, what perspectives has the Church taken on Christ's return?
- d) Comment on this doctrinal statement in the Statement of Faith: “The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent and will be personal and visible. As the believer's blessed hope, this vital truth is an incentive for holy living and sacrificial service toward the completion of Christ's commission.”
- e) Describe your understanding about the nature of resurrection using 1 Corinthians 15.
- f) What does the Bible say about heaven? How would you equate or differentiate “heaven” from “the kingdom of God”?
- g) What is the future destiny of those who die without ever hearing the Gospel?
- h) What does the Bible say about hell? Comment on the phrase in the Statement of Faith that says “existence forever in conscious torment”?
- i) In your opinion, what is the biblical vision of the consummation of the kingdom of God that was inaugurated at Jesus' first coming? How does Scripture describe the new creation and the role of God's people in it?

Supplemental Questions:

Return of The Lord

- a) On what basis do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will personally and physically return to the earth?
- b) How will the second coming of Christ differ from the first coming?
- c) What are the differences among the doctrines of premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism?
- d) What is your understanding about the rapture?
- e) How does the Bible describe the great tribulation?
- f) What is the relationship between Israel and the church?
- g) Describe your understanding of the millennium.
- h) Comment on God's covenants with Israel as they relate to eschatology.

i) What is the future of Satan and his demons?

Resurrection

j) What does the term resurrection mean?

k) Is it possible for a resurrection to occur without a physical body?

l) Name scripture stating your belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

m) How important is the doctrine of the resurrection to the Christian faith?

n) What is the relationship between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and future resurrection?

o) What happens when the believer is resurrected?

p) What happens when the unbeliever is resurrected?

The Lostness of Man

q) Is there any possibility of making a decision to be saved after one has died?

r) To what degree does a Christian bear personal responsibility for sharing the good news?

s) Define universalism, soul sleep, annihilationism.

Session 11 (Y3, Q3)

10. The Church

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of the Church and its mission and purpose.

Key themes to explore: purpose and mission of the Church, Church structure, future of the Church

Primary questions:

a) What is the Church?

b) What role does the Church play in Jesus' redemption of the world?

c) What does the Church do?

d) What images of the Church do you find in the New Testament?

e) Consider questions on disciple-making here such as: "What is a disciple? How does one reproduce disciples? How are you making multiplying disciples in your context - both personally and corporately?"

Supplemental Questions

a) What is the future of the church?

b) What is the order of local church government in the C&MA?

c) What is the function of the pastor in relation to body life?

d) What are the qualifications and function of elders?

e) In what way are General Assembly and District Conference related to the local church?

f) What is the function of the District Superintendent?

g) What is the significance of water baptism?

h) Outline the positive and negative aspects of autocratic congregational and Presbyterian styles of governance.

i) What is the biblical procedure for conflict resolution?

j) What does the apostle Peter say about the relation of the shepherd to the flock?

k) State the characteristics of the servant or the Lord as they were given to Timothy.

l) What is the relationship between the pastor and the elders?

Session 12 (Y3, Q4)

11. Anthropology

Objective: The ordinand expresses a thorough understanding of what it means to be human, according to Scripture.

Key themes to explore: Biblical humanness, cultural, social, and moral awareness.

Primary questions:

- a) The secular identity is somewhat 'plastic.' A person is encouraged to discover their identity by looking within and then they conform outward behaviour with their inward reality. How does a Christian understanding of identity differ?
- b) What does scripture teach about the significance of being embodied beings?
- c) What is the significance of being made in God's Image as male and female?
- d) What are some implications of this teaching as it relates to issues of marriage, sex, and gender?
- e) As it relates to our society's culture, what are some of the pressing issues you deal with at your church or in your ministry? How does Scripture inform your response to these issues?
- f) What is your approach to social media? Does it help or hinder your ministry?

Supplemental Questions:

- a) Discuss how you would counsel a couple/person inquiring about divorce.
- b) How would you counsel someone in your church who is struggling with their gender identity?
- c) How do you intentionally pursue sexual purity and resist the temptations of pornography or any other form of sexual brokenness?