



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

Commissioned Pastor Study Guide Presbytery of Central Carolinas, for April 2024

Before you prepare for your exams, contact Butch Hill to make sure you are on track. Also, make sure you know the date of the exams and Presbytery meeting.

This guide is intended to help Commissioned Pastor applicants prepare for the Examination Team and Presbytery examinations. Most questions will be taken from it. The exams will be oral, with no helps of any kind. You will probably be examined alongside other candidates.

After Butch gets you started, you should email George Schwab for materials to help you think through the issues and begin preparing.

You should look at the EPC's resources [site](#) for access to needed materials in addition to those supplied by George Schwab. Make sure you are very familiar with the following:

- The Bible.
- The [*Essentials of our Faith*](#).
- [*Westminster Confession of Faith*](#). Read all 35 chapters in modern English.
- The [*Book of Order*](#). Make sure you study the latest version.
- [*Liberty in Non-Essentials*](#) by Rev. Dr. Don Fortson. It is suggested that you read in its entirety. Page references are supplied in the History section. Also, some history questions include page references from Pitman, found [here](#).
- Presbytery's various position papers.

Addresses you should know:

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Bible

Where is the first promise of the gospel?
List the days of creation.
Describe Eden.
What happened at the Fall?
Describe the Covenant with Noah.
Describe the Covenant with Abraham.
Who is Melchizedek?
What was the sin of Sodom?
Say something about Isaac and Jacob.
Name the Twelve tribes.
Describe the career of Joseph.
Who was Moses?
What is the Pentateuch?
Outline Exodus.
Describe the plagues.
List the Ten Commandments.
What is the Mosaic Covenant?
What was the Tabernacle?
Who was Aaron?
Describe the Sacrificial system.
What happened on the Day of Atonement?
What are the purity laws?
Say something about Tithing.
What was the Sabbath?
Describe the Wilderness wandering.
What did Joshua do?
Discuss 6 judges from the book of Judges.
Outline the book of Ruth.
What is the greatest commandment?
What is the second greatest?

Who was Samuel?
Describe Saul's career.
Describe David's career.
Describe the Davidic covenant.
What are Messianic Psalms?
What are Imprecatory Psalms?
Tell us about Solomon.
What did the Temple look like?
What was the sin of Jeroboam?
Who were the Omrides?
Tell us about Elijah and Elisha.
Tell us about Job.
Describe the Virtuous Woman.
Tell us about the book of Isaiah.
Who was the Suffering Servant?
What did Assyria do to Israel?
Tell us about Hezekiah.
Tell us about Josiah.
Talk about Messianic Prophecies.
Tell us about Jeremiah.
What did Babylon do to Israel?
Tell us about the book of Daniel.
List the Minor Prophets.
Tell us about Ezra.
Tell us about Nehemiah.
What happens in Esther?
Tell us about the Servant Songs.
Describe the Apocrypha.

List in order all the books of the NT.
What books comprise the “Synoptic gospels”?
What does John have that the synoptics don’t?
List the seven “I Am” statements in John.
Tell us what Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God.
Where in the Bible is the Sermon on the Mount?
Give us a synopsis of the Sermon on the Mount.
What are some key events in Passion Week?
List some Parables of Jesus.
Tell us about the Parable of the Sower.
Tell us some of Jesus’ miracles.
Describe the temptation of Jesus.
Name the twelve disciples.
Describe Jesus’ High Priestly prayer.
Describe the historical events surrounding the Crucifixion.
What spiritual benefits come to us through the Resurrection?
What happened at Pentecost?
Who was the First Martyr?
Describe the Conversion of Paul.
What was the issue at the Jerusalem Council?
Detail for us Paul’s Missionary journeys.
List in order the Pauline epistles.
Outline the book of Romans.
What does the NT say about Marriage and Divorce?
Describe the Lord’s Supper.
What are the Gifts of the Spirit?
What is the fruit of the Spirit?
Tell us about the Resurrection of the body.
What is taught in Galatians?
What is taught in Ephesians?
What is taught in Philippians?
Thinking of 2 Timothy 3:16, how is Scripture useful?
What will happen at the Return of the Lord?
List the Pastoral Epistles.
What is taught in Hebrews?
What is taught in James?
What is taught in I Peter?
What is taught in II Peter?
What is taught in I John?
What happens in the Book of Revelation?

Theology and Sacraments

You will be asked these five questions:

- Do you subscribe to the Essentials of the Faith of the EPC without any reservations?
- Is Jesus the only way of salvation?
- What exceptions do you have to the WCF and Catechisms?
- Do you affirm the view of Scripture found in Chapter 1 of the WCF?
- What is your view on infallibility and inerrancy?

Other Sample questions:

Define General Revelation.

Discuss biblical passages which teach the Authority of Scripture.

What is the relationship between Scripture and the WCF?

What does the WCF say about the Holy Spirit?

Why were the last two chapters added to the confession?

Compare the Reformed view of the Sacraments with other traditions.

Discuss the relationship between General and Special Revelation.

Would you say that Scripture is infallible? Why or why not?

What is the extent of canon?

State the doctrine of inspiration.

What is the doctrine of God?

Describe the Trinity.

What is the doctrine of Creation?

What is Providence?

What work and role do angels have? What are angels?

Who is Satan? What are demons?

Describe the person of Christ.

Describe the work of Christ.

What are the three theocratic offices of Christ?

What is the doctrine of the virgin birth?

What is the Incarnation?

What is the theological significance of the crucifixion?

What benefits come to the believer through the resurrection?
(Rom 4:25, 6:4; Eph 2:5 – 6; Col 2:13; 1 Pet 1:3; etc.)

Why will Christ return? What will happen then?

Describe the person of the Holy Spirit.

Describe the work of the Holy Spirit.

Describe the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If Cessationist: give biblical basis for that view.

If Egalitarian: give biblical basis for that view.

What does it mean that people are totally depraved?

What is the doctrine of Original Sin?

List as many elements of the Ordo Salutis as you can.

Which comes first in the Ordo Salutis: faith or regeneration? Why?

What does it mean that we are united with Christ?

What is the role of the Law in the Christian life?

What is Covenant Theology?

What is your understanding of the Church of Jesus Christ? How are you going to make this a priority?

Defend the EPC's position on paedocommunion.

What is the Regulative Principle of worship? What is your view of it?

Explain your eschatology.

What are various millennial views?

Tell us about the final judgment.

What is Theonomy? Do you hold to this view?

What is Dispensationalism? Do you hold to this view?

What is "Openness of God" theology? Do you hold to this view?

1 Sam 15:11 says that God regretted making Saul king. Explain.

What is Annihilationism? Do you hold to this view?

Tell us about the Atonement. Who is propitiated?

Church History and Reformed Tradition

*EARLY AND MEDIEVAL CHURCH (*See [Pitman](#) chapter 3)*

Why is ancient church history important for the life of today's church?

How did the Roman persecutions shape the Early Church?

What is Gnosticism and how did the Church respond to it?

Describe the formation of the NT canon. When was it complete?

Tell us about Marcion.

*Who was Ignatius of Antioch? What did he prophesy to the Philadelphians?

*Who was Justin Martyr? What did he say about the gifts of the Spirit?

*Who was Irenaeus? How did he describe the Christian experience?

Tell us about Athanasius.

What is the history behind the Apostles Creed? What was it addressing?

Tell us about Church government in Christianity's early centuries.

Who was Origen?

Tell us about The Council of Nicea.

How did the conversion of Emperor Constantine impact the Church?

Where did the idea of the Papacy come from? Who was the first Pope?

What was the Arian heresy and how did the Nicene Creed address it?

What was the outcome of the Council of Chalcedon?

How did Augustine respond to the teachings of Pelagius?

*Tell us about Augustine's encounter with the miraculous.

What was the Donatist controversy? What was the outcome?

What was Scholasticism? Explain Thomas Aquinas' contribution.

Who were John Wycliffe and John Huss?

*REFORMATION AND POST-REFORMATION CHURCH (*See [Pitman](#) chapter 3)*

What were the issues that brought about Luther's "breakthrough"?

Who was Ulrich Zwingli?

Why did Zwingli believe that the children of believers should be baptized?

Who was John Calvin and what did he do in Geneva?

How did Calvin understand the doctrine of Predestination?

What was Calvin's view of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper?

*Who was George Wishart? Tell us about his prophecies.

*Who was John Knox? Tell us about some of his prophecies.

Who was Jacob Arminius? How did the Synod of Dort respond to him?

*Who were the Huguenots? Tell us about their prophecies and healings.

What was the historical background to the Westminster Assembly?

When did the Westminster Assembly meet?

What documents were produced by the Westminster Assembly?

What is the topic of the first chapter of the WCF?

What is the answer to the first question in the Shorter Catechism?

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANISM

Who was Francis Makemie?

When was the first Presbytery formed in America?

What was the Adopting Act? What was the final decision of the Synod?

Who began the Log College? What impact did it have on Presbyterianism?

What was the Old Side/New Side schism about? When were they reunited?

Who was John Witherspoon? What did he contribute to Presbyterianism?

When and where did the first General Assembly meet in America?

What was the 1801 Plan of Union?

When did the Old/New School schism occur and what was it about?

Who was Charles Hodge?

Tell us about Henrietta Mears.

When did the Southern Church begin allowing the ordination of women?

What revisions were made to the WCF in 1903?

How did J. Gresham Machen challenge the Presbyterian Church?

Describe the two added chapters of the WCF in its modern version.

HISTORY OF THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (See [Fortson](#))

- When did the Evangelical Presbyterian Church come into existence?
- Who were the founding churches of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?
- What issues in the mainline church propelled the EPC founders to separate? (See *Fortson pp. 17 – 26; 33 – 38; 42 – 54*)
- Why was commitment to WCF crucial to EPC founders? (59 – 68; 137 – 144)
- What did Bart Hess contribute to the EPC founding? (29 – 33; 55 – 59)
- Who was Andy Jumper; why is his story important to the ethos of the EPC? (38 – 42; 68 – 70)
- Describe the controversy over “The Essentials.” How was it resolved in 2001? (144 – 166)
- How does the “Essentials of Our Faith” relate to the WCF in our constitution?
- The EPC can be described as “New School Presbyterianism.” Explain. (2 – 17)
- List the EPC position paper’s distinctives on women’s ordination. (95 – 99)
- How would you describe the EPC view on the gifts of the Spirit? (99 – 101)
- Describe the relationship between the EPC and other conservative Presbyterian bodies. (101 – 105; 122 – 127)
- Tell us the story of Andrew Brunson.
- Tell us the story of Cassie Bernall. (134 – 135)
- How did the EPC deal with tensions between complementarians and egalitarians in the BOO in 2012? (208 – 220)
- Tell us the story of Mike Pompeo.
- Tell us the story of Howard Shockley.
- Howard described the EPC as a “Charismatic denomination.” Why do you want to be part of such a church?
- What impact has Ken Priddy had on the missional emphasis of the church?
- The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy has been a rallying point for many Evangelicals. On its 10th anniversary, what did our General Assembly say about it? (178 – 179)

Polity

You *will* be asked: Have you read the Book of Order of the EPC? (“No”=instant fail)

What is the motto of the EPC?

What does it mean that we value liberty in non-essentials?

If a commissioner to Presbytery tries to debate a non-essential, what will happen?

Define the Book of Order.

What are the three parts of the Book of Order?

Based on 81-03 of the Acts of the Assembly, what is the primary purpose of Presbytery meetings?

Who is the administrative director?

Who is the stated Clerk of Presbytery? What is his email address?

Who is the current moderator of Presbytery?

Who is the chair of the church development committee?

How does the Book of Discipline (1-10) define immorality?

What does the Book of Discipline say about retention of church property?

What weight does the Acts of the Assembly carry in the BOO?

Who has primary responsibility for:

- the local congregation
- preparing a budget
- organizing a congregation
- supervising foreign missions
- ordaining ministers
- calling a pastor
- amending the Book of Order
- renovating church property
- ordaining a deacon
- overseeing the worship service
- selling church property
- dissolving a pastoral relationship
- moderating the Session meeting
- receiving a new member
- overseeing congregational Christian education
- music used in a worship service
- calling a congregational meeting

What is the difference between Associate and Assistant Pastors?

What is the difference between a Committee, a Board, and a Commission?

Define the “Nature of the Power of the Church”

What is the difference between the “Responsibility of Order” and “Power of Jurisdiction”?

What is the “first” duty of an Elder in the courts of the Church?

What is the difference between a “Called Meeting” and a “Stated Meeting”?

Why is discipline important in the church?

Identify who has the original jurisdiction over:

- ordaining a minister
- church members
- Stated Clerk of the Presbytery
- a missionary
- a minister as a seminary professor
- a hospital chaplain

Identify, define or discuss

- quorum for a Session meeting
- non-Presbyterian forms of church government
- membership rolls
- members of presbytery
- voting by proxy
- mission or vision developer
- the ruling elder (RE)
- the ordained minister (TE)
- the deaconate
- minister voting at session or congregational meetings
- participating at/in presbytery
- officers of the General Assembly and Presbytery
- a congregation leaving the denomination
- church discipline: define types of offenses and types of sanctions
- What are the three items for which a person can be disciplined?
- marriage of a divorced person
- a pastor’s duty to perform a wedding
- candidates for baptism
- private baptism
- modes of baptism
- re-baptism
- children taking communion

Session Meetings:

- Who moderates the Session? Who should create the Session agenda?
- How familiar are you with Roberts Rules of Order? Describe it.
- Can the Pastor make motions or participate in a debate?
- Does the Clerk of Session need to be an active member of Session?
- Why should a motion be on the floor prior to any discussion?
- Why should most motions be pre-written in a Session meeting?
- What kinds of motions require seconds, and what kinds don't?
- How long before Session meetings should the agendas be sent?
- Can items be added to the agenda at the time of the meeting? Explain.
- If many REs are for a motion but many against, what should happen?
- Typically, what elements should be contained in a Session agenda?
- About how long should an evening Session meeting last?
- List two options of what to do if the meeting needs to go longer.
- Describe how a motion on the floor should be fairly debated.
- How are motions that are already on the floor amended?

Office and Work of the Pastor

You *will* be asked these 3 questions:

Would you perform a same-sex wedding?

What is the gospel? (Briefly explain the gospel)

How do you make disciples?

Describe how would deal with the following issues and events:

Homosexuality in the church

Abortion as an option

Conducting a Funeral

Conducting a Wedding

Church discipline, including restoration

Baptism vs. Baby dedication

Dealing with Divorce

Motivating to Evangelism

Remarriage after divorce

Dealing with Suicide

A parishioner struggling with grief or depression

Unfaithfulness in marriage

Church conflict

Confidentiality

Where do you see your role in relationship with the Session?

Dealing with abuse in marriage

Counseling someone whose infant died

How would you counsel someone struggling with addiction to:

Pornography

Gambling

Drinking/drugs

How would you counsel a young woman in your congregation who believes God is calling her to serve as an ordained pastor?

Do you agree that “The church must speak out against active euthanasia as it rapidly gains popular approval”?

A member of your church has been invited to a lesbian wedding and has come to you for advice. What advice would you give?

A man in your church tells you he feels like he is really a female inside and is thinking about having gender reassignment surgery. How would you counsel him?

What are significant challenges for pastors and the Church in America today?

In your view, what is the most effective form of evangelism today and give an example of using this in your ministry?

How would you counsel a member of your church who doubts their election and/or salvation?

How would you respond if someone with cancer requested to be anointed with oil and prayed over for healing by you and the elders?

What is your opinion of this statement, “The EPC affirms the gifts of God’s Spirit as biblically valid for today”?

A missionary returns from the field and tells you about miracles he witnessed while there. How would you process that?

A woman in your congregation wants to be a pastor. What seminary would you advise her to attend?

A charismatic in your congregation wants a seminary education. Where would you advise him or her to attend?

If there was a pandemic and the governor imposed a stay at home order, how would you as pastor lead the church?

Questions about Marriage:

An engaged couple seeks your services to officiate their wedding. In the process of leading them through pre-marital counseling you discover that they are living together and are sexually active. How do you respond pastorally to this couple?

Would you respond differently if they have had a child together who is living in the home as well?

How would you counsel a couple whose previous marriages ended in unbiblical divorces? Are there special circumstances that would shape your counsel? What does the EPC Position Paper say about it?

How would you counsel someone who is trying to understand the Scriptural picture of marriage?

Questions about baptism:

What would you say to a young couple with a 3 month old infant that want to have their baby dedicated instead of baptized?

What would be an appropriate response to a couple if they wanted to have their infant baptized in the privacy of their home?

A member of your congregation was baptized as a child but never came to know the Lord. Now, as an adult, they have become a believer and desire to be baptized. How would you respond to their request?

Questions about the demonic:

A member of your church tells you that doors open and close and the lights in their home turn on and off on their own. They think this is demonic activity. What steps would you take next?

What is your opinion of Jesus’ statement on demons, “This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting”? How do you apply this to your ministry?