

## Theological Competence Exam

The *Book of Order* states: " This examination shall assess the candidate's capacity to make effective use of the classical theological disciplines and of the confessional documents of the church in relating the gospel to the faith of the church in the contemporary world" [G-14.0310d (3)].

### General Musings

This test examines the way you, as a pastor, use theological insights in a practical situation. What are you going to do with all this theological knowledge that you learned in seminary when you get out into the "real" world?

- The examiners want to see the balance between what you know and how you would use that knowledge (of the Bible, of theological issues, of church tradition, of Reformed tradition, of *The Book of Confessions*) as a pastor.
- Remember the readers are not your professors but clergy, educators, and lay people, so don't use jargon or large theological terms. You wouldn't suggest that a parishioner "exegete" Corinthians for an insight to a problem!
- Support any generalizations with details. This may be theology but it is also a test. What exactly do you mean?
- Although the questions present real life pastoral situations, remember it's a theology exam. There is no substitute for a solid theological discussion.
- Include Biblical, classical, reformed, and/or contemporary theology in your response. You don't need to incorporate all four, but you should touch on two or three to demonstrate your broad knowledge.
- Include some personal reflections and concerns. Make this your test. Let the readers get to know you as a knowledgeable, caring pastor who struggles with issues just like your congregants will. You might want to write something like, "I, too, have struggled with the problem of suicide and how to understand that tragedy theologically."



