

TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PRESBYTERY INTERNS

Candidates and Examinations Committee

Catawba Valley Presbytery—Presbyterian Church in America

The CVP intern program exists to cultivate faithful, competent, and holy men for the service of Christ's church as teaching elders. In accordance with the standards articulated by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and in submission to the requirements of the Book of Church Order (BCO 19-7 through 19-16), the Candidates and Exams Committee oversees the practical training of candidates for the gospel ministry, so that an adequate trial may be made of these aspiring pastors' gifts and abilities to gather and perfect the saints as well as rule and guide the church. In fulfilling this calling, the CVP intern program seeks to supplement the formation of character, ministry skills, and pastoral competency that is initiated in the intern's seminary training. Ideally, the intern program will couple together two essential aspects of preparation for the gospel ministry: (1) practical instruction -focusing upon the acquisition and refinement of the requisite skills of being a pastor and (2) testing of gifts in a wide array of contexts so that—under the scrutiny and probation of the presbytery—the intern can receive an honest assessment of his suitedness for the ordained office of teaching elder in the PCA. It is our aim to strike a balance between activity and structured, mentored reflection upon that activity so that the intern can benefit from the broadened discernment, honest feedback, and timely admonition from his mentor and the Candidates and Exams committee. It is our conviction that maturity and vocation are best realized in the context of godly, redemptive relationships, most specifically in the context of the community of God's people. The church is God's proving ground for candidates to discern their unique vocation and to be equipped to lead God's people and his church. The qualifications for the ordained office of teaching elder, as outlined in the epistles, showcase at least four broad areas of maturity and competency for those who aspire to vocational ministry:

- A. **Personal sanctification** a□ sowing for and reaping a godly character prescribed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
- B. **Family oversight and discipleship** “He must manage his household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church.”
- C. **Practical ministry skills** a□ An elder is “able to teach” as well as holding “firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he maybe able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”
- D. **Reputation among and relationship to those outside of the church** “He must be thought well of by outsiders.” The nurturing of and testing for these four areas of ministry competence is the design and focus of the CVP intern program.

A) Personal Sanctification

According to Scripture, those seeking the office of elder must demonstrate a character and disposition of personal holiness, gospel-centered identity and gospel-driven relationships. Any CVP mentor-intern agreement shall include training in the cultivation of habits of personal devotion and holiness, intentionally pursuing intimacy with God through the means of grace. An intern's progress in ministry readiness cannot come simply by accomplishing a pre-determined list on ministry skills. Preparing a man for ministry necessarily involves regular training in personal faith-sustainability. The assignments listed here are intended to assist in this process of discerning and deepening an intern's gospel-identity and faith practices, both as a Christian and as a minister of the gospel. The assignments are not meant to suggest a 'formula for holiness' or to produce a performance mentality, but merely to equip the intern with patterns of engagement with the living Word of God.

Requirements:

1) Read the entire Bible during your intern year, and report your monthly progress in regular Scripture reading to your mentor.

While engaging in your seminary studies as a ministerial candidate, it is possible to rely upon the content of classes and focused work as a student of theology and the Bible as the primary and sometimes exclusive partaking of the means of grace. Many students can actually make it through seminary without reading extended portions of Scripture on a regular basis. Certainly, cultivating such a pattern of private Scripture reading and prayer will not be easier once the intern's preparations for the ordained ministry are complete. In fact, with the hectic pace of family life and ministerial obligations, it is much more difficult to establish a regular, fruitful, edifying time of personal partaking of the means of grace. Therefore, we require that the intern establish a regular pattern of private Scripture reading and prayer. In specific, we require that the intern report to his mentor each month what biblical books he has read and how frequently he has been able to carve out time for personal prayer and meditation. The mentor, or the Candidates and Exams Committee, can provide options regarding various Bible reading plans.

2) Develop memorization competency

During the internship period, the intern should nurture a regular pattern of memorizing God's Word. The treasuring up of God's Word enables a pastor to fend off the lies of the devil with the truth, to unmask the alluring approaches of sin, to comfort their flock with encouragement from Scripture, to provide biblical answers for questions that confront them and those whom they serve, and to develop a Christian mind and a truly biblical world and life view.

The list below contains several suggested passages and themes around which to focus memorization of God's Word. These are not exhaustive, but rather a minimum level of competence that will aid the intern in his ordination trials as well as his life as a minister:

Suggested areas of Bible memorization:

- o Plan of salvation with verses
- o *Ordo salutis* with two scripture proofs for each point
- o Five points of Calvinism with two scripture proofs each
- o Qualifications for elders and deacons
- o Proofs for infant baptism
- o Lord's Supper
- o Covenants
- o Justification
- o Sanctification
- o Inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture
- o Presbyterian polity
- o Deity of Christ
- o Christ's second coming
- o Grieving and mourning death
- o Heaven
- o A spiritual fruit which the intern has identified as a specific personal struggle

3) Complete a spiritual gifts inventory, and have conversation with mentor to debrief

The Candidates and Exams Committee, when requested, can provide the intern with an open-ended spiritual gifts assessment. The tool requires two people familiar with the intern's character and ministry to also complete a survey. Once the intern has completed their survey and received the results from the other two people, they should meet with the mentor to discuss the results. At the mentor's discretion, a different spiritual gifts assessment may be used than the one provided by the committee, though we recommend the collaborative nature of the tool described here.

4) Complete a character inventory, and have conversation with mentor to debrief

The Candidates and Exams Committee recommends the use of a personality profile (Meyers-Briggs, DISC, or similar) to be completed and discussed with a mentor, counselor, or someone trained in these tools. In addition, the intern should spend time meditating on the following passages: 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, 2 Timothy, 1 Peter 5, and Ezekiel 36. An honest assessment of strengths and weaknesses should be the goal, also inviting candid assessment by a spouse or friend. The resulting discussion with a mentor should involve a strategy for growth and change. The Candidates and Exams Committee can provide the intern with a personality profile akin to the Meyers-Briggs, if requested.

5) Compile, and submit to the Candidates and Exams Committee, a bibliography and rationale for devotional literature

The bibliography is intended to be a useful tool for making devotional literature recommendations to various people in a congregation. As such, it should include literature that the intern would recommend to people in various stages of life, including (but not limited to) devotions for couples, family devotional material, devotional material for teenagers, etc. The bibliography should demonstrate a familiarity with resources new and old, and briefly explain the rationale for including each item.

B. Family Oversight and Discipleship

In 1 Timothy 3, Paul teaches that an overseer of God's church also manages his own household well, is a faithful, committed husband, and a thankful steward of God's entrusted resources. Whether currently married or not, an intern's preparation for ministry must include the nurture and maturity of his role as head of household. Thriving pastors prove themselves to be thriving husbands, fathers, and stewards.

Requirements:

6) Read and discuss (with your wife, if married, and with your mentor) at least one book on marriage.

It is all too common for pastors to shepherd their congregation to the neglect of their own family. In order to hedge against this sabotaging trend, we urge the married intern to use their internship as breeding ground for a deep, intimate, honest, and growing marriage. Single interns should also complete this assignment, to better develop a ministry to damaged marriages, and to proactively consider how to build a healthy foundation, should marriage be in their future.

7) Read and discuss at least one book on parenting (if you are a parent).

In the same vein, the committee urges interns with children to discuss with their spouse a book on parenting. The committee or mentor can supply the intern with recommended resources to complete these two assignments.

8) Interview a pastor and his wife to learn about ministry and marriage's unique relationship.

This discussion is an opportunity to see ministry played out in the life of a pastor's family. We suggest an informal interview, preferably with the mentor and his wife. Some topics to consider covering might include keeping boundaries and protecting family time, proactively pursuing our spouse in the midst of ministry demands, managing the expectations often put on a pastor's wife or children by a congregation, what level of confidentiality exists between a pastor and spouse in relation to sensitive counseling or discipline matters in the church, etc.

9) Report to your mentor your plan for keeping the Sabbath and catechizing your children.

We recommend regular conversation between intern and mentor on guarding the patterns and practices of Sabbath. We also encourage conversation on strategies of catechizing and discipline, if a parent. If the intern is not a parent, he should still devise a scheme for family worship to impart to a congregation, or to his own future family.

10) Devise and implement a family budget.

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 expose character flaws of excess, greed and lack of intentional, thought-out godliness. Therefore, an essential part of an intern's training and testing for the ministry involves having a clear strategy for disciplined and exemplary stewarding of God's resources. An intern should evidence an ability to make sound financial decisions personally and as a pastor. If married, the intern should devise and implement a family budget if not already doing so. This should be reviewed with the mentor. In addition, the intern should, if necessary, develop a clear strategy to remove outstanding debt and financial liabilities.

11) Meet with church treasurer or accountant to learn about the unique financial status, legal requirements, and opportunities of a pastor.

The purpose of this meeting is to understand the financial status for clergy as it relates to Social Security, insurance, housing allowances, retirement, and savings, so that the intern can plan accordingly. The mentor may also desire to be a part of this discussion.

12) (Optional but Encouraged) If married, attend a Christian marriage conference, or at least six sessions of marriage counseling.

The intern and mentor should discuss how to implement this and what resources might be available.

C. Practical Ministry Skills

While the competencies of personal sanctification and family nurture/stewardship are crucial to an intern's preparation for the gospel ministry, they ultimately serve to undergird the core of the internship –tangible, maturing skills for the work of a pastor.

Four areas are addressed in this program: 1) Preaching and teaching God's Word, 2)Administering the sacraments, 3) Ruling in Christ's church, 4) Knowing God's flock: visitation and counseling.

We recognize that no one is fully mature before (and even during) the lifetime of serving as a pastor, but we earnestly desire to see instincts, teach-ability, and reality of gifts that validate and give an intern's apparent vocation fruit and staying power in the life of the church. The underlying rubric is that of

progressive (not definitive) abilities, but there must be a presence of some definitive, palpable gifting and effectiveness. Paul strikes a balance between his insistence that young men pursuing ordination and leadership in Christ's church must be "approved unto God" (2 Timothy 3) while at the same time he urges Timothy to "practice these things" (1 Timothy 4:15) which implies that there is always space for growth and increased maturity.

Requirements:

Preaching and teaching God's Word

13) Read the standards of the PCA (WCF, LC, SC), write out potential exceptions or questions regarding them, and discuss with mentor.

14) At least 30 preaching and/or teaching opportunities, at least 6 of which must be preaching.

One of the preeminent qualifications for those who seek to be elders in God's church is the ability to teach God's Word and articulate sound doctrine, as Paul stipulates in 1 Timothy 3 that an elder must be "able to teach" and in Titus 1 that he must be able to give instruction in God's Word. Therefore, an intern must display this indispensable gifting, and his internship is an excellent context for testing and growing these gifts. We encourage the intern to experiment with various genres of scripture and a diversity of settings and styles of communication. Evaluation of at least one of these sermons by the mentor is required. Beyond the six occasions of preaching a formal sermon, the balance of opportunities to proclaim God's Word can occur in various contexts such as Sunday School, VBS, children's or youth ministry. At least one of these teaching opportunities should also be observed and evaluated by the mentor.

15) At least 4 times leading the corporate worship service

The intern should evidence an ability to plan for and lead a service of corporate worship. Directing the assembled people of God in worship is an invaluable service to the church and is a skill that emerges and improves through practice and repetition.

16) Submit to the Candidates and Exams Committee one detailed worship service from the Call to Worship to the Benediction with every word articulated and accounted for.

A sermon topic and outline should be included, but a full sermon need not be.

Administering the sacraments

17) Submit to the Candidates and Exams Committee a baptismal service that briefly explains the sacrament's rootedness in the Old Testament covenant promises, the significance of the sign itself, and the rationale for including the children of believers in the celebration.

Account for the step-by-step procedure for administering the sacrament; include every word communicated to the congregation and those involved in the baptism itself. Take into consideration the normal length of time set aside for a baptism in

your particular church, and stay within those parameters. You may, if you wish, combine this assignment into assignment 16 as part of the total service.

18) Submit to the Candidates and Exams Committee a Lord's Supper service that briefly explains the roots and significance of the sacrament and accounts for every word spoken to the congregation before, during, and after the supper.

Take into consideration the normal length of time set aside for a baptism in your particular church, and stay within those parameters. You may, if you wish, combine this assignment into assignment 16 as part of the total service.

Ruling in Christ's Church

19) Attend at least 4 meetings of the session with at least one interview/debriefing with the clerk of session and pastor afterwards.

20) Attend at least 2 meetings of the diaconate with at least one interview/debriefing with the chairman of the diaconate afterwards.

21) Read *Robert Rules of Order* and demonstrate familiarity with basics of parliamentary procedure.

22) Attend at least 2 meetings of presbytery (Catawba Valley or other).

23) Attend, if possible, at least one meeting of a presbytery committee.

24) While not a formal requirement, it is highly recommended if at all possible to attend an annual meeting of the PCA General Assembly, or to participate in the webcast of the event with your mentor or other elder.

Knowing God's Flock: visitation and counseling

25) Engage in a variety of visitation experiences, including hospitals, visitors, new members, evangelistic, nursing home, schools (student ministry), prison ministry, etc. Essential to an intern's testing and maturing of his gifts is learning to treat the wounds of God's people with gentleness and compassion, cultivating the heart of a shepherd. In order to shepherd well, a pastor must know his people well, and that demands intentional visiting and time invested with those under his care. Therefore, we require that the intern demonstrates an ability to initiate and follow through with visits in a variety of settings. *This task can not be underestimated.* The committee has not set a specific number of visitations that the intern must complete. Rather, the intern and mentor should meet together at the beginning of the internship to discuss expectations and goals in this area. Ideally, visitations should become a regular weekly part of an intern's ministry experience. The visitations might be specific to the responsibilities of the internship and therefore weighted more in one area than another, but the committee still expects each intern to experience a broad range of different situations. The committee can aid the intern in connecting with opportunities where his church might be lacking. The intern is expected to report upon and debrief his visitation experiences during his regular meetings with his mentor.

26) Organize, and submit to the Candidates and Exams Committee, a working bibliography of counseling material.

This will include the intern's own counseling tools as well as a workable list of books that he can point his people towards regarding specific issues. The list of resources should address (but not be limited to) such topics as divorce recovery, parenting, addiction, depression and anxiety, marital issues, forgiveness, and finding purpose/ calling.

27) Interview a Christian counselor and (if possible) sit in on several counseling sessions with counselor or pastor.

28) Submit to the Candidates and Exams Committee a detailed funeral service with a plan for how to conduct the service, the visitation, the graveside service and counsel the family before, during, and after the funeral.

29) Submit to the Candidates and Exams Committee a basic wedding service template that includes the elements of the service, outlines the choices for vows, and notes some of the ways in which a couple can personalize the service.

This is meant to be a tool to give to an engaged couple to help them in planning their wedding service. A scripture passage and outline should be included, but a full homily need not be.

30) Discuss with your mentor his strategy for pre-marital counseling.

31) When possible, each intern is required to attend a funeral with a pastor/mentor and interview/debrief with the entire process with him.

D. Reputation and relationship with non-believers

The tendency for seminary students is to be insulated within the church and seminary community to the neglect of cultivating vital relationships with those outside of the church; however, Paul makes it patently clear that the office of elder is not just one of nurture and perfecting the saints but also engaging and gathering them. Therefore, as a formal portion of the internship, the committee requires that an intern be diligent in developing relationships with non-Christians in hopes of pointing them to God's grace in Christ.

32) Pray for opportunities to build relationships with non-Christians

33) Make a list of current relationships to unbelievers and articulate what a "next step" would look like to engage them with the gospel.

34) Identify viable "fishing pools" that might yield meaningful chances to learn about the mind and culture of those outside of the church as well

as afford chances to give a reason for the hope that is within you.

35) Ask your non-believing friends to give you a candid assessment of what they understand about Christians and how they regard Christianity.

36) Plan how you and your family will continue to build and deepen such relationships within the context of vocational ministry.

The goal of these last five assignments is intentionality and availability. The intern should be assessing their own level of gospel presence in the lives of non-believers, and taking steps to deepen their relationships with these people. Progress in this area should be a regular topic of prayerful discussion between mentor and intern. The Candidates and Exams Committee is available to assist in opportunities and resources to complete the internship.

While the BCO requires a period of training that is normally at least one year in length, the goal for each intern should be to get a well-grounded experience that addresses the areas mentioned here, and we encourage interns to think of this as an apprenticeship, not a set time-period. In other words, the goal is not to hurry through. The committee reserves the right to exhort an intern to further training in a given area if his experience in that area is deemed deficient.

When you do feel you have completed your internship, the **written assignments (5,16, 17, 18, 26, 28, and 29)** along with an **intern completion form** should be submitted to the committee chairman. Your mentor is also required to complete a **mentor evaluation**. Both of these forms are available on the website, www.cvppca.org.

Ministry Target Tracks

Taking into account the wide range of specialties within the office of teaching elder, the committee has found it helpful to identify various “tracks” to allow an internship to carry a specific emphasis. A mentor and intern should discuss any special training needed for the role being pursued, so as to make thoughtful and thorough preparation in these specialized areas.

RUF

Essentials:

Develop a rubric for pre-engagement counseling that helps couples decide whether or not they are ready to get engaged

Develop a rubric for pre-marital counseling that takes an engaged couple from their decision to get married through their wedding day.

Devise a plan for training students to lead small group Bible studies and prayer groups. Interview a current RUF campus minister (using a comprehensive list of questions concerning scheduling, development, preaching, working with administration, core group, vacation, etc)

Devise a plan for crisis counseling and one-to-one discipleship for students

Church Planting

Essentials:

Interview Church planters

Begin working on your Church Planting Vision Statement

Development and fund-raising strategy

Interview a city planner regarding the demographics of your city

Write out what your church plant's shepherding structure will be

Develop your first Officer training plan

Write out your Children's ministry philosophy

Explain your Outreach strategy and posture towards the culture (Christ in culture,

Christ against culture)

Define your Visitor Integration Plan

Write out a rough draft of your New Members class

Assistant/Associate Pastor

Essentials:

Write out your vision statement for your particular area of ministry

Explain your Leader Development Philosophy

Lead a Small Group

Pastoral Visits

Administrative Plans (oversight of office)

Session Committee oversight