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Respondent

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Anonymous

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Personal Information

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4. Date

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5. Are you a member of our Church?

Yes

No

6. Describe your previous experiences of serving in the local church

I have served at SCBC in multiple roles, including as part of the summer ministry team (2022), AV team, worship team, and other areas as the need arose.

7. Who are you discipling and what does that look like?

In addition to supporting teaching and discipling in our SCBC men's ministry, I strive to disciple my girlfriend through our relationship daily, and am actively discipling some of my Christian coworkers through encouragement in God's word and helping them see workplace and life issues through a biblical lens.

8. Describe the commitments you have put into your life to keep yourself above reproach in the areas of your past sin struggles

I have committed myself to the truth that 'Jesus is better', meaning that when I am prone to wander away from the Word of God, I remind myself that I've died to my old self and have been freed through Christ. Although sin still surfaces and each day is a battle against sin, I make every effort to be in God's Word daily and regularly gather together with believers to keep my focus on Christ alone.

9. Are you aware of any relational problems that would hinder your service as an elder to our church?

No

Family Questions

10. If married, can you tell us the condition and quality of your relationship with your wife at the present time?

N/A

11. Is your wife supportive of your involvement at the level of leadership in the church and does she believe you are a good fit for this role? If so, why?

N/A

12. Is your wife in submission to your leadership within the home and in spiritual matters?

N/A

13. Describe your relationship to your children. If they are grown do you know of any hesitations they would have about your serving the church in this capacity?

N/A

Theology Questions

14. What is the gospel?

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ, who is the only way, truth and life. Jesus is God's only son, and was sent to live a sinless life and died on the cross to save His people from their sins. This is a free gift of God, and all that is required is to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We will immediately be justified, and will continually be sanctified as we continue our relationship with the Lord.

15. What do you believe to be the purpose of the local church?

The purpose of the local church is to worship God together as a body of local believers, to disciple believers, and to serve as a beacon of Light to the community around us.

16. Based on your understanding of Scriptures, what are the primary roles of an Elder?

The primary roles of an elder are to lead and oversee the church. This may include teaching, preaching, organizational support, care for the members, and protecting the church against false doctrine.

17. Do you have any hesitations about the faith statement of Songtan Central Baptist Church? If so, what are they?

No

18. How would you characterize your knowledge of the scriptures and your familiarity with its teachings?

I am knowledgeable of the scriptures and familiar with biblical teachings, and am able to articulate most biblical truths and doctrines. However, I have no formal or academic training related to the Bible.

19. Do you believe in the Trinity?

Yes

20. Do you believe in a six literal day creation?

Yes

21. Do you believe in the doctrines of grace? Why or why not?

Yes, I believe that these doctrines are important and clearly articulate the attributes of God as well as the state of man. Mankind is totally depraved, meaning we have no hope outside of God's grace. I do not believe that we can take credit for our own conversion, therefore God must have a hand in calling us to Him. Christ only atones those who have accepted Him as Savior, however there is no sinner that God cannot cleanse; God will save all who turn to Him. I also believe in eternal salvation; no one can be snatched from God's hand.

22. What are some theological issues that you think are especially important for Christians to get right in this time and place?

I think that Christians must remember and expect that we will encounter suffering and persecution when we choose to live for Christ. The world is becoming increasingly hostile toward God's word and therefore God's people. We must stand firm, regardless of what others think, say or do. No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

23. Who is the Holy Spirit? What role does the Holy Spirit play in the life of a believer?

The Holy Spirit is the 3rd member of the trinity, and is fully God and fully Spirit. He was given to us upon the ascension of Jesus, to live and work within us. He lives in us when we receive salvation. He convicts us of our sin, and gives us new life in Christ.

24. What is the doctrine of redemption? How do you reconcile man's responsibility and God's sovereignty in the salvation of a believer?

We were bought with a price - Jesus's blood and death on the cross. God purchased us with his Son's life, and we have been redeemed through Him. We have the responsibility to believe this and accept salvation, and as believers we are called to follow God's word and live a life of continual sanctification.

25. What is baptism? Who is it for? What does it do, mean, or symbolize? What is your view on infant baptism?

Baptism is the public profession of faith. Baptism symbolizes the death and burial of the old man, and the new life that has risen through a new birth in Christ. I believe that baptism should be fully-immersive to demonstrate this full burial and resurrections of new life. I do not believe in infant baptism, as baptism should be reserved for those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is not a saving act.

26. What role in leadership do you believe women should have within the church? In what context should they teach? Are there any restrictions?

Women clearly have an important role within the church, but leadership roles, teaching and preaching in front of the church should be reserved for men. 1 Timothy 2:12 is clear: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet." Though there are many roles, functions and duties for women in the church, in regards to leadership roles in particular, leadership and teaching should be reserved to women and children.

27. Why do trials occur? What is the purpose of suffering?

Suffering and trials are to be expected: "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12). We experience trials just as Jesus experienced trials and suffering during his time on earth. We may not always know why we're experiencing suffering or trials in the moment, but ultimately our faith will grow after passing through trials. "This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

28. What is church Membership?

Church membership is the formal membership into a local body of believers. Members are expected to be active, affirm the statement of faith with all other members, seek to be disciplined, and disciple others. All members have a duty to grow in faith and participate in the advancement of the gospel. Further, the member commits to service in the church and to be led by the leaders of the local church body.

29. What is biblical community? Should a church require it, and if so, why?

Biblical community is an extension of the church, beyond typical church services and gatherings. Biblical community is formed when members actively seek to know and be known by other believers. This is particularly important in a church like SCBC, when so many are far from home and desire a family to continue growing and abiding in Christ. I think churches should encourage such community and provide opportunities for its members to get connected with each other.

30. What is biblical accountability? Are there any areas that are off-limits within an accountability relationship? Why or why not?

Biblical accountability is an important aspect of a church. We must form relationships and rely on each other to create a biblical culture of accountability. When we are consistently focus on sharing our struggles and encouraging each other in the love of Christ, we will be better equipped to battle sin and point each other to Christ. I believe that accountability works best when believers are completely transparent with each other, but this requires trust. Smaller groups or 1-on-1 relationships are ideal in order to build trust and ensure discretion.

31. What is church discipline? How would you support it biblically? How should it be used within the body?

Church discipline is necessary and beneficial for the church body. It starts by one believer privately discussing the sin with the member. If there is no repentance, one or two others are brought along to discuss the sin and call for repentance. This continues up to a discussion with church leadership, and if still no repentance, the issue will be addressed as a church body. Church discipline is important because we must maintain a body of faithful and Bible-centered believers. By allowing one to stray and stay in sin, the body is weakened and susceptible to further sin and harm.

32. What is the will of God? How can a believer discern God's will in the day to day matters of life?

The will of God is to live according to His word, and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Beyond this, we can discern God's will for our lives by abiding in Him through scripture reading, prayer, and regular assembly with other believers. While God may never audibly speak to us, we can begin to discern His will through these regular connections.

Practical Questions

33. Do you understand the difference between biblical convictions and personal preferences?

Biblical convictions are those which have been clearly outlined and addressed in Scripture. For example, we should not steal - this is clear throughout Scripture. Personal preferences are not specifically addressed in Scripture. For example, there is no passage that forbids the playing of a particular musical instrument in worship. This would be a personal preference, not a biblical conviction.

34. How do you tend to respond when disagreements or conflicts arise?

I tend to first respond by listening to all sides of the disagreement, and attempting to understand where the disconnection lies. Often times, two people or groups want a similar result but may disagree on the path to get there. I believe it is important to refocus the discussion on the desired result, rather than becoming stuck on deciding which path is taken. Finding a common goal is a key first step to conflict resolution.

35. How should a Christian think about politics? What is the framework a believer should use to decide who to support politically?

A Christian should always use a biblical framework when deciding who to support politically. For example, abortion and religious liberty may be topics of high priority when casting a vote for a candidate, along with other factors that can be considered through a biblical lens.

36. What does it mean to be pro-life? How would you counsel a couple or individual who was considering an abortion?

Being pro-life means that I believe life begins at conception. All human life is precious to God, and abortion should not be considered simply out of convenience or personal choice, no matter how long the child has been conceived. I would counsel a couple or individual through Scripture and help them view such sanctity of life through God's word.

37. How do you respond to criticism? What do you do if things do not go your way?

I try to respond to all criticism with grace, and to assume the criticism is coming from a place of love and desire to see improvement. I prayerfully consider the criticism and ask God to show me if it is an area in which I can improve. When things don't go my way, I try to understand the reason behind it and humbly accept it. Though not always easy, I believe there is greater value in cohesion than in my personal preferences.

38. Who do you have in your life that tells you the truth even when it is difficult to hear? How do you respond to them?

My parents, my girlfriend, and a few close friends. When they point out things that are true but difficult to hear, I know that they're coming from a place of genuine love and concern. I respond by asking questions and attempting to understand how they think I can improve and/or repent. I then seek repentance and ask God to help me overcome this difficulty in my life.

39. How do you tend to handle stress or pressure? Give an example.

I tend to handle stress by considering the situation prayerfully and logically. Though the situation may not be ideal, what can be changed? What am I worrying about that cannot be changed? And how can I ensure I do my best to get through the situation? Rather than panic, I know that prayer and quick action will be the best way forward.

40. What is a biblical view of monetary giving? Is tithing biblical? What is different between giving in the Old and New Testament?

35. I believe tithing is biblical and commanded in the Old Testament, but since we are free from the law after Jesus' death and resurrection, I believe that a New Testament view of monetary giving is to give cheerfully, as one has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion. My favorite Bible verse is Acts 20:35, which tells us that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Therefore based on Scripture, monetary giving is biblical and expected.

41. What do you see as the greatest need in our local church today?

I believe that the greatest need in our local church is to form closer relationships as a body of believers. It is through these relationships that the church will thrive, ministries will be built, and discipleship will be strengthened.

42. As applied to an Elder Team, what is your understanding of "plurality of leadership" and "consensus in decision making"?

I believe that an elder team allows for multiple leaders to convene and seek biblical consensus together as a body of leaders. Rather than relying on one pastor or elder to make unilateral decisions for the church, a larger body of trusted leaders will be better equipped and accountable to make biblical decisions within the church.

43. Why do you desire to serve the church as an elder?

I desire to serve SCBC as an elder because I love God and I love this church, and I want to see the body grow in faith and number. Though my experience in church leadership is limited, I have a heart for the church and want to serve in this role to the best of my ability.

Personal Questions

44. How did you become a Christian?

I became a Christian at the age of 8 years old, through attending church and my parents' teaching. Though I didn't fully understand everything at the time, I knew that I needed Jesus' salvation for the sins I had committed.

45. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus now?

Since becoming a Christian at the age of 8, my relationship has grown and my faith has taken deeper root each day. I rely on Jesus to help me each day, and I know that He is the one leading my life. I seek to know and serve Him, so that my life can be used as He wills for His purpose.

46. How do you regularly pursue holiness and communion with God?

I regularly read and study scripture, and set aside times for prayer throughout the week. My desire is to abide in Him, so that I may continue to grow in knowledge and relationship with Him.

47. What is your current personal plan to be growing in Christ (Bible reading, scripture memorization, prayer, etc.)?

My current plan is one chapter of scripture to study per day, and one time of focused and intentional prayer per day. These are the minimum goals for my personal plan, but I often find myself referencing other scriptures or praying for other reasons/requests throughout the day.

48. In other words, what are some personal convictions in your life?

49. What are some things we might not like about you if we knew them (theological views, personal weaknesses)?

I've put a lot of thought into this question, and I think my greatest personal weakness is that I am often tempted to find an excuse for something rather than taking ownership. This is something I'm working to overcome. With Christ's strength, the accountability among the church elders, and through the support of the church, I know Christ can help me overcome this weakness.

50. What sins do you struggle with most?

The two sins I struggle with most are probably pride and lust. I occasionally find myself thinking about how 'I did (or can do) something, or I may be reluctant to ask for help. Lust is a temptation that seems to attack often, but I have learned and am practicing strategies to push it away and redirect my mind. These and other sins are a constant battle, but Christ is on my side - and He is helping me actively fight against them in pursuit of sanctification.