

## **Pastor of Worship and Connections**

### *APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE*

**Name:** Gamaliel Ortiz

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#### **Personal:**

1. Briefly describe your personal conversion to Christ and your identification with his Church. What evidence in your life helps you to know that your conversion is genuine?

I was exposed to the gospel at a very young age, as I grew up with Christian parents. I had acknowledged an understanding of who Jesus is and what he had done for me, however, it did not take root in me until I was 20 years old. In my first year of college, I got my girlfriend pregnant and we decided to get married. When my that child was born, that's when I actually surrendered my life to Jesus, recognizing I was in over my head and I needed him. The gravity of all that I had learned about God growing up became real and relevant to me. Though all of my life I have been part of a local church, I was then a belonging member of the body of Christ and began to serve in the local church wherever I was attending.

I know who I am without Christ, and it's not pretty. I managed to destroy a lot on my own. But I've also come to know who I am in Jesus. There are still times when I catch a glimpse of the old man in me, which drives me to deny myself in order that I can be more like Christ. This is in large part evidenced in my relationships with people, dealing with them as Jesus calls us to and the Holy Spirit enables me, rather than how I would want to. Additionally, I seek to follow God's will for my life, rather than my own. My will would have me still serving in the military and getting ready to retire, while God called me out of that in order to pursue full-time service to his Church. Additionally, as a result of my own personal experience with Jesus, I want others to experience him as well and have the opportunity to follow him, which leads me to seek opportunities to disciple others.

2. Describe your spiritual journey over the past few months. What has God been teaching you?

Over the last few months, God has been showing me how I still depend on myself, rather than him in many ways. Through that, he's teaching me complete dependence on him. Part of that has been letting go of my plans in order to be 100% engaged in the direction God is leading. One example of that has been in this job search process. My plan would be to throw applications out everywhere and see what sticks. God has really impressed upon me to not do it that way, but to walk the process out with Kossuth, wherever that may lead. As nerve-wracking as that is for me, I know that he is continuing to develop, shape, and mold me into the image of his Son.

3. How do you personally pursue God and His righteousness? Describe how you practice the discipline of daily Bible reading and prayer.

I need to meet with God first thing in the morning. If I don't, it just doesn't happen, even if I have the best intentions. I'm a morning person, so I get up and read a passage, then pray and meditate on it before going on with my day. I just recently finished going

through the book of Matthew and have started digging into Daniel. In between, I spent a week in a psalm (Psalm 63 this time). Through Matthew, my prayer time often focused on asking God to make me more like Jesus in specific traits that I was reading. During Psalm 63, I spent time asking God to give me a true heart of worship – a heart that seeks him above all else. This study in Daniel is timely - in focusing on God's sovereignty, as I've been working through dependence on him. I have a schedule of what I pray for each day, aside from my personal worship and needs.

4. Who helps you stay accountable to God and to spiritual disciplines? Describe your relationship with your accountability partner(s).

Apart from my wife, who does help me stay accountable to God and to spiritual disciplines, I have two other accountability partners who are brothers to me. One of them is actually a brother-in-law from Cathi's side of the family. The other is a good friend and was a co-pastor from my home church in Oklahoma (Dayspring). With both of these men, I chat with at least on a weekly basis whether on the phone or some other means (typically a video chat). We are completely open and honest with each other on every aspect of life – personal walk, marriage, and ministry. They both know my personal weak spots and ask me about them and I likewise do with them. We also pray for each other consistently.

5. Describe your family and their partnership in your ministry. How do you balance your ministry and family responsibilities?

My wife, Cathi, has been not just my wife, but my primary partner in ministry since we've been married. Predominantly, I've been leading worship through music alongside of her for that last 16 years. As I started teaching and preaching, she has been a most helpful sounding board to help me improve. She also compliments me in so many ways. I am an introvert, while she is extroverted. We've led small groups and Bible studies together where she fully engages the hosting aspect and has helped me understand what it is to be a gracious host while I tackle the study or discussion itself. My older kids, 3 of them now teenagers, often help care for other children in the group, so that their parents can be fully engaged in the group.

We believe that our family is our first ministry. Before school each morning (Monday – Friday), I lead devotions and pray with our kids. Each night, we pray and bless the kids before they go to sleep. We have one day a week reserved for us to be a family, regardless of what the rest of the week looks like. In this season of life, it's been a struggle to stay true to that, but we're making efforts to make it work. I teach Saturday mornings from 8 to 10 at the Bible school and am home by 11am. Cathi and the kids clean the house while I'm at school. The rest of the day is then spent together. We also believe one of the best things we can do as parents is to prioritize our marriage. Sunday evenings is my date night with Cathi. We don't often leave the house to do anything other than on occasion, but the kids know that time is reserved for us to be together each week.

**Experience:**

6. Describe an experience in which you have had to counsel someone through a difficult issue.

I have counseled a gentleman whose wife had an affair and due to his anger, she got a restraining order on him. During the separation, he came to see me. We spoke and focused on his side of the equation and remaining centered on Christ. After 9 months, she filed for divorce. However, he continues to be a strong part of his kids' lives, still talks of reconciliation, and keeps looking to God as his anchor.

7. Describe your teaching/preaching experience. What evidence indicates that God uses your ministry of the Word to build and equip his people? What teaching/preaching settings do you gravitate toward (e.g. small group, class, sermon, etc.)?

When I started preaching on occasion shortly after starting seminary, I was not a good communicator. At least not in the pulpit setting. As previously stated, I am an introvert and speaking in front of large crowds was intimidating (particularly if I wasn't behind an instrument). It wasn't until moving to Haiti and preaching very regularly (at least once a month for 3+ years) that I became passionate about communicating God's word. There were relationships and mentorships that came out of that preaching ministry. One gentleman in particular would always tell me that he looked forward to my preaching because he walked away with a greater understanding of Scripture every time. Now, he hosts a Bible study at his house that I am equipping him to lead. I currently teach in a variety of settings. I teach at a Bible school, I lead two small groups (one in English, another in Creole), and I preach once a month at the church we attend. The majority of my experience is in small group settings and find it to be most rewarding, because I get to see how God's word takes root in people and the results from the application to their lives.

8. How can a church practically equip others for fruitful ministry? Describe how you have personally equipped others. How has an equipping mindset impacted how you pastor?

There are several steps and stages in equipping others for fruitful ministry. One crucial step is in identifying the God-given capabilities and passions of a leader for ministry. Once identified, that person can greatly benefit from shadowing or seeing a practical model from which to learn and in such a way be equipped. Likewise, intentional teaching/mentoring for and through the ministry experience is a great equipping tool. One such an example that I am currently in the middle of is a small group ministry. As I prayed last year about starting a Haitian Bible study/small group in this community, I prayed for an individual to host the group. God identified an individual to me who has the capacity to not only host, but also to lead the group, with a passion for his word. We just finished doing a 12-week Bible study in his home with people he had invited to be a part of it. All through the study, I asked him to take more and more responsibilities with the group. By the end of the time, he was completely leading the group.

That equipping mindset has made me approach many things with the mentality of working myself out of a job. That doesn't just have to be the case here in Haiti, where it's

appropriate for Haitians to lead in their own cultural context. It's important in the States as well. I have to be willing to recognize that I can't do everything – let alone do everything well. There are people that God has equipped to do things that I am not good at. If I insist on doing everything, first of all, I am not going to do everything well, but I am also robbing someone else of the blessing of using their talents to the glory of God. My role in such situations is to guide and steer, perhaps, while they run with it. It also “forces” me to look and pray for investment opportunities.

9. Describe an experience you have had in mentoring someone? Describe an experience you have had in raising up and training someone for ministry?

As a youth pastor at Dayspring, there was a teenage girl in the youth group who grew up without a father. She gravitated toward our family and I sensed God wanted me to mentor her from a fatherly perspective. Cathi and I brought her into our home (as a second home, not replacing hers or her mother's) like a daughter to us and older sibling to our kids. She had several years watching Cathi's and my marriage and how we parented our kids. As time went by and she began dating, the young man she had been seeing came to me to ask for her hand in marriage and I entered into a mentoring relationship with him as well. As life pulled us in different directions – our family in Haiti and they stayed there at Dayspring, we've remained in contact. They now live in our house in Oklahoma (the very one she had been welcomed into), have two kids and continue to be involved in the church, she as one of the worship leaders. On one of our trips back to the US, we went out to lunch with this family we now cherish as dear friends. Cathi and I watched as one of their boys was getting unruly and how they dealt with that in public. We wanted to encourage them and told them we appreciated how they have grown as parents and such. It was they who encouraged us as they told us that they learned how to parent from us because they didn't have that example in their homes growing up.

Likewise, here in Haiti, I have been mentoring a local Haitian for the last three years. After one of my seminars, he approached me and said he wanted to learn more from me. We began meeting once a week to talk about Scripture and its application to daily life. We talked about theology and practical ministry. He began leading Bible studies and seminars where he shared and expounded on the very things we had spent time discussing. At one point, he lived in our house in transition from one living situation to another and also had the opportunity to see my marriage and parenting up close. He moved to a house about a mile away from mine. It's been humbling to see some of the things he witnessed in my house being applied in their home and in his ministry to others. Within the last year, I ran into someone who asked me if I knew anyone fit to lead a church as a pastor in this community so I connected the two men. The one I've been mentoring is now pastoring that church. Aside from that, he has formed a mentoring relationship with several other young men that he is raising up in the same way that I disciplined him, in order that they may continue that cycle going forward.

**Philosophy of Ministry:**

10. What do you consider to be the primary purpose(s) and responsibilities of a local church?  
What do you look for as evidence of a healthy church?

We know that our primary purpose as the pinnacle of God's creation is to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7; 1 Cor. 10:31). The local church's first purpose is also to glorify and worship God. Additionally, we see Jesus' last command is to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them everything Jesus taught (Matt. 28:19-20). These stand out to me as the two primary purposes of the church – to worship God and make disciples who worship God, so that he may be glorified. In also looking at the gifts that God has given the church (Eph. 4:11-12), we find responsibilities stemming from those roles of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (shepherds), and teachers. I believe the early church in Acts 2:42-47, gives us a picture of a healthy church as one in which these elements are present: worship, fellowship, service, and equipping.

11. Describe a healthy leadership team and your values in how a leadership team should function together in life and ministry.

I've heard it put best in that a healthy leadership team breeds the kind of culture where doing ministry together is joyful. There is unity. This doesn't mean that everyone agrees on everything, but there is joy even in the disagreements. There is also dependence on each other. This isn't just for productivity or ministry, but also for personal growth and development. The involvement with one another goes beyond the walls of the building and into the homes and families as well.

12. What would you consider to be the primary role and responsibilities of an elder? A deacon? What do you value (and what are your concerns) about plural-elder leadership as compared to a "senior pastor" model? Within the elder team, what distinct role and responsibilities do you see for a "lead elder" as the "first among equals"?

Acts 6 gives us a good starting point for this discussion. We see the apostles appoint 7 men "to serve" so that they could focus on the ministry of the word and prayer. Inherent in this appointment, the apostles/elders show they have oversight of the church. Putting it simply, the deacons are charged with attending to physical and administrative matters of the church so that the elders can take on the oversight of the church through prayer, teaching, and shepherding.

I have no concerns with the plural-elder leadership. Some of the advantages of this shared leadership include balance, accountability, and example. By balance, I mean that the elders complement each other – where one is weaker, another will undoubtedly be stronger. This applies to practical matters as well as wisdom and experience. The church, then, which tends to mirror the leadership, is not "doomed" to mirror the faults, quirks, etc. of one leader, but can be balanced by the plurality. In accountability, the group holds each other accountable to live, teach, and lead with biblical faithfulness. Additionally, since there is not one over the whole church, there is accountability against "lording it over them." By example, I mean that the eldership models the unity with which Christ taught us and provides an example of working together. A "lead elder" then provides structure and efficiency to the group of elders.

13. After having read our [church constitution](#), do you have any questions or concerns with working under its articles and bylaws? Are you in full agreement with our [Statement of Faith](#), and if not, where do you differ?

I have read the church constitution and have no concerns. Likewise, I have read the Statement of Faith and am in full agreement.

14. Our Ministry Model and strategic plan operate around the words Gather → Grow → Scatter. (*Gather to encounter the grace and glory of God in worship, Grow to become mature followers of Christ, and Scatter to make disciples in our neighborhood and among the nations.*) How do you understand the church's responsibility to Gather? How should it lead its members to encounter the grace and glory of God in worship? Include your philosophy of ministry as it relates to worship.

As stated previously, corporate worship is one of the elements of a healthy local church body. In the Acts 2 church, we see them devoted to the teaching of the word, fellowship, and prayer; gathering for worship both publicly (at the temple) and privately (breaking bread in their homes). This corporate worship allowed them to be encouraged, challenged, and equipped. Corporate worship is also an expression of unity – which Scripture stresses time and again for the body of Christ. In his high priestly prayer, Jesus prays, “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one” (John 17:22). By our unity, not only do we proclaim Jesus (vv. 21, 23), but we also experience the glory – and grace – of God.

Our fellowship is also an expression of unity and worship. As we seek to honor God in our relationships with each other, we experience his grace through one another. God lives in perfect fellowship and harmony within his Triune nature and desires for us to do the same our fellowship with one another. In our relationships we ought to be pointing each other back to Christ, thereby communicating the love, glory, and grace of God. The same can be said of service – an expression of worship to God. The reality is that worship isn't one single aspect of our lives. We were created to be beings that worship. As such, all that we do is worship (1 Cor. 10:31) which ought to be directed towards our Creator. As we gather, we encourage each other to this end – to worship God in our everyday lives. We then go out and glorify God in our individual walks with him and then gather again to celebrate corporately God's work in our lives. This celebration often includes music, which comes from the heart and identity (culture) of the church expressed as worship to God.

15. How do you understand the church's responsibility to Grow? How should its members be pursuing Christ-like maturity? Include your philosophy of ministry as it relates to discipleship.

The church's responsibility to grow directly correlates to making disciples. Jesus' last command to his disciples wasn't just to make converts, but to make disciples, “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). Ephesians 4:13-16 calls us to grow individually and as a body “in the knowledge of the Son of God” so that we are not deceived. We are to grow in maturity, “into Christ”, the head of the church, so

that we can work together and build the church up in love. Referencing the early church again in Acts 2:42, we see believers devoting themselves to teaching. The church is called to teach right doctrine (orthodoxy), but making disciples goes beyond that to also teaching the “how” to put that into practice in everyday life (orthopraxy). This involves modeling that lifestyle for others and entering into meaningful relationships where both orthodoxy and orthopraxy have an opportunity to take root and flourish.

16. How do you understand the church’s responsibility to Scatter? How should its members be engaged in reaching their neighborhoods and the nations? Include your philosophy of ministry as it relates to outreach.

The church’s responsibility to scatter is centered on a missional heart. Going back to Jesus’ last command, we are called to make disciples of all nations. This mission and responsibility begins, is sustained, and ends with God himself. The precursor to this command was Jesus’ statement that he possesses all authority. It is in that authority that we go to make disciples. Jesus modeled mission for us in coming to us as flesh. He became like us, while remaining fully God. As we imitate his model, we must cling to our identity in Christ, while bridging the gap of differences in order to relate to and reach the lost. While this is easily seen in cross-cultural missions, it is the same in local outreach. We are to engage the lost in the world and in our own communities, seeking opportunities to relate to them, to proclaim Jesus and make disciples that follow him.

17. A significant part of this role has been titled "Connections." What practical steps do you envision a church could take to "connect" (a) newcomers into the life of the church, (b) regular attenders into growth and ministry opportunities, and (c) the church to the local community in reaching unbelievers?

I think it’s hard to answer this question without fully knowing the culture of the church. However, generally speaking, newcomers need to feel welcome from the start. Welcome teams or first impressions teams exist to ensure that new people at services feel that connection right away. As next steps, there are churches that use newcomers briefings or classes to inform newcomers of the doctrine, governance, and ministries of the church. Initial interaction with them should be used to identify potential ministries with which they could connect. Specifically, there should be an effort to connect them with a smaller group within the body. As leaders and others in the body get to know newcomers, they should be getting to see and know strengths, talents, passions and then point them towards those opportunities that would allow growth and ministry to happen for that individual. As with the newcomers classes, some churches have follow-up classes or groups that help folks identify some of those passions and talents and where or in what capacity they might best serve in the church body. Apart from encouraging the church body to engage their community in reaching the lost, the leadership should also be continually looking (whether personally or through others) for appropriate ways the church can serve the community at large and specifically in reaching unbelievers with the gospel. Evangelism or discipleship training could be a part of the equipping to connect in those opportunities.

**Character/Qualifications:**

18. Do you have a willingness and desire to be an elder? If so, briefly discuss your understanding of and desire for eldership. If not, how would you want to relate to and interact with the elder team?

I do have a willingness and a desire to be an elder. Looking back over the last ten years and even beyond, I can see how God has been preparing me to do so. I've been mentored by some great leaders, had the opportunity to serve first as a lay person, lay leader in the church, and then called to full-time ministry. Even after that call and initial step, I believe that my time in the ministry so far has been a continuation of training and molding. Not that I have arrived anywhere in particular, but this would be a continuation of what God has already been doing and how he has been leading me forward.

19. Using 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, explain each qualification of eldership and how you have grown in your understanding/practice of each:

The first qualification in 1 Timothy is to be above reproach; while this would seem to indicate someone needs to be perfect, we know that to be impossible. However, an elder should be someone who is currently living submitted to Jesus Christ, walking in the Spirit, so that his life is an example to others. "The husband of one wife" would indicate that an elder, if married, is currently in a healthy, faithful marriage. I believe sober-minded, self-controlled, not a drunkard, and not a lover of money all walk hand in hand. An elder should not be one controlled either by substances, or vices (drugs, alcohol, money, etc.) or by the flesh. Respectable, hospitable, and not violent or quarrelsome all indicate a gentle disposition, as is specifically mentioned. They also point to an approachable person. The next section says, "He must manage his own household well." As far as it depends on him, he ought to be living in accordance with the biblical expectations of a believer as he leads his home. It specifically mentions his children as being kept submissive. In general, I take that to indicate that an elder ought to be discipling his own family, particularly his children. He is the head of the house and responsible for the conduct within it as well, therefore, he needs to be proactive in managing it. Verse 6 states that he must not be a recent convert. There must be time for maturity and growth in the Lord to occur before responsibility for the church is put on his shoulders. Additionally, the last qualification mentioned here says that even outside the church, the elder ought to have a good reputation.

Titus 1:9 adds that, "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." This goes along with 1 Timothy 3:2, "able to teach." This points not just to a qualification to be able to teach, but also to a responsibility that comes with this position, which is to teach the word.

20. Describe your philosophy and method of parenting with sufficient examples that illustrate how you follow this. How have you grown as a husband in recent years? As a father?

I believe my family is my first ministry and my kids are my first mission field. I have a God-given responsibility to them to raise them in the knowledge of him. Deuteronomy 6 has been what I aspire to as a father. One of the principles there is to be an example to

my kids as I love God with all that I am. Verses 7 through 9 tell me to take every opportunity possible as teaching moments. Raising them up as disciples of Christ requires intentional training in both formal and informal settings. I need to be deliberately teaching and leading them as well as staying vigilant for opportunities in the everyday activities.

I currently lead my children in studying the Bible every Monday through Friday morning. We sit together to read a passage of Scripture, talk and discuss it, then pray together. Every evening Cathi and I pray with them and I bless them before they go to bed. I ask the kids often what they're reading and studying in God's word and what they're learning. Whenever there are discipline issues, Cathi and I both make every effort to point them back to God and his word. Just the other day, one of my kids responded to a situation in unjustified anger. Knowing we'd all recently memorized a passage having to do with anger, I brought it up. As a result, this child decided (on his own) to do a word study on anger and spend the rest of that day in fasting. That was the conviction of the Holy Spirit at work and I am grateful for it. I pray that each of my kids has that heart towards God. One way that I have grown as a father in recent years is in learning the power of my apology. I have learned that apologizing to my children is incredibly important.

As a husband, I have grown in my ability to love selflessly. As with many things in my life and walk with God, it's still a work in progress. I know that Cathi feels most loved through serving her – helping her around the house and doing things for her, particularly without her having to ask for the help. I am working at denying myself and laying aside my preferences in order to serve and love her better.

21. Please have your wife write a few paragraphs sharing her perspective of your serving as a pastor. We are interested to have her comment on your walk with God, your love for her and your children, your management of your marriage and family and a direct statement of her level of support of your vocational ministry. Have her share some examples of how you have grown as a husband and father in recent years.

One of the greatest blessings in our marriage and family is the way in which Gami leads our home. Our teen daughter recently told him, "You treat all your girls like princesses." This is true. He seeks to embody the admonition for him to love me "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." He loves me sacrificially and happily. He is my greatest support and encouragement as He prays for me and works to gently lead me ever closer to God. In so doing, our kids are witnessing what true love is in marriage. It is our goal to love each other the way Christ loves us, and to model it well for our children. In the same way, Gami is an incredible father, who loves his children uniquely and deeply. His ultimate goal is to lead them into the Father's hands. He does this via regular Bible studies with them, and availability to talk with them in whatever may be on their heart(s). He always reminds them that we are first children of God, and that His standards are what matter. He points them back to Scripture and to God in every possible situation, seeking to never miss the opportunity for discipleship in our home. Our older children have come to recognize this and have listed it to be one of the things they appreciate about him the most. As in every home, we do not always do it perfectly

and sometimes we completely miss the mark. When Gami does this, he humbles himself and apologizes to whomever he let down, modeling confession and forgiveness.

One of the biggest areas of growth in recent years has been learning how to love teenage daughters. Anyone who has lived that knows that teenage daughters can be a little dramatic and needy (or a lot of both, haha). Our girls are loud – pretty typical. Gami is a quiet introvert. Yet, he wants to love our girls well. So he sits and listens to them chatter “a million miles a minute” about absolutely nothing. He hugs them tightly and laughs with them. He teases them as only a father can do. He advises them and helps them with homework. He has grown so much in this area that it no longer takes many tips from me or reminders about how much a teen girl needs their dad. He gets it, and he lives it well.

In addition to loving our daughters well, he is walking the transition with our oldest as he finishes high school. Add a very active 9-year old boy to the mix, and God is stretching us both as parents. One of the challenges Gami has worked through is learning how to teach younger kids. He is brilliant, and a theologian at heart. Trying to explain Biblical matters to a child is not something that comes easily. However, he has really put in the effort to learn how to do this in recent years so that our children grasp more of the truth of God’s Word.

Gami, being the schedule-oriented one in our marriage, is gracious to remind me (and our children) to not let time slip away. We have a day each week that is dedicated to our family. We also have a weekly date night as a couple. During these times, we seek to enjoy time together, serve one another, laugh, share stories, etc. We all cherish these times and believe it is a piece of what makes us a strong family. It is a physical reminder that family is the top priority, second only to God. Gami has worked hard to instill this in our children and model it for them. He and I work together to ensure we do not allow ministry, work, friends, or anything else take these moments from us. We hold each other accountable to guarding our time as a family so that our kids have no doubt that we know they are our first priority. We believe that God has called us to raise them up as disciples. They were directly given to us, our first mission field.

In order for Gami to love us so fiercely, and draw us closer to God, he must ever be drawing closer to God himself. He is a student by nature, and habitual as well. He spends time in the Word each day but has grown in recent years to go beyond the study of Scripture for study’s sake. He seeks God’s will through the study of His Word and can often be heard breaking out in song – or writing a new song – as He is moved during this time with God. He has learned to “feed himself” spiritually speaking, so that time under other people’s teaching is like dessert. His passion is to glorify God in every situation, and to help others do the same. His walk with God encourages me to continue to dig deeper in my own.

Throughout our 17 years of marriage, Gami has always served in the church in some capacity. It was incredible to have a front-row seat to him hearing and following a call into full time ministry. That call has led us to Haiti, and now is leading us back to the states. I have no doubt that Gami hears from God, and that he obeys wholeheartedly. Therefore, I have no hesitation in following wherever Gami may be called, for I know it will be in the center of God’s will, which is where we will be most useful, fulfilled, and

satisfied. I also know that God does not only call Gami; He calls our entire family. This is why we all are praying together through this process, and we know God will use and grow all of us in this next phase of ministry, wherever that may be. I often tell Gami that he is so gifted, I can't imagine a church turning him down. Yet, I also know that there are many gifted men, and we truly only want to be where God wants us. Therefore, our prayer is that God not only leads us, but also leads the church to which we will be going. We pray that God makes it abundantly clear where He would want us – to us and to the church – so that we can proceed with confidence that God is moving and leading.

22. What principles do you follow and teach on financial topics such as stewardship, tithing, offering, and indebtedness?

Everything belongs to God (Psalm 24:1-2), including all that I have. Following that foundational principle, I am a steward of what I have (1 Corinthians 4:2) and God directs on how it is to be used. That said, at least the first ten percent of all our income goes to the local church. We believe that is how God has directed as an expression of acknowledgement that it is all his to begin with, as well as an expression of trust that he will continue to provide what we need. In that light, the whole issue of financial stewardship is an opportunity to draw closer to God in order to know his heart in how to use his resources and trusting him with what we think we need. Following that train of thought, giving is also worship. Four principles learned from the Proverbs 31 woman are to work hard, spend wisely, give freely, and plan ahead.

Unfortunately, debt causes more stress and hardship than I think we like to admit. Scripture even calls debt as a form of slavery (Proverbs 22:7). Scripture does not say that it's wrong to borrow, but it's still bondage. I believe there is some acceptable debt, but again, it becomes a burden and obligation. It can also become a source of conflict, particularly in marriage.

**Doctrine:**

23. What do you believe and teach on the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture? List three significant scripture passages for support and explain why you selected them.

Scripture is the inspired word of God. Peter tells us that men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). As such, God is the ultimate author of Scripture. Since God is true/truth and Scripture is his word, we can absolutely trust it as his inerrant word. Furthermore, Scripture contains all we need to know and walk with God. It is sufficient for salvation, for sanctification, and for my satisfaction (Psalm 1:1-2). It teaches, convicts, and equips us, thereby enabling us to do what God has asked of us (2 Tim. 3:16).

24. List three truths that are essential to an understanding of who God is and what he is like. What are 2-3 crucial Bible passages that support your thinking?

I think the Trinity is an important truth to understanding who God is and what he is like. Otherwise, we run into all sorts of confusion over Jesus, in particular. It is essential to know that God is ONE, though he exists in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This is one of those truths that we can know even if we don't fully understand it. When Jesus gives the Great Commission, he tells his disciples to baptize in the name (singular) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).

God is also eternal or infinite. Psalm 90 says that before he even formed the earth, he is from everlasting to everlasting. God's infinite nature applies beyond unlimited time to his unlimited knowledge and his omnipresence. These are all aspects of God's greatness. As such, he alone is worthy to be praised and worshiped.

Finally, God is holy. His holiness indicates his uniqueness and separation from all else. Leviticus 20:22-26 expresses his holiness alongside of his requirement that his people also be set apart from all else. Inherent in his holiness is his purity and righteousness, which means that he is untainted by evil. This also means that he is good, because he does not in any sense participate in any evil.

25. What do you teach and counsel on the subject of divorce? Would you allow divorced people to remarry, and if so, under what circumstances? How would you lead if a divorced Christian desired to teach or hold a position of leadership in the church? Provide 2-3 key biblical passages for support.

I wouldn't say that I teach on the subject of divorce. However, when I teach on marriage, I teach God's plan and design for marriage is as an image of Christ and the Church, a covenant between a man and woman, and divorce breaks down this design and intent. So, from the get-go, I teach that marriage is a covenant that is not intended to be broken. Likewise, Scripture does not command divorce, but permits it. Therefore, in counseling individuals on the subject of divorce, I acknowledge that Jesus made concessions for those cases where sexual immorality is present (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). It should be said as well that Paul adds the potential for spiritual incompatibility in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 – namely, an unbelieving spouse wants to separate – as grounds for divorce as well.

A marriage certificate specifically in those days was to allow the remarriage – that was an implied intent of divorce. A legally obtained divorce allowed those individuals to legally marry again. That said, divorce and remarriage are both permitted in the cases mentioned above.

First Timothy 3:12 states that one of the qualifications for a deacon is that he "must be the husband of one wife," while Titus 1:6 reiterates that an elder "must be blameless, the husband of but one wife..." However, I do not believe these statements and qualifications present a problem with a divorced person from serving as a pastor or elder. The qualifications given in each of these passages for an elder are those things that are demanded of all who follow Christ. The intent and the idea behind these qualifications is that the person that is to serve in a leadership position must live a life that is exemplary to the body of Christ. I believe when this passage is looked at in the context of the New Testament, and in light of Jesus' teaching and covenant, we can see that what matters in this list of qualifications is the heart of the man. Jesus taught that though the law says not to commit murder or adultery, but that the underlying heart issues were anger and lust. The absence of the action did not mean the absence of the root issue. Likewise, the presence of a sin in someone's past does not indicate the

current status of the heart. Again, the intent of this Scripture and qualification for elders is that they be men who can be an example of a godly lifestyle to the church. The passages make that clear in saying, “Now the overseer must be above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:2) and “An elder must be blameless” (Titus 1:6). The issue is not if the man has never done anything wrong – whether that means divorce or bad parenting or getting drunk or even not being hospitable! The issue is if the man currently lives a life that is humbly submitted to Christ.

26. Using, at a minimum, Hebrews 1:1-4 and John 1:1-4, 14, answer the question: Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus is the one and only Son of God (Rom. 1:3-4). He is co-equal with the Father (John 1:1-4; 14:10-11). Jesus was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:25) and took on human flesh (John 1:14). He lived a sinless life (Heb. 4:15) and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sins (Heb. 10:12-14). He was crucified on a cross where he died (Phil. 2:8) and after three days, he rose again, conquering sin and death (Acts 10:39-40). He appeared to many after his resurrection and then ascended before their eyes (Acts 1:9-11). He now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Heb. 1:3) and will return again to reign as King of kings (Rev. 19:11-16).

27. How would you lead the church with respect to ecclesiastical separation within the community? How would you balance that with the importance of gospel unity within the body of Christ in the community? Support your answer with a few passages of scripture.

St. Augustine is credited with saying, “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” I think that is a fair approach to the issue of ecclesiastical separation. When it comes to the essentials of the faith, there must be adherence. If there is not, then a separation must absolutely be made so as not to be counted amongst those with false doctrine. In Revelation 2, Jesus addresses the church in Pergamum and rebukes them for tolerating those who adhere to the teachings of Balaam and Nicolaitans. At the same time, Paul calls us to lay aside the non-essentials in Romans 14 for the sake of peace and unity. In verse 19 he says, “So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.” John, in his first letter, talks of having fellowship with each other, based on the mutual fellowship we have in Jesus (1:1-4) – which requires the right fundamentals. He later warns against false teaching that would threaten that fellowship (2:18-27). This parallels the call to personal separation Paul calls for in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13.

In dealing with other organizations or churches as it pertains to this, there is a level of discernment that has to be exercised. It would be unwise to enter into an ongoing partnership with an organization or church that does not reflect the same doctrinal standing, so as not to be associated as a like-minded body. However, there may be opportunities to collaborate for events in a very short-term basis that would open the door to bring the gospel to the community.

28. Select one passage of scripture (2-12 verses) that teaches or explains the ministry of the Holy Spirit. List 3-5 things that describe the role or work of the Spirit from this passage.

It's so hard to choose just one passage to depict all that the Spirit does for a believer.

There are several places in Scripture that shed light on certain aspects of his role.

However, I feel John 16:8-14 is an important one. Jesus is comforting his disciples by telling them that though he is leaving, he is sending the Holy Spirit. He (the Holy Spirit) will:

- Convict of sin and righteousness – Without the conviction of sin, there is no realization that we even need a savior. In the ongoing life of the believer, the Holy Spirit convicts us of right and wrong, so that we can continue to walk in righteousness.
- Guide into all truth – As Jesus himself said not long before this passage, “I am the way, *the truth*, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.” The Holy Spirit, being “another” of Jesus, the third person of the same Trinity, continues to point us to Jesus. As he convicts and guides and we obey, we walk in that truth, declaring the truth through our own lives. Additionally, as we look at Scripture, the same Holy Spirit that inspired the words that are written in it also aids us in understanding it.
- Glorify Jesus – As the Holy Spirit works in our lives, He works to make the name of Jesus known through us. As he convicts and sanctifies us, our lives become better reflections of our Savior, bringing glory to Jesus.

29. Our Statement of Faith allows for a range of views on eschatology and spiritual gifts. Please share your personal convictions regarding these areas. For example, what do you believe and teach about end times events? About the gifts of tongues, signs, and healing? How have you reached those convictions? What questions are most difficult for you in these areas?

In regard to eschatology, I hold to a post-tribulation return of Jesus Christ for the final judgment. In Matthew 24, Jesus answers their questions of the signs of the end of the age. As he talks with them, he very intentionally paints a picture of his coming after the tribulation. Beyond that, he states in verse 30 that “they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” The phrase “coming on the clouds” was often used of divine judgment, which is how Christ will be returning. Additionally, it says all will see him in power and glory. His second return will be triumphant as he gathers his elect (v. 31). The most natural interpretation here is for a post-tribulation return of Christ. First Thessalonians 4:16 also alludes to a triumphant return, “with the sound of the trumpet of God.” Jesus, in John 4:39-40 references raising up believers “on the last day.”

The Holy Spirit gives us equips us for the good of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7); as he wills (1 Cor. 12:11). I would neither classify myself as a continuationist nor a cessationist I believe the pattern that is seen biblically and historically is that signs (miracles) were for the purpose of validating the message. Prophets of the Old Testament would perform signs so that the Israelites would believe he was sent of God. Jesus also performed signs in order that people would believe him as he revealed himself as the Messiah and

God in the flesh. The apostles performed signs in order to validate their message of the gospel. As this message spread throughout the known world, those carrying the word would often perform signs in order to give validity to the message. As those signs lessened and almost seemed to disappear, there are still accounts of miracles being done predominantly in areas where the word of God has not yet been embraced. To remote tribes who are having the Scriptures translated into their native language, miracles happen that bring validity once again to the message that missionaries are teaching. Again, God is certainly capable of and does signs outside of this context as it brings him glory. But I believe the biblical support is in this specific context. For this reason, I do not hold to a Pentecostal (or full-gospel / charismatic) viewpoint which place emphasis on the physical manifestations, such as speaking in tongues. At the same time, I do believe that God can and does work miracles as He wills, though this is not the normative pattern.

30. What do you believe and teach on the order of salvation? How do you contrast God's role and man's role in salvation? How does this understanding affect your ministry? Provide a few key biblical texts that influence your thinking on this.

I believe and teach the order of salvation as an effectual calling, conversion, and regeneration. The effectual calling necessarily implies God's sovereignty in his calling. On top of that, there is a total depravity that exists in man (Eph. 2:1-3), which means that in our condition, there is nothing we can do for ourselves. We are spiritually blind (Rom. 1:18-23). We require God to, in a sense, initiate the process in us. The following verses (4-5) says, "But God..." putting the action on him as the initiator of our salvation. Furthermore, Jesus says multiple times that it is the Father that draws us to himself (John 6:37, 44-45; 15:16).

Conversion is two simultaneous (and continual) things: turning from sin and turning in faith to Jesus. This is only possible due to the effectual calling. It is effectual because those he calls, he justifies and glorifies (Romans 8:30), indicating that those God calls are compelled to respond favorable to his grace.

Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit that gives us new birth (John 3). Jesus said we must be born-again, born of the Spirit. In this new birth, he makes us a new creation that is capable of responding to the call of God and capable of living for him.

At the same time, we are charged with responsibility as well in repenting, converting, and living righteously. Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, calls for people to repent (Acts 3:19). Paul urges recipients of his letters to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26), be imitators of God (Eph. 5:1) and offer themselves as living sacrifices as worship to God (Rom. 12:1). Jesus himself said that if anyone would come after him, he had to deny himself and pick up his cross daily (Luke 9:23).

There are those that take to one or the other of these views concerning our salvation. However, I don't think it can be ignored that they are both equal realities in Scripture. God is sovereign and chooses us, predestines us, allowing us to come to him. We are also held responsible for our choice or rejection of him, as well as our continuing actions from that point. The full picture encompasses both. In my ministry and personal life, I have to recognize that without the Holy Spirit, there is nothing that I can do, no change

can occur in anyone, including myself. I need to be submitted to him and ask him to intervene first in my life to change my heart as I continue to seek righteousness, but also to intervene in those to whom I hope to minister.

31. What is personal holiness? How is it achieved? Provide supporting biblical texts.

I believe there are two aspects to this. Maybe it's best to think of it in a passive and an active sense. It is only God who makes things holy, as he himself is holy, unique, separate from all else. In the Old Testament, the presence of God within the encampment of the Israelites is what made them holy as a nation. His presence was in the center and his presence emanated from the tabernacle. Looking at Romans 8:1-11, the Holy Spirit is credited as the "source" of our personal holiness. Verses 9-11 state that the Holy Spirit dwells within the believer. The very presence of God is present in us to make us holy, as was the case with the Israelites of the Old Testament. But there's an active component as well. The references to walking or living in the Spirit or merely being in the Spirit tell us that it is not in and of ourselves, but in the power of the Spirit that we can achieve personal holiness. This passage paints a picture of a personal spiritual war that is waged in every person between the flesh and the spirit. And it's only in submission to the Holy Spirit that we have the ability to walk in righteousness (personal holiness). A parallel passage in Galatians 5:16-26 gives some practical examples of what living according to the flesh versus living in the Spirit looks like.

32. Describe an example where you've dealt with a brother or sister in church discipline. What is your view of the purpose and method of church discipline?

As the worship pastor at Dayspring, I had an issue arise with one of the singers on the team. Her husband had an affair and when she found out, in retaliation she had relations with a co-worker. When the church leadership heard of the situation, I went to their home and sat with them to inquire of the situation. They were both open and honest about the situation and recognized they were in sin. We had decided that this lady would be stepping down for a time from the worship team, so I informed her of that. She was not happy about that and insisted that singing on the worship team was a way of healing. Not dismissing those feelings, I emphasized that while I was glad she found healing through worship, she needed to heal in her relationship with God and her husband before she could lead others in worshiping through music. She was angry for a time and would not submit to counseling or even meet with any of the leadership. After some time, she did and she and her husband were restored to each other and then to the body.

The biblical basis for church discipline is the very character of God. We are called to be a reflection of his character; therefore, church discipline begins with God's holiness in view. His holiness demands purity of the church. When Paul lists eleven sins in 1 Corinthians 5, his assertion is that practices of the world have no place inside the church. When sin is not confronted, the church condones it and makes it a new norm. God's nature is also one of love. Church discipline must also be carried out in love. Scripture tells us to restore gently (Gal. 6:1). Restoration must be the objective. God, who is love, stopped at nothing to provide a way to restore us back to himself. The goal in every type of discipline – whether it's a rebuke, correction, admonition, or even so far as

excommunication – is restoration first to a right relationship with God and then to the body of believers.

Jesus taught in Matthew 18 to approach the offender as an individual. If there is no repentance, then go with one or two others. If the unrepentant heart continues, then the matter is brought to the church. The final step is excommunication. The method does not center on punishing the offender but removing the deviant behavior from the church and also regarding the offender as an evangelistic prospect (“let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”) To continue to treat the person as a believer and a member of the church is to ignore the greater need in their life as well as the purity of the church.

33. Based on your understanding of the purpose of baptism, how would you deal with someone desiring baptism who has previously been baptized by a method other than immersion?

According to Romans 6:1-11, baptism is an act of faith and a testimony that one has been united with Christ in his death and resurrection. It is a public declaration of one's commitment to Christ. Furthermore, it is a graphic picture of the truth that it portrays – buried with Christ in death and raised to life again! Though I wouldn't require a new baptism for someone who was previously baptized another way, I would like to honor someone's desire to be baptized by immersion if that is his/her conviction in being obedient to Christ's command.

**Giftedness:**

34. What do you believe to be your strengths related to leadership in the church? What are your spiritual gifts? How do you know? What are your current ministry passions, vision, hopes, and dreams? What do you believe to be your weaknesses (give example situations) related to leadership in a church? How do you compensate for these?

During seminary I had taken a Leadership style inventory, found in Aubrey Malphur's book *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*. I just retook the test/inventory and confirmed my previous findings of having an Analytical leadership style. This indicates that I tend to be more of a task-oriented leader. As I previously shared with your team, I am an introvert and tend to process things internally before speaking or sharing my thoughts.

I am motivated by solving problems and creating efficient systems; I like ensuring accuracy and quality and setting high standards. I dislike being unprepared or being rushed for decisions (making decisions with little time to reflect); I also recharge being alone, so lack of private time can sometimes be a stressor for me.

My gifts are primarily teaching, leadership, and administration (also part of Malphur's book). Beyond taking a test or inventory in a book, I have seen these throughout my life – particularly in the last 10 years or so. I tend to gravitate towards all three of these areas. I find that I get a great of satisfaction when I am teaching – whether as a youth pastor, a soldier in the Army, or now as a missionary, some what I consider my greatest accomplishments have come from teaching. In the absence of (good) leadership, I have a tendency to take charge. This led me to be placed formally in leadership on several occasions, including my time in the military. I also have a knack for seeing efficiency and

order or how to achieve it. While I was at Nehemiah Vision Ministries, this was one of my roles – to create efficient systems and processes for better continuity.

I am passionate about worship and discipleship. I learned to experience God's presence through worship in music and later approached discipleship in the same way. In conjunction with my gift of teaching, I love to explain Scripture and see people grow spiritually as they make their lives conform to it. I am also excited when those who I've been teaching then begin teaching others and making disciples themselves.

One of my weaknesses is that I can come across as uncaring. Due to my analytical nature, I can jump to facts and data instead of taking time to show compassion. Last year, someone here in Haiti came to us because they were unsure of how they were going to put their kids in school. I immediately jumped to problem-solving mode in how we could make things happen. My wife, who happened to be with me (and much more gracious and compassionate than I) interjected by acknowledging the feelings of distress and even shame of not being able to provide. Cathi balances me out in that area quite a bit and I have also learned a lot from her in how to approach those types of situations. In the broader picture, I recognize that I have to work hard at the relational aspects of ministry. But God has given me a love for his people, the church, where this is no longer a burden, but a joy.

Another weakness is to be overly critical, particularly of myself and my work. I need to continually remind myself of God's grace so that it flows from me as well.

35. How do you see God's hand in connecting your gifts and leadership skills with the position we are seeking to fill at Kossuth Street Baptist Church at this time? In what ways do you envision that you could be a blessing to KSBC as a pastor?

My passions of worship and discipleship work hand in hand with the position of Pastor of Worship and Connections. These are sometimes regarded as being on opposite ends of the spectrum with respect to the approach to the two ministries. Worship tends to be a left-brained field requiring a more artsy personality, while Connections and Discipleship tend to be viewed more in an analytical view. Yet they both have elements of the other as worship needs good discipleship – good doctrine – to fuel it, while connections and discipleship require a bit of creativity in reaching people of different backgrounds and personalities. I believe God has uniquely gifted me for such a blend of ministry – both through how he's created me and in the experiences he's allowed me to have thus far. I would hope and pray that I would be a blessing to KSBC as much as I feel the church would be a blessing to me and my family. I humbly offer my talents and abilities to be used as God and the church desires for his glory and the advancement of his kingdom. It's hard to say exactly how that would happen, but I would pray that my involvement in leading others to experience the presence of God through worship and in helping connect folks to the church and into ministries within the church where they would continue to experience him and grow in their walk with him would do just that. After my visit in December, I was able to see that Kossuth would be a blessing to my family and that the way that God has been developing me over the years would also be a blessing to the church. It's clear to us that God is leading our family in the same direction the church is growing and we would love to be a part of what God is doing at KSBC.