

Church Leader?

Marion T. Trapp

Are you ready to lead in ministry? The following is a quiz based on a new seminar--"The 30 Most Important Things Every Christian Leader Should Know." A Christian leader who does not know things like, the philosophies which threaten the "Pure and Simple Christianity" found in Scripture, is in danger ... and so are those who follow him or her. ***"I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."*** None of the following questions is simply "academic," so there is a statement of relevance following each one.

History and Theology Competency Test For Christian Leaders:

1. Personal Walk: How much time should a Christian leader daily spend in prayer and the Word? Support your answer with Scripture and historical examples.

[Relevance: Scripture and Christian biography demonstrate how necessary daily prayer and time in God's word is. A person who is not "sitting at Christ's feet" everyday is missing the "one necessary thing" (Lk 10:42), and will have little of the touch of God on their life and ministry.]

2. Personal Effectiveness: Paul said "the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power" (I Cor 4:20). Do you have evidence (transformed lives) that testify to the fact that God is using you as a leader?

[Relevance: Paul claimed that the people he ministered to were his "letters of recommendation" (2 Cor 3:1-2)--they were the validation of his ministry. An ineffective Christian should have the humility to go back to the drawing board to determine if they are off track in significant ways.]

3. Scripture: From memory, explain the historical flow of the Old and New Testament (key figures and events), and be able to comment intelligently on each of the 66 books of Scripture.

[Relevance: A person who does not know Scripture deeply is a spiritual babe (Heb 5:11-14), and susceptible to deception (Eph 4:14-16).]

4. The Gospel: Clearly explain how a person is "born again" using appropriate Scripture.

[Relevance: an explanation here should not be needed . . .]

5. The Apostles' Creed: Write out the 12 statements of the Creed and briefly talk about its content and origins.

[Relevance: All evidence indicates that this Creed harkens back to the earliest Christian essentials, and so is a great standard for unity.]

6. Classical Theism: Are you aware of the "Classical Theism" versus "Open Theism" debate? What is "Classical Theism" and what are the key attributes in this model of God (impassibility, simplicity, etc.), and how do they fit together? What is the "Open Theist's" protest (It is not primarily about God knowing the future)?

[Relevance: Evangelicals today have little understanding of what "Christian" theologians throughout history like Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin and Luther actually believed about God. We don't have to agree with them on all points, but we at least need to understand what they were saying...and we need to think through whether the God of Classical Theism is capable of real relationship.]

7. Theodicy (The Problem of Evil): Give your solution to theodicy--the most perplexing practical/theological issue in Christian history--"If God is all-loving and all-powerful, why does evil and suffering exist?"

[Relevance: The problem of evil is arguably the most troubling theological (and pastoral) question of all time. If you have no good answer for it, you will not be able to help the countless souls who struggle with the issue.]

8. The Roman Catholic Church: Explain what the RCC believes about salvation and the seven sacraments.

[Relevance: Protestantism emerged as a reaction against RCC errors, and it is vital that Christian leaders understand the differences between salvation as defined by the Bible and salvation as defined by Roman Catholicism ... because they are radically different.]

9. Protestant Reformation: Briefly describe the five solae.

[Relevance: The five solae delivered Christendom from bondage to RCC tradition, and they remain profoundly relevant and helpful.]

10. Protestant Scholasticism: Explain the content and origins of TULIP.

[Relevance: The Calvinism vs. Arminianism controversy is arguably the most significant in-house debate among Bible-believing Christians today. To avoid unnecessary disunity, Christian leaders must be aware of the discussion, as well as the weaknesses on each side.]

11. Pietism: Speak about the influence of the Moravians of Herrnhut on later Evangelicalism.

[Relevance: These people sparked the greatest move of God on earth since the days of the Apostles, and gave early Evangelicalism many of its defining features.]

12. The First Great Awakening: Explain the origins and influence of "The Holy Club."
[Relevance: An Evangelical who does not appreciate how God used these men really knows almost nothing about the origins of Evangelicalism.]

13. Evangelical Revival: Describe the Evangelical movement from 1700-1920, when revival was central to the movement; mention key figures.
[Relevance: This is a neglected era of history, but God moved in this time period in a way that is simply jaw-dropping.]

14. Intercession: Describe what the greatest Evangelical figures from 1700-1920 believed and taught about intercession and faith; reference some of the great literature on the subject.
[Relevance: Evangelicals once knew how to move God's hand like Elijah, and they can teach today's Evangelicals how to do the same.]

15. Holiness: Explain the different schools of thought on holiness (Reformed, Wesleyan, Keswick, etc.) within historical Evangelicalism.
[Relevance: Scripture says that "without holiness, no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). Studying the different way that Evangelicals promoted this is essential for understanding why God used them.]

16. Theological Humility: What is the difference between primary and secondary theological issues? Be specific and give examples.
[Relevance: When God moves in power, there are a few things that must be in place, and a host of other things that are non-essentials. Leaders should not confuse the two.]

17. Unity: What is Christian unity ("who is in, who is out"), and when historically has it been done well?
[Relevance: History shows that God comes in power when His children are getting along. A Christian leader must know the difference between who is in and who is out.]

18. Holy Spirit Power: Explain the importance of "crisis experiences" with the Holy Spirit in Evangelical history; give examples.
[Relevance: Virtually everyone in the Bible-believing tradition who was used powerfully by God had a "crisis encounter" with the Holy Spirit: Wesley, Whitefield, Finney, Moody, Chambers, Hyde, Tozer, Pierson, etc. This is a fact that has been hidden in recent years, but must be brought into the light for a new generation to see.]

19. Huge Hitters (Part One): Write a short paragraph on the significance of the following people:

Nicholas Zinzendorf, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Johnathan Edwards, David Brainerd, William Carey, and James McGready.

[Relevance: To understand how and why God moves in power, God has given us Scripture and the testimony of great men and women. They can challenge our prejudices and errors, and lead us into new ways of understanding and experiencing God.]

20. Huge Hitters (Part Two): Write a short paragraph on the significance of the following people:

Charles Finney, William and Catherine Booth, Charles Spurgeon, George Mueller, Hudson Taylor, D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, A. B. Simpson, C. T. Studd, John Hyde, and Evan Roberts.

[Relevance: See "Part One" above.]

21. Dispensationalism: Who is Darby, and how did his "70 Weeks" view of history impact Evangelicalism?

[Relevance: This is one of the three great controversies in the Evangelical tradition. To not understand it leads to unnecessary divisions in Christ's body.]

22. Pentecostalism: Explain the origin and stages of the "Tongues Movement" that began in 1906.

[Relevance: Pentecostalism is the dominant strain of Evangelicalism in the world today. This is another theological issue that can lead to unnecessary divisions in the body of Christ.]

23. Liberal Christianity: How did this attempt to redefine Christianity affect American Protestantism (hint: who are the "7 Sisters")?

[Relevance: Anyone who does not understand theological liberalism will simply have no idea what is going on in the mainline Protestant denominations in America and around world ... and why they seem so crazy at times.]

24. Higher and Lower Biblical Criticism: Briefly describe so-called "higher criticism" and "lower criticism."

[Relevance: Higher criticism is mostly groundless speculation (source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism), but if a leader does not know about lower criticism (i.e., textual criticism), they will lose people over easily answered questions about the Bible.]

25. Christian Fundamentalism: What was Christian fundamentalism, and how did the Scopes Monkey Trial discredit conservative Christianity in American culture?

[Relevance: It was this moment in time that made simple, biblical Christianity a joke in the minds of many Americans.]

26. Neo-Orthodoxy: How do theologians like Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer view Scripture?

[Relevance: These guys look and sound like Evangelicals, but they have a very troubling view of Scripture as myth--know it before commending these theologians to others.]

27. Neo-Evangelicalism: How did Neo-Evangelicals attempt to re-establish the credibility of conservative Christianity?

[Relevance: This movement, which emerged in the 1940s, attempted to undo some of the damage done by Fundamentalism.]

28. Postmodern Christianity: Explain how the Emergent/Emerging church is related to the agnosticism of Immanuel Kant.

[Relevance: These folks are taking Evangelicalism by storm, but most people have no idea about their philosophical underpinnings.]

29. Four Other Religions: What do Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism believe?

[Relevance: People searching for the truth need Christian leaders with a clear understanding of other religions.]

30. Pseudo-Christian Cults: What do Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses believe?

[Relevance: These are clear-cut perversions of historic Christianity. Leaders need to know how and why.]