

ORDINATION IN THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR BAPTIST FREEDOMS

[Approved 28 February 2015]

Introduction

The Christian Ministry is an office of the highest honour and great responsibility. Those serving in the ordained ministry should be aware of many responsibilities under their care: conducting faithful worship, effective proclaiming of the Gospel, knowledgeable pastoral counselling, wise directing of spiritual life, modeling a sensitive Christian life, not to mention the many secondary but important calls for service. The Office of Minister was established by the Early Church, grounded in the New Testament, and requires one to have a personal and living faith in Jesus Christ. Each Minister must have a distinct sense of a Call to the Ministry, given through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

A Minister displays the embodiment of Christian character, an ability to work harmoniously with the people and offer confident and informed leadership in the multiple aspects of Church life. Also manifested is an awareness of the need for continual spiritual and mental growth

When a congregation is considering a candidate for their ordained Ministry, it is wise to investigate thoroughly so that they may be assured the candidate exhibits all of the above and represents them in an effective and engaging manner.

SECTION 1: PROCESS TOWARDS ORDINATION

1.1. A Church Licence to Minister

- A.** A candidate for the Ministry must first seek a *Licence to Minister* from the congregation where their membership is held. The local congregation's Licence to Minister is, in effect, both an affirmation and a recommendation. Normally, the Board of Deacons (or 'Senior Board') of that congregation facilitates this licensing process.
- B.** It is required that persons being considered for such a license to have preached or taught in their own churches so that it may be determined whether they have gifts in the area of the desired ministry.
- C.** There ought to be a review as to what they have been doing within the church.
- D.** They should tell of their conversion, call to the ministry and of their faith in Jesus Christ. They should demonstrate servant-leadership ability.
- E.** They should be able to relate well to people.

F. Their lifestyles, including family relationships and ethics, should be taken into consideration and there should be evidence of faithfulness in work habits.

G. There should be evident progress in biblical knowledge, spiritual growth, understanding of the ministry and Baptist principles and faith expression.

H. A Licence to Minister should be renewed each year by the congregation as a part of their continual care and nurturing of their candidate.

I. The Credentials committee recommends that the congregation that grants such a Licence to Preach establish ongoing support and counsel, and accountability from the candidate.

1.2 A CABF Licence to Minister

A. It is understood that a CABF Licence to Minister indicates the confidence of the CABF in the candidate to be responsible in preaching and service; however, any congregation that applies for the candidate's ordination retains the responsibility to grant any other privileges of Ministry.

B. Criteria expected from the candidate of a CABF Licence to Minister include the following:

- a. That the candidate maintain an unrescinded Church Licence.
- b. That the candidate exhibit acceptable activity, in some form of pastoral or church responsibility.
- c. That the candidate indicates intention to continue educational and preparation for the ordained ministry.
- d. That the candidate should agree with the basic Baptist principles generally accepted and published, such as *A Capsule of Information about the Baptists* (Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, c. 1969) and/or *Basic Baptist Beliefs*, by Gordon C. Warren (Baptist Federation of Canada, n.d.).

C. A CABF Licence to Minister must be renewed annually. The candidate must appear before the Accreditation Committee in person each year and shall furnish satisfactory evidence of progress in studies, intention to pursue them, of service responsibility fulfilled, and of continued loyalty to the aims and purposes of the CABF.

1.3 Examining Council for Ordination

A. The next step for the candidate working within a congregation or institution full-time is to have a congregation request the CABF to call and Examining Council for Ordination. The Officers of the CABF will be

responsible for organizing the Examining Council in consultation with the ordaining church. The CABF is willing to establish an Examining Council for Ordination for candidates that meet its criteria for accreditation and where reasonably possible the Examining Council will convene in the ordaining church. In order to appear before a CABF Ordination Council a candidate must have the recommendation of the CABF Credentials Committee.

B. The Ordination Council shall consist of:

- a. The President of the CABF, or alternative (normally the Vice-President), and the CABF Secretary, who will keep a record of the proceedings.
- b. The Chair of the Credentials Committee, or designate.
- c. Three representatives appointed by the ordaining church.
- d. Six ordained Baptist clergy appointed by the CABF Council.
- e. In addition to the above, each of the CABF churches is entitled to send its Minister and one representative, if they so wish.

C. The Ordination Council shall be open to non-voting visitors, subject to Paragraph **1.3 (H)** (below).

D. The President of the CABF, or alternative, shall be the Chair of the Ordination Council.

E. The President of the CABF shall negotiate with the requesting congregation and the candidate sufficient and convenient times for the Examination and the Ordination Service.

F. At least two months' notice shall be given to all concerned: the candidate, the members of the Ordination Council, the requesting congregation, each CABF congregation and individual CABF members. This shall be the responsibility of the President of the CABF.

G. The Ordination Examining Council agenda includes:

- a. Prayer of Invocation,
- b. Introduction of the Candidate (Chair of Credentials Committee),
- c. Report of the Credentials Committee regarding the candidate,
- d. Report by a representative of the congregation applying,
- e. A Statement describing the candidate's Call to Ministry, views of Christian doctrine and their Practice of Ministry (approximately 1,500 words).
- f. A period of questioning of the candidate by the Examining Council.

H. After a thorough questioning, the Candidate shall be asked to withdraw to enable a full discussion amongst the Council. The

Candidate should be prepared to return to clarify any issue which the Council deems necessary.

I. For a Candidate to be recommended for ordination, an affirmative vote with a two-thirds majority of the Ordination Examining Council is required.

J. The Candidate is then informed by the Chair of the results, accompanied with prayer and sage advice. This recommendation shall be reported to the church making the application.

1.4 Ordination Candidates from Other Jurisdictions/Denominations

A. It is recognized that a CABF congregation may call to a ministry position a non-ordained person who has trained in another Baptist or non-Baptist jurisdiction. If the Church and candidate desire that the CABF facilitate the process towards ordination, the candidate may apply to the Credentials Committee, which will determine what, if any, steps should be completed before making a recommendation to appear before an Examining Council for Ordination. The Credentials Committee will use the CABF criteria for ordination as a basis for its decision.