



ORDINATION PROCEDURES

**Compiled by
CONVERGE Southwest
Ordination Guidance Committee**

**Approved by
CONVERGE Southwest
Board of Trustees**

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THE ORDINATION PROCEDURES of CONVERGE SOUTHWEST

Contents

The Concerns.....	4
Ordination Defined.....	4
Pre-requisites to Ordination.....	5
Agent of Ordination.....	8
Sequence of Events for the Candidate and Church.....	9
Sequence of Events for the Ordination Guidance Committee.....	10
Statement on the Ordination of Ministers.....	11
Ordination Guidelines.....	12
The Doctrinal Statement.....	14
Statement of Faith.....	16
How the Ordaining Church Calls the Council.....	17
Who the Ordaining Church Invites to the Council.....	17
How to Participate in an Ordination Council.....	18
How to Hold an Ordination Council.....	19
An Example of Ordination Council Procedure.....	21
An Example of Ordination Service Procedure.....	22
License.....	22
The Maintenance of Ordained Status.....	22
Recognition of Previous Ordination.....	23
Transfer of Ordination Process.....	23
Applying Ordination Guidance Committee Standards.....	24
Ordination Guidance Committee Reservation Form.....	25

THE ORDINATION PROCEDURES of CONVERGE SOUTHWEST

THE CONCERNS

1. To increase the significance and worth of ordination.
2. To ease assembling Ordination Guidance Committees.
3. To improve the preparation of candidates for the Ordination Council.
4. To provide candidates with consistent advice before their Ordination Council.
5. To help churches in proper ordination procedures.

ORDINATION DEFINED

1. While there are variations in Baptist definitions of ordination, these common denominators seem to prevail:
2. It is an act of the local church for the whole church.
3. It is the church's recognition and confirmation of God's call and gifting of a person for ministry.
4. It carries with it society's legal and social recognition that a person has the professional function of minister.
5. It takes note that God is present by the Holy Spirit in the actual act of the prayer, accompanied by the laying on of hands.
6. It recognizes that the ordained person is authorized to certain functions in the church. Depending upon which Baptist group and where it is located in the world, special priority may be given either to: a) preaching and teaching the Word, or b) presiding at the ordinances, or c) shepherding, or d) administration, or e) equipping the saints. The latter is strongly emphasized today among all denominations. The pastor is an enabler both as trainer and leader.

PRE-REQUISITES TO ORDINATION

Baptists recognize prerequisites to being set apart to the gospel ministry.

1. **The person who is called by God is eligible for ordination.** Jesus said, “You did not choose me, I chose you” (John 15:16). Ordination does not create a minister. God does through the inward sense of call.
2. **The person who possesses gifts for the ministry is eligible for ordination.** H. Richard Niebuhr calls this the “providential call,” that invitation to take up the work of the ministry through the equipment of a person with the talents to do the work. It is ultimately the task of the church to determine whether the gifts of preaching, teaching, shepherding, and enabling are present in the candidate’s life.
3. **The person who is mature is eligible for ordination.** “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands,” said Paul (I Timothy 5:22). The practice of licensure for one year in the full-time ministry before ordination is a worthy practice. Few exceptions to this should be made. Sometimes those planning to enter the chaplaincy need ordination prior to application for military service. Such individuals, usually planning well in advance to enter the chaplaincy, ought to spend more time in direct church ministry – or something comparable to it – so that gifts can be apparent so that the supervisor can make adequate recommendation and so that the time for maturing through experience is adequate. The same would hold for those planning on overseas mission service.
4. **The person who is a member of the ordaining church is eligible for ordination.** The genius of Baptist church order in regard to the church ministry is that historically a member of that local church was chosen from among the membership (all of whom saw themselves as ministers) because this person possessed the gifts for the set-apart ministry.

Today, the culture has changed drastically. The quiet rural church which knew the man, now their pastor, from birth, saw him grow and knew his gifts and abilities, called him and ordained him, is a thing of the past. Further, our highly mobile society (in which, it is said, the average family moves every four years) militates against ordination which once was presumed to be a truly local affair. The candidate for ordination is no longer a local boy who has been active in the church over a long period of time and therefore is well-known to church leaders.

Most ministerial candidates have not had the intensely personal involvement and nurture by a friendly congregation and interested minister. The times call, then, for either maintaining a strong relationship with the home church, which

encouraged him to the ministry, or insisting that seminary students in training become more than attenders in a church nearby or asking that the seminary community truly take the place of a local church in terms of spiritual nurture and encouragement.

Whatever alternatives, the ordained must, according to our tradition, be a member of the local church, which ordains him. An obvious corollary to this strong tradition is that persons ordained ought to be loyal to the denomination of the church, which ordains him for as long as he pastors churches of that denomination. Blind loyalty is un-Baptistic, but faithful interdependence is important. If a CSW church does not have “membership”, it is recommended that the candidate have at least one year of ministry experience in the leadership of the church so that the congregation can adequately ascertain the candidate’s calling, giftedness, and effectiveness in the ministry.

5. **A person who has met the minimum educational standards is eligible for ordination.** Baptist tradition in America has been suspicious of trained clergy. In certain areas and among some more conservative groups, this attitude still prevails, but for the most part Baptists recognize that the minister is a professional.

Most Baptist groups have developed the same standard. While few Baptist denominations as a whole demand the standard, most districts or associations within the denomination do. Some groups do – and all should – demand knowledge of a Baptist history, principles, and polity, including knowledge of the denomination. The CONVERGE Worldwide statement says:

Denominational. All ministers of CONVERGE Worldwide should be convinced Baptists who accept historic Baptist distinctives in all matters pertaining to church order and practice. Men coming from non-Conference backgrounds, and especially non-Baptists, are advised to take some recommended courses from Bethel Theological Seminary or complete certain prescribed reading.

Since it is not and cannot be enforced, the latter part of the statement has never, to our knowledge, been done. It ought to be encouraged. The Seminary should likewise update prescribed readings.

A pastor’s education will not make him an adequate minister without the prior possession of “natural” and “spiritual” gifts, but neither will be adequate without careful and disciplined preparation for his ask.

6. **A person who is a pastor or teacher is eligible for ordination.** No greater arguments rage in the area of ordination usage than about which persons in Christian service ought to be ordained. Through the changing times, churches have moved to multiple staffs, and one sees listed on the bulletin cover: “Minister of Music,” “Minister of Recreation,” “Minister of Christian Education.” Similarly, the ministry of Jesus Christ has moved out of the institutional church into coffeehouses, hospitals, industry, and other supra-church ministries. Should all of these people engaged in ministry for Jesus Christ become ordained? Are there parameters for judging ordination?

The argument rages with more vigor when one realizes that ordained clergy or licensed ministers have certain financial advantages of tax savings on housing allowances and the advantage of deferment from military service. It is amazing how integrity before God and the law can be lost – even in denominational offices and schools and multiple church staffs – when the financial and legal inequity of persons on the same payroll is seen and infighting challenges tradition or Scripture.

In terms of churches with multiple church staffs, there is ample Biblical precedent and Baptist tradition for “plurality of elders” in one local congregation. Though generally not practiced today, early Baptists occasionally ordained one of their number to be a ruling elder or teaching elder. In recent years church staffs have had pastors, associates, or assistants. Generally there seems to be no problem with ordaining those who share what can be called “pastoral responsibility. “To ordain every person engaged in ministry, however, is to miss the concept of the set-apart ministry through both the Old and New Testaments. Ordaining “Ministers of Recreation” is no different than ordaining the church custodian as “Minister of Building Care!”

The clear significance of ordination in Scripture and in Baptist tradition is that one is set apart for the “gospel ministry.” Ordination is reserved for the preaching-teaching of the Word of God. It signifies to the church the centrality of the spoken Word. Our contention is that seminary professors, for instance, ought to be solemnly set apart for this ministry, as well as the historic “messengers” of the denomination today – bishops, district superintendents, ministers, or secretaries, a moot point, since invariably these move from the regular pastorate.

A Master of Arts in Christian Education hardly gives the same background training as a Master of Divinity program. The seminary has a great responsibility at this point to provide counsel on what prerequisites will be needed if a person decides on the pastorate. Duties and preparation are important to ordination in our time.

AGENT OF ORDINATION

Baptists have stoutly maintained that there is no ecclesiastical authority higher than the local church, and therefore ordination is an act of the church. Every writer, regardless of how independent a background, having maintained the local church prerogative for ordination, invariably adds, “But in our tradition, we have wisely chosen the counsel of other churches.” There are a number of reasons for this.

Our history, especially in England, shows that Baptists, while seeking independence of established church or state authority, were not independent of one another. They were strongly interdependent. The strength of denominational life was enormously important to early Baptists who needed the strength and fellowship of other churches.

Secondly, churches today cannot insist on the “rights” of the local church in terms of ordination because if ordination were performed solely by the local church, without the calling of a Council, the minister would need to be re-ordained whenever he moved to another pastorate.

Thirdly, a strictly local ordination presupposes a culture no longer in existence. Years ago, the pastor was called forth from the local group and ordained. In this mobile society, the ordained is seldom known very long by the church. The problem is that a local church is the instrument of ordination when the candidates are from all over the country. Duke McCall correctly observes:

“A local church ordains a man and promptly buries the whole matter in forgotten records. The man moves on without a caring community supporting, praying for, and being prepared to discipline him. The world is then treated to the scandal of ordained Baptist ministers who have left the ministry. Yet, they sometimes engage in ministerial functions such as the performance of weddings as if their ministerial role had no roots in the fellowship of a church. Again, the world reads of an ordained Baptist minister involved in the plot and murder of three men. Even then his ordination is not revoked because he is no longer a member of the ordaining church and therefore no church assumes responsibility or authority.”

Fourthly, because the community through civil law recognizes the ordained person as having special status – housing allowance under the Internal Revenue Service, right to perform weddings, and deferral from compulsory military service – the right of one small church to “ordain” one or more of its members will be increasingly scrutinized by society through its government. Further, the temptation for a local church to unilaterally ordain or license a member because of the civil and economic considerations involved should be checked and balanced by other churches and by the denomination to which they belong. So we Baptists recognize that while our tradition steadfastly maintains, “the local church

ordains,” in practice we recognize the realities. Therefore, by using a district or association “Ordination Guidance Committee” to advise a prospective candidate by inviting the participation in denominational and seminary representatives, and by calling a Council of the churches in the area, we are saying that the denomination has part of the ordination, too.

Baptists also know that since the local church is an “outcropping” of the universal church and is fully the church in any local manifestation, when a person is ordained in the Baptist church, his ordination is to the whole church of Jesus Christ. “The Baptist Doctrine of the Church,” a statement of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, stated:

“Although Baptists have for so long held a position separate from that of other communions, they have always claimed to be part of the one – holy catholic church of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In this sense, after a person is ordained, he is more than simply the minister of local congregation. He is a minister within the whole Baptist denomination and, because Baptists insist that a Baptist church is part of the universal church, there must be some sense in which he is a minister of the universal church.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS PRELIMINARY TO ORDINATION

From the Perspective of the Candidate and Church:

1. The Formal church vote informs CSW staff (in writing) its desire to ordain a candidate.
2. Candidate prints and reviews Ordination Procedures document (this handbook).
3. Candidate completes the reservation form and sends it to CSW office.
4. CSW staff provides written confirmation of reservation to the candidate.
5. At least one month before Guidance Committee is scheduled to meet, candidate sends doctrinal statement to CSW staff.
6. CSW mails a copy of the doctrinal statement to the Ordination Guidance Committee.
7. Following the interview with the candidate, the Ordination Guidance Committee prepares and submits a letter of advice to the ordaining church with a copy to the

candidate.

8. The advice of the Guidance Committee may be for the candidate to make revisions on initial doctrinal statement. If the advice is to postpone convening Ordination Council, the candidate may reserve another interview during the next scheduled meeting of the Ordination Guidance Committee.
9. Upon receipt of letter of advice to convene a Council, the ordaining church schedules the Ordination Council and invites delegates from sister churches, and church members.
10. The Council meets and recommends that the church proceed or not proceed with ordination.

ORDINATION GUIDANCE COMMITTEE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

From the Perspective of the Ordination Guidance Committee:

1. A local church requests help with ordination.
2. CSW staff responds with this handbook.
3. The candidate requests an interview time with Guidance Committee.
4. CSW staff schedules and confirms (with everyone) the interview time.
5. The candidate prepares and sends doctrinal statement.
6. CSW staff distributes doctrinal statement.
7. The Ordination Guidance Committee reviews, interviews and advises.
8. The church convenes the Ordination Council to interview candidate.
9. The church conducts an ordination service celebrating the occasion of Ordination.

STATEMENT ON THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

INTRODUCTION

Baptists believe that the ordination of ministers is the responsibility of the local church. In ordaining, a local church acts responsibly for itself and for its sister churches.

The local church has authority to ordain only its own member who has a recognized specific call to vocational ministry. As the number of churches and pastors multiplies, the need also grows for some uniform principles and practices. Churches need guidance in evaluating prospective pastors coming from a variety of denominational backgrounds and schools. The following recommendations can help churches:

ORDINATION STANDARDS

1. **Spiritual:** An experience of conversion, a divine call to the ministry, a consistent Christian walk, a vital concern for the conversion of the lost and up-building of the church at home and abroad are essential in the candidate's experience.
2. **Doctrinal:** All prospective pastors should affirm their unequivocal adherence to an evangelical doctrinal position based on the Scriptures as the Word of God. The 1951 Affirmation of Faith adopted by CONVERGE Worldwide shall serve as the guide in these matters.
3. **Educational:** The demands on pastors, missionaries and chaplains are growing. That is why many churches esteem graduation from a four-year college course followed by a standard Master of Divinity course in seminary. The ministerial calling requires the best training, comparable in quality and intensity to that of other professions.
 - a. Some of our ethnic churches meet the intent of this educational standard in other ways such as graduation from the pastoral course of an ethnic institute or seminary and extensive theological tutelage by an experienced pastor. Within these cultures, standards for ministry are no less stringent than those of English speaking pastors and congregations and, often, are more stringent.
 - b. To reflect our unity in Christ's Body and our partnership in gospel ministry, a single process for ordination is maintained, not a process for each ethnic group. The difficulties of language and culture are not insurmountable.
 - c. Ordination is a ministry credential that follows the pastor from church to church.

4. **Denominational:** All ministers of CONVERGE Worldwide should be convinced Baptists who accept historic Baptist distinctives in all matters concerning church order and practice. Those coming from non-Conference backgrounds, and especially non-Baptists would be wise to take some recommended courses available from Bethel Theological Seminary or complete certain prescribed reading.
5. **Practical experience:** It is advisable that a graduate from a theological school spend at least one year after graduation engaged exclusively in preaching and pastoral work before seeking ordination. A license to preach and serve as a pastor will allow him to fulfill his pastoral duties without restriction during the year or more before ordination. There are exceptions to this rule. The candidate may have adequate pastoral experience before and during his seminary course. Or a candidate may seek early ordination to satisfy requirements for missionary service or chaplaincy. Practical experience helps churches and candidates determine fitness for the ministry. Any uncertainty as to call or other obvious disqualifications should bar a person from ordination despite sincerity or educational attainments.

ORDINATION GUIDELINES

1. **Preliminary Examination:** It is the church's responsibility to establish a candidate's readiness for the ordination process before initiating it.
2. **Preparation for the Ordination Council:** The candidate works with CSW staff, the Ordination Guidance Committee and appropriate seminary faculty in preparing for the Ordination Council.
3. **Calling a Council:** The church (or designated Board responsible for this) calls the Ordination Council intending to ordain the candidate upon a favorable recommendation by the Council. The candidate must always be a member of the ordaining church. Area churches may send their pastor and two other members as delegates or messengers to the Council.
4. **Meeting of the Council:** After organizing itself the Council will examine the candidate with respect to spiritual experience, call to the ministry, and views of Christian doctrine. The Council should take its responsibility seriously and examine the candidate carefully.
5. **Results of the Council:** The outcome of the Ordination Council will be a recommendation to the church either to ordain or not. Occasionally, a Council

will suggest ordination if the candidate fulfills certain requirements. An example would be the completion of recommended readings or study courses. The Council may recommend postponing ordination until the candidate takes certain remedial steps. Grave departures from traditionally high standards call for forthright refusal to recommend ordination.

6. **The Public Service of Ordination:** To avoid pressuring the Council, the ordaining church should not publicize the ordination service for the candidate until the Ordination Council has met.

7. **The Function of Ordination Guidance Committees:**

- a. The Executive Minister will appoint two standing Ordination Guidance Committees, one in the San Diego area and one in the Los Angeles area.
- b. Each Ordination Guidance Committee will consist of at least four people including at least one pastor. It may also include one seminary professor.
- c. Ordination Guidance Committee members will be appointed for a term of two years.
- d. Each Ordination Guidance Committee will meet twice a year scheduling adequate time per candidate. The candidate will provide a doctrinal statement to the Ordination Guidance Committee members before their interview.
- e. Although the responsibility of setting the date of the Ordination Council rests with the ordaining church, it is recommended that the date not be set before the candidate meets with the Ordination Guidance Committee.
- f. The Executive Minister will educate churches and potential candidates regarding ordination policies and procedures.
- g. The Executive minister will serve as a liaison between CSW churches and candidates in all matters concerning ordination.

THE DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Instructions for Writing a Statement of Faith in Preparation for Ordination:

PURPOSE

The paper is given as a public declaration of what you believe regarding the classic theological tenets of the evangelical Christian faith.

It should, therefore, be your own work, in your own words, with quotations from theological sources at a minimum. Approximately one page at the beginning of the document containing your conversion testimony and call to ministry is advised.

The paper should present positively what you basically believe, generally avoiding statements about what you do not believe.

In addition to presenting your theological understandings of the faith, the paper should demonstrate your ability to communicate in clear, concise thought patterns, words, and style.

SUGGESTED AREAS TO BE COVERED

Your statement should treat major theological themes, i.e.: God, Scriptures, man, sin, Christology, salvation, the church, eschatology, the Holy Spirit, and the Christian life. You should develop each of these doctrines as they grow naturally out of your present theological understanding. However, you should bear in mind the traditional approaches and, while expressing them in the categories of your own experience, seek to establish continuity with the experience of your readers (a part of whom will be an ordaining Council).

Wherever relevant, your statement should reflect your knowledge of the Biblical expression of the particular doctrine, its historical development, and its contemporary synthesis. The examples provided below should give you an insight.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

You should seek to incorporate in your statement the following concepts: What is the biblical understanding of man? Who is man as a soteriological creature in the twentieth century? How does man stand today as the image of God? What are the ethical dimensions of humanity?

ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Demonstrate the theological significance for today of the Biblical metaphors for the

church (body of Christ, habitation of God, etc.). How does the church relate to the Kingdom of God? How is the church related to contemporary society? What is the significance of the church for eschatology, etc.?

Before you begin to write each of the separate doctrines, outline the areas you intend to include, develop the procedure for treating these areas, and then ask yourself the question: Does this show my knowledge of the Biblical and historical data and does it relate to the man of today?

FORMAT

The statement should be fourteen to twenty pages in length, double-spaced. Pay attention to literary style, grammar, and spelling.

Use headings, subheadings, and page numbers for easy reference during the questioning period. Break down by paragraph. Use thesis-like margins.

Since we Baptists are “people of the Book,” use Scripture. Not more than an average of the one quoted reference should be used in support of any given point or statement. (Additional references may be used but only by giving location of chapter and verse.)

Since you are seeking ordination from a Baptist church, affiliated with an association of Baptist churches, your statement should demonstrate your familiarity with and commitment to traditional ‘Baptist distinctives.’

Remember that two thirds of any given Ordination Council are laymen, some with little theological sophistication. Prepare to communicate to them, too.

DUE DATE

A legible copy of the Statement of Faith must be submitted to CONVERGE Southwest Center one month prior to your meeting with the Ordination Guidance Committee. Please submit in PDF or Word Document format.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Among the topics that need to be addressed are the following:

1. Scripture
 - a. Revelation
 - b. Inspiration
 - c. Illumination
 - d. Authority
2. God
 - a. Attributes or qualities of God
 - b. The Trinity
 - c. Works of God
 - d. Creation
 - e. Providence
3. Humanity
 - a. The makeup of human nature
 - b. The purpose or destiny of Humanity
4. Sin
 - a. The nature of sin
 - b. The effects of sin
 - c. The nature and extent of Original Sin
5. The Person and Work of Christ
 - a. The humanity of Jesus Christ
 - b. The deity of Jesus Christ
 - c. The atonement
6. The Holy Spirit
 - a. Person
 - b. Work
7. Salvation
 - a. Conversion
 - b. Regeneration
 - c. Justification
 - d. Sanctification
 - e. Glorification
8. The Church
 - a. Nature and function
 - b. Officers
 - c. Ordinances
 - d. Baptist Distinctives
 - e. Philosophy of World Missions
9. The Last Things
 - a. Death
 - b. Intermediate state
 - c. Resurrection
 - d. Tribulation
 - e. Second coming
 - f. Millenniums

HOW THE ORDAINING CHURCH CALLS THE COUNCIL

1. Upon hearing from the Ordination Guidance Committee the church selects a date for the Ordination Council a minimum of four weeks before the Council is to meet.
2. The appropriate governing body (the ruling Board, Church Assembly) calls for a Council and vote intending to ordain the candidate. The ordaining church makes and acts upon a list of those they wish to attend the Council. The list may include delegates from: CONVERGE Southwest (if available), the Theological seminary from which the candidate graduated (if possible), persons who may have played a significant role in the candidate's life, the pastor and two lay persons from nearby Conference churches. A tentative date of the ordination service should be set and an invitation sent by the church to the prescribed list.
3. Discover from other pastors the best date for the Council and ordination service. A calendar of area events should be consulted before setting the date so that conflicts can be avoided. A minimum of three hours should be reserved for the Council meeting. Light refreshments enhance the warmth of the Council meeting.

WHO THE ORDAINING CHURCH INVITES TO THE COUNCIL

1. Ordaining churches invite other CONVERGE Worldwide churches to send their pastor and two others to the Council.
2. Churches from other than CONVERGE Worldwide may send representatives upon the invitation of the ordaining church.
3. It is customary to invite and send delegates from Bethel Seminary West and CONVERGE Southwest to participate on the seated Council.
4. Participants should be allowed and encouraged to bring interns, lay people and others as observers who would benefit from attending these procedures.
5. The ordaining church should seek to have no more than 33% of the sum of the seated Council from any one church, especially the ordaining church. Although there is no specific number of participants suggested, the candidate is best served if the Council is well rounded and objective.
6. The ordaining church is encouraged to hold the Ordination Council during the weekend so that working lay leaders can attend.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ORDINATION COUNCIL

1. When you, as a participant, receive the letter of invitation:
 - a. Check your calendar.
 - b. Make the ordaining church aware of your participation even if not requested to do so.
 - c. Note any particulars concerning the meeting:
 - i. Time and location
 - ii. If the church expects you to stay for lunch or participate in any other adjunct meeting

2. In preparation for the Council:
 - a. Pray for the candidate and the Council.
 - b. Be aware of the Statement on Ordination in CONVERGE Worldwide Annual.
 - c. Read carefully materials sent to you by the candidate or ordaining church.

3. At the Council:
 - a. When at the Council always be ready to:
 - i. Listen carefully to the testimony, nature of the vocational call, experience, attestation of the ordaining church, skill level in oral and written communication.
 - ii. Interact with the candidate's interpretation of Scripture, understanding of doctrine and church history.
 - iii. Use spiritual discernment in comprehending the spiritual and emotional readiness for ministry realizing that the ordaining church will attest to most of this work.

 - b. Be ready to do help if the Council asks you to:
 - i. Chair the Council.
 - ii. Do the work of clerk for the Council.
 - iii. Vote on any matter when asked.
 - iv. Sign the appropriate documents if asked.

4. After the Council:
 - a. You might be asked to participate, in person or by delegate, in the Ordination Service.
 - b. You might be asked to help if the candidate needs supplementary guidance.

HOW TO HOLD AN ORDINATION COUNCIL

1. The function of the church:
 - a. Before the scheduled Council the church will have appointed a convener of the Council.
 - b. This person may be the moderator or other officer of the church or a representative from the district office. The convener calls the meeting to order at the appointed hour. He may lead in a brief service consisting of a hymn, Scripture reading and prayer. A representative from the church reads the minutes of the church that call for the Council.
 - c. The convener requests credentials from all the delegates. He calls the roll and announces the number of delegates present.
 - d. Upon completion of the seating of the delegates, the convener will declare that the roll makes up the Ordination Council.
 - e. He will then ask for nominations from the floor for moderator and clerk of the Council. Upon election, the officers will preside over the Council.

2. The function of the Moderator:
 - a. The moderator will invite the appointed church officer to introduce the candidate for ordination.
 - b. He must be objective, allowing all people an opportunity to speak but keeping any single person from monopolizing the time. At times he must firmly move the session on.
 - c. He should be kindly disposed to the candidate, seeking to put him at ease.
 - d. A moderator needs to set a tone of warmth and candor for the whole proceeding.
 - e. He needs to remind the Council (and enforce it) that they are present to decide the candidate's fitness for the gospel ministry; therefore, they are not to attempt to teach him or to set him straight in the process. The moderator should not be the pastor of the ordaining church.
 - f. The moderator may preside at the service of ordination.

3. The function of the clerk:

- a. It is the duty of the clerk to receive, record, and read to the Council the names of representatives and churches.
- b. A concise record of all proceedings and actions of the Council must be kept as minutes.
- c. The clerk records the vote to ordain or not to ordain. In the latter it must be a vote by raised hands and the number of negative votes must be recorded.
- d. The clerk keeps an accurate record of the service of ordination.
- e. The clerk provides complete copies of Council and service proceedings to:
 - i. The local church
 - ii. CONVERGE Southwest
 - iii. CONVERGE Worldwide Archivist, c/o Bethel Theological Seminary, 3949 Bethel Drive, St. Paul, MN 55112
 - iv. The Standard, 2002 S. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL - 60005
 - v. The writing of a news story on the ordination service for various papers depends on the local church.

4. The function of the Council:

- a. The Council decides upon the candidate's fitness for the gospel ministry.
- b. The Council makes its recommendations to the church.
- c. The Ordination Council in session will listen to the candidate as he relates his conversion and spiritual pilgrimage, call to the ministry, and statement of Christian beliefs. Upon completion of each division, the Council asks questions or makes appropriate remarks. Questions should be pertinent and to the point. Questions should not be "trick questions" or attempts to parade the knowledge of the inquirer. However, every opportunity should be given to the Council to raise questions that in turn will satisfy the Council about the candidate's qualifications for ordination. An ordination must reach its intention: a recognition by the church of God's call and an appraisal of the candidate's character, preparation, and qualifications to fulfill that call as a worthy servant of Jesus Christ. This can only be done if the Council accepts its role with a spirit of humility and responsibility.

AN EXAMPLE OF ORDINATION COUNCIL PROCEDURE

1. Hymn
2. Scripture
3. Prayer
4. Host Pastor or convener:
 - a. States the purpose of the meeting
 - b. Reads local church board's recommendations.
 - c. Introduces delegates and guests and requests credentials.
 - d. Holds the election of a moderator.
 - e. Holds the election of a clerk.
5. Moderator:
 - a. Circulates sign-up sheet for list of delegates for the record and for the candidate.
 - b. Asks host pastor, or other appointee, to introduce the candidate.
 - c. Asks candidate to:
 - i. Share conversion, Christian experience and call. The purpose of these questions is to show the genuineness of salvation, preparedness, gifts, strengths, weaknesses, and ministry goals.
 - ii. Share the doctrinal statement. The candidate may read portions of the doctrinal statement, make comments and receive questions. The purpose of questions is to clarify the statement and to demonstrate ability to apply the doctrine.
 - iii. Receive final questions. The purpose of which is to address anything not covered or unclear.
 - d. Asks Council for a motion to conclude questions.
 - e. Dismisses candidate and family.
 - f. Leads the Council's discussion.
 - g. Receives or asks for a motion to recommend the candidate to the church for ordination.
 - h. Asks the candidate to return and informs him of the vote with any pertinent concerns.
 - i. Asks the clerk to notify the church and other organizations, institutions and newspapers.
 - j. Asks the clerk to oversee the signing of the certificate.
 - k. Asks for a motion to dissolve the Council.
 - l. Returns the meeting to the convener.
6. The convener of the Council leads in prayer for candidate, his or her family, and future ministry.

AN EXAMPLE OF ORDINATION SERVICE PROCEDURE

The church invites the participants to the Ordination Service beforehand. Take care to emphasize the authority of the local church in the ordination service. The church plans and directs the service with whatever help it needs from visiting ministers. Samples of ordination services are available in CSW office.

1. The reading of the motion of the Council, appropriate reading of Scripture, prayer and music. (No vote necessary at this time because the church has previously voted to ordain upon receiving a favorable decision by the Council).
2. Ordination sermon.
3. Ordination prayer.
4. Charge to the candidate.
5. Charge to the church.
6. Hand of fellowship and presentation of the Certificate of Ordination.
7. Benediction by the ordained person.

LICENSE

A license is appropriate in two situations:

1. A church may license its pastor as a preliminary step to ordination.
2. Or a license may recognize a person's call to ministry and serve as a letter of recommendation. Authorization to perform marriages and other functions of a minister may be conferred upon theological students who will become student pastors.

THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDAINED STATUS

1. When an ordained clergy accepts the call of another congregation the responsibility for supervision of ordination also transfers to that congregation. Sometimes church membership does not change when a vocational ministry does. Then, supervision does not change either. Ordination is contingent upon a recognized, specific call to vocational ministry. Sometimes an ordained person does not have a call from the church of which he is a member. Or, perhaps, the

church of which he is a member does not recognize the validity of the call to another form of ministry. Then the ordination is in a state of lapse. Ordained clergy who become disabled or who enter full vocational retirement shall continue with full recognition of their ordained status.

2. If a minister lives a life inappropriate for a servant of the Lord or proclaiming teachings contrary to the Word of God and Baptist beliefs, the local church may call a Council to hear the charges and the minister's defense. Upon recommendation of the Council the church will then revoke the minister's ordination certificate and announce the revocation in the denominational press. It should be understood that such action may be taken only by the church of which the minister is a member.
3. An ordained person can voluntarily renounce ordination. Such renunciation shall require only that the ordained person declare such to the leaders of the congregation and hand over the certificate of ordination to be destroyed.

RECOGNITION OF PREVIOUS ORDINATION

1. When ministers ordained in other fellowships become pastors of Baptist General Conference churches, the local church can take the following steps:
 - a. Call a recognition Council similar to the Ordination Council.
 - b. Upon recommendation of the Council, proceed with a public recognition service.
2. It could be appropriate for one whose background is widely divergent from that of our Conference to seek reordination. In such case the usual ordination procedures will be followed.

TRANSFER OF ORDINATION PROCESS

1. Prepare doctrinal statement with special attention to areas of theological difference between ordaining body and CWW.
2. Schedule appointment for review with the Ordination Guidance Committee.
3. Ordination Guidance Council will either conduct the review or appoint a mini-Council for the purpose of examining the candidate for transfer of ordination.
4. Reviewing Body will interview candidate for transfer of ordination and make appropriate recommendation to the church.
5. Church will conduct a service of affirmation of Ordination.

APPLYING ORDINATION GUIDANCE COMMITTEE STANDARDS

1. The Ordination Guidance Committee continues in a close relationship with seminarians at Bethel, Bethel West and CONVERGE Worldwide students at other seminaries who might profit from this work
2. The Ordination Guidance Committee continues to inform pastors of their ongoing work.
3. The Ordination Guidance Committee publishes its work broadly and offers it as a help and utility.

CONVERGE Southwest

Ordination Guidance Committee Reservation Form

Contact Information:

Name of Candidate _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail Address _____

Phone (Work) _____ (Home) _____

(Cell) _____ (Other) _____

Church _____

Preferred Dates* to sit for Guidance Committee (pre-ordination council):

**Please note: Guidance committee meeting needs to occur a few months prior to your target date to complete the process of becoming ordained.*

Y N My church or its leadership has voted to begin my ordination procedure. (Please attach documentation.)

Y N I will provide a copy of my Doctrinal Statement (in the requested digital format of a PDF or Word Document) at least one month before my Guidance Committee meeting occurs.

Education and Credentials:

College _____ Degree _____ Year _____

Seminary _____ Degree _____ Year _____

Length of time in part or full-time ministry: _____

Positions held: _____

Please scan completed form and return to (or send by US Mail):

Janie Plante – janie@convergesw.org ~ 858.722.4342
CONVERGE Southwest ~ 4747 College Ave ~ San Diego, California 92115