

Ordination Policy

*Guidelines for the
License to Ministry,
License to Preach,
and Ordination*



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INTRODUCTION

While recognizing that the principle of the Autonomy of the Local Church places within the jurisdiction of each church authority in the matter of ordination, it is reasonable where the endorsement of a number of affiliated churches is concerned, there should be some formal and distinctive features that give significance to this wider recognition.

This manual has been prepared as an aid to churches planning a public service of ordination for men who have been called by the Lord to the Gospel Ministry. It sets forth requirements and procedures commonly observed among Baptist churches. Its observance by the Venture Northeast churches (formerly CB Mission Northeast) establishes a degree of uniformity in ordination procedure. This manual also helps to clarify the matter of licensing and commissioning.

The following suggestions are not to be construed as directives that infringe on the autonomy of the local church. Rather, they are intended to promote and preserve the quality of pastoral ministry within the Conservative Baptist fellowship of churches and to provide guidance to the local church which seeks with “decency and order” to ordain a man to the Gospel Ministry.

The following Venture Northeast Bylaw should be noted: “The church’s practice is to call and ordain only biblically qualified men as elder/pastors” (accepted 9-9-97). Therefore, it is appropriate for the local church to credential men and women who are called to a ministry other than that of elder/pastor in a way that is not confused with ordination. This may be accomplished by licensing and recognized by commissioning.

I. What is Licensing?

Licensing is a credential of the local church that recognizes an individual’s call and gifting for ministry. There are two kinds of licenses: a license to preach and a license to ministry. (The license to preach encompasses the license to ministry but not vice-versa.) The Venture Northeast Ministry Center would appreciate notification of all actions of licensure.

License to Preach

A license to preach is a credential of the local church that recognizes that a man has been called to preach the gospel. Such a license normally leads toward ordination to the office of pastor-elder including a church planter at home or abroad. Thus a license to preach should only be granted to male members of the church.

Timothy was charged, “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands” (1 Timothy 5:22). In the normal process of a man’s calling to pastoral ministry there should be a time of making certain of God’s appointment. It is possible that during this period of training and/or internship a man is involved in a local church ministry and has responsibilities that extend beyond the normal involvement of a layman. For example, a theological student who is the pastor of a small church or on the pastoral staff of a larger church may be licensed to preach.

It is one of the prevailing customs of our churches to grant a license to someone believing himself, and believed by others, to have been called to preach the Gospel, but not yet prepared to enter upon the work of the elder/pastor ministry. When the local church of which he is a member recognizes God’s gifting, blessing and leading upon such a man into the active Gospel ministry, it is fitting for the church to take steps toward granting him a license to preach.

After careful and prayerful examination by the church leadership board concerning his conversion, call and doctrinal views, and upon their favorable recommendation to the local church, the candidate is asked to preach the Word, after which the church may take a vote to grant him a license.

This license is good only for that local church and is not to be recognized as valid in any other church. In contrast to ordination, the examination for licensing is within the structure of the local church. A license to preach typically has a limited duration such as one or two years. Therefore, licensing is not a substitute for ordination. It is expected that a license to preach will lead to ordination for those called to the Gospel ministry (see Section 2: Ordination: IA3).

When a man who is not ordained is called as pastor of a church, he should be licensed by that church for the preaching ministry as soon as possible following his call. The license may be in the form of a standard certificate or letter written and signed by the church clerk certifying that he is authorized by the church to perform all the duties of a pastor including the administering of communion and baptism and the performing of marriage ceremonies. A record of the action should be a part of the permanent records of the church. As noted above, the license to preach is expected to lead to ordination. However, in the event that the individual for reasons of conscience does not seek ordination and the church agrees, then it should be noted in the church records that the pastor’s license to preach extends to cover his tenure in the office.

License to Ministry

A license to ministry recognizes the call and gifting of God on an individual (man or woman) for other than preaching the Gospel in the office of pastor-elder. This might include, for example, those called to full-time missionary service in a supporting role (including para-church ministries), to those ministering in prisons, the military, hospitals or nursing homes or to those serving as full-time Christian educators, etc.

The decision to grant such a license ought to be conditioned by the church's conviction that the ministry in question conforms to an acceptable declaration of faith, and that the individual's ability to serve in this capacity is enhanced by the granting of the license (e.g. a condition of serving as a chaplain in the military requires a recognized license from a church).

As it is every believer's responsibility to serve in a Christian ministry, a license to minister should not be granted for normal church ministries such as a Sunday School teacher, a committee member, etc., neither should a license to ministry be granted solely for income tax purposes. The license to ministry is an alternative credential to the license to preach and should be granted with the same degree of care and examination.

Because a license to ministry is not intended to lead to ordination it shall be valid for the duration of the licensee's ministry designated by the local church. A license can be annulled or withdrawn at any time should the church have, in its judgment, sufficient reason for such action (1 Timothy 5:19). Please send copies of all such actions to the Venture Northeast Ministry Center.

II. What is Commissioning?

Commissioning is the formal act of installing or sending an individual previously licensed or ordained by a church to either the Gospel ministry (elder/pastor whether they are ordained or not), or other ministry positions such as a missionary, etc. Whereas licensing is the credential issued by the church, commissioning is the service of recognition at which the individual is set aside for the particular ministry.

Some examples of commissioning include: the formal service of installation of a pastor, the setting aside of a person for a campus ministry, or the sending out of a missionary into a particular field of service. The act of commissioning is thus linked with the formal action of the church first in licensing an individual and then in publicly setting that person aside for the work.

The Venture Northeast Ministry Center would appreciate being notified of all commissioning services.

III. What is Ordination?

We believe that ordination is a credential of the local church. Ordination recognizes and announces publicly what God has already accomplished in calling a man to the Gospel Ministry as a pastor/elder. We believe that a person seeking such affirmation of his call should be, and must remain, above reproach in his lifestyle, and biblically sound in doctrine and competent in ministry skills.

We further believe that ordination is not a perpetual order. Should a man become morally unfit, or change his doctrinal views so that they are no longer in agreement with the Scriptures and Venture Northeast's Declaration of Faith (*see Appendix D, page E*), he should set aside his credentials or accept the church's action to do so. It is the prerogative of Venture Northeast to recommend the revocation of a person's ordination credentials if he is found unfit to continue in the ministry.

The body of believers in a local church recognize in substantial ways that the Holy Spirit is setting apart this man for the work to which God has called him. These substantial ways are identified clearly by such Scriptures as 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-20; 1 Peter 5:1-4 and Titus 1:5-9.

Because member churches have declared their agreement with the Venture Northeast Declaration of Faith (*see Appendix D, page E*), this fellowship of churches therefore accepts the ordination credentials of a man called to serve as pastor of a member church who was previously ordained by an ordaining body other than a Conservative Baptist local church. Should a member church call a pastor who is not in agreement with the Venture Northeast Declaration of Faith, it is the duty of that church to withdraw from the fellowship of Venture Northeast.

Section 1: The Pre-Ordination Committee

The pre-ordination committee is a group of ordained CB pastors within an area fellowship (or several fellowships as needed), who, representing all the churches of the fellowship(s) oversee the preliminary stages of the ordination process. It is recommended that the committee be comprised of four men, with three as a minimum. The purpose of the committee is to review candidates recommended for ordination by their local church as to their call and preparation for the office of pastor-elder. Following this review, the chairman of the committee will report back to the church with its recommendations.

I. The Process

The ordination process begins when a church (the pastor, clerk or other designated officer) petitions the moderator of the area fellowship to arrange an interview for a candidate with the pre-ordination committee. The moderator will refer the contact to the chairman of the pre-ordination committee who will do the following:

- A. Contact the recommending church to determine if the candidate has complied with the initial requirements for ordination as outlined in the *Guidelines for the License to Preach and Ordination*, Section 2, specifically points I and II. The area moderator will determine if the candidate has complied with the Guidelines.
- B. Forward to the candidate a copy of the Guidelines and request him to complete the required documentation (Church Recommendation Form (*see Appendix D, page G*), Ordination Information Form and Doctrinal Paper, *see Appendix D*). When complete, the candidate will send a copy of his doctrinal paper to each member of the pre-ordination committee. The Ordination Information Form will be sent to the chairman of the committee. The candidate will be requested to name a mentor (if he not already done so) to assist in the preparation of the doctrinal paper.
- C. Upon receiving the complete document package from the candidate, the chairman will schedule a mutually acceptable date for him to meet with the committee.

Prior to the meeting, the committee members will carefully review the candidate's statement of conversion, call to ministry and doctrinal statements. The purpose of this examination is to critique the paper for orthodoxy and prepare questions for the candidate in those areas where his position is not clear, is weak, or is not well presented. The whole process is to assist the candidate to be well prepared for a full ordination council meeting.

II. The Pre-Ordination Meeting

When the pre-ordination committee meeting convenes, the candidate will be asked to read his statement of conversion, baptism and call to ministry. This is a very important aspect of the meeting. The committee must determine if the candidate *has a clear and verifiable call to the pastoral ministry*. This should be evident in his passion for the proclamation of the Word of God and the desire to see the church grow in the grace and knowledge of God. The candidate should be able to demonstrate to the committee a deeply held conviction that God has so called (1 Corinthians 9:16). The committee should not pass over this section lightly.

The committee will then review the paper with the candidate section by section. Questions should be asked that will clarify points that are unclear or on which the candidate ought to expand. The committee should look for statements that might trigger an ordination council to "bore in" on a particular point. Such areas might be those where Conservative Baptist's have traditionally held a particular position and the candidate holds a different one, or where certain of the candidate's statements appear to indicate that he holds a position not within the mainstream of Conservative Baptist thought. In such case the candidate ought to be well prepared to biblically defend his position as it may prevent his ordination. It is important to state that the committee is not to instruct or attempt to change the candidate's position unless it is clearly contrary to Scripture or to Venture Northeast's Declaration of Faith (*see Appendix D, page E*). If either of these cases exists, the candidate would not be recommended for ordination.

The candidate should be instructed, but not coached, to prepare to answer some of the typical ordination council questions such as: "Could Christ sin?", "In light of all the translations do we still have a reliable Bible?" etc. (*see Appendix D—The Ordination Information Form*). The committee should review the paper for spelling mistakes and grammatical and syntax problems. The biblical references cited to support a particular doctrinal point should be carefully reviewed to ensure they accurately support the position. The committee should also take careful note of the candidate's use of, and reliance on, Scripture as opposed to quotations from other sources.

At the close of the interview, the candidate should be asked to leave the room while the committee members discuss his readiness

for ordination. If the consensus is that he is not ready, he should be told the reasons and given recommendations concerning what he should do to be better prepared. This might be in the need for greater clarity and conviction of call or points of weakness in doctrinal position, or maturity. He should be informed that he may re-submit his application with the approval of the pre-ordination committee and the recommending church. The chairman will notify the church and the area moderator accordingly.

If the consensus is that the candidate is ready, he should be instructed to make any recommended changes to his paper and prepare for a full ordination council. The chairman will notify the church and the area moderator. The pre-ordination committee will select two men from their ranks to serve as the ordination council moderator and recording secretary (*see Appendix B*). The names of these men will be forwarded to the recommending church. When the ordination council convenes, they will take charge of the council following the church's call to order and reading of the official notice (*see Section 2: Ordination: VI C, page 12*).

All the members of the pre-ordination committee must make every attempt to attend the ordination council to assure an adequate representation of Conservative Baptist messengers and to support the candidate and the recommending church.

III. Record Keeping

The chairman of the pre-ordination committee will ensure that a record of the pre-ordination process for each candidate is maintained and that a copy of the proceedings be sent to the area moderator, the candidate and the candidate's church.

Section 2: Ordination

I. Recommendation to the Ordaining Church

- A. Because Scripture commands us not to be hasty in laying hands on anyone (1 Timothy 5:22), we believe that a candidate for ordination should first meet these basic criteria:
1. He should be ordained by his home Conservative Baptist church or by the CB church he is called to serve.
 2. He should live among the community of that local church for a minimum of one year in order for them to recognize God's call.
 3. He should be licensed by that church. He also should be previously licensed for a minimum of one year before applying for ordination. During this year the Candidate may complete his doctrinal paper for the ordination council.
 4. The Candidate should be involved in the local area CB fellowship during the year pending ordination. The Candidate should participate as much as possible in the monthly area fellowship as well as attend other ordination councils, the annual meeting, and the shared meetings that unite our association in fellowship. Reasonable exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.
 5. During the licensing period the Candidate, in consultation with the Pre-ordination Committee, will select a mentor to whom he will be accountable to prepare for ordination. A written recommendation from the mentor and the ordaining church will accompany the Candidate's paper.
 6. He should have demonstrated ability to teach, and otherwise minister from Scripture.
 7. He should be granted or denied ordination on the basis of what he *is*, and not on what he will become. Therefore, only his present credentials, views, and practices can be examined. A Venture Northeast pre-ordination committee can help both the candidate and the church determine a man's present fitness before an invitation is extended for an examination council. (*See Section 1: The Pre-ordination Committee*).
 8. While it may be difficult to standardize educational requirements for one who is to be ordained, Titus 1:9 sets the standard: "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (NIV). Educational qualifications should *generally* include at least the completion of Bible school or seminary training.
- B. Baptists believe that Scripture teaches the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9). This belief affects several aspects of the ordination process
1. Laymen should be included in the ordination process. Letters announcing a council should be addressed to the church and the pastor. Those invitations should request the presence of the pastor (or pastors) and two lay messengers to participate in the examination.
 2. The members of the ordaining church must be invited to attend the ordination council and its delegates to participate in the examination.
 3. All CB churches in the area fellowship of the ordaining church should be included in the invitation to the council.
- C. Because ordination is a ministry of the local church, the ordaining church is responsible for the entire proceeding.
1. It should see that the candidate is fully qualified and prepared.
 2. It should formally vote to call a council.
 3. It is responsible for seeing that all things pertaining to the council and ordination are done in decency and order using these guidelines.

- D. Churches should remember that an ordination examination and an ordaining service are not the same thing. **ORDINATION SERVICES SHOULD NOT BE PLANNED** until *after* the council has met and made its recommendations. In no circumstances should the ordination service be scheduled for the same day as an examination council.

II. Recommendations to the Candidate

- A. It is desirable that a man should receive ordination upon a call to the pastorate.
- B. As stated earlier, ordination is not a perpetual order. It is valid only so long as the candidate adheres to the doctrine and conduct which were the bases for his ordination. He should notify the ordaining church and association of any change in doctrine or conduct, which would prove disqualifying for Christian service within Venture Northeast.
- C. In preparation for ordination a candidate should complete the *Ordination Information Form* (see Appendix D). The candidate should prepare a paper that includes the following information:

PERSONAL HISTORY

- State when and how the Spirit of God led you to Christ.
- State your call to the pastoral ministry and qualifying gifts.
- State your understanding of ordination.
- State your theological training and preparation for ministry.

CHURCH HISTORY

- What are the historic Baptist distinctives with supporting Scripture references?
- What are the historical roots of the Conservative Baptists?

DOCTRINAL BELIEFS

A detailed doctrinal statement affirming the positive aspects of the candidate's beliefs lessens the need for questioning. The paper should demonstrate biblical support for the candidate's doctrinal views, and show skill in biblical interpretation and practical application. The paper should avoid excessive quotations from sources other than the Bible.

- Doctrine of the Scriptures (Bibliology including revelation, inspiration, authority, illumination and canon)
- Doctrine of God (Theology Proper including nature, attributes, trinity, and works of creation, sovereign rule, providence)
- Doctrine of Christ (Christology including His person and work)
- Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology including His personhood, deity, ministry and gifts)
- Doctrine of Angels, Satan and Demons (Angelology)
- Doctrine of Man (Anthropology)
- Doctrine of Sin (Hamartiology)
- Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology including faith, repentance, regeneration, justification, election and predestination, and sanctification)
- Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology including origin, organization, officers, ordinances, mission, membership requirements and church discipline)
- Doctrine of Last Things (Eschatology including Christ's return, the resurrections, the judgments, millennium, tribulation and final destiny)
- A statement on Hermeneutics and Homiletics.

PRACTICAL AND PASTORAL MINISTRY ISSUES

The candidate for ordination should think through and be prepared to verbally address current issues confronting the church and the pastoral ministry as guided by his pre-ordination committee.

- D. It is important that before the ordination council, the candidate seek the assistance of a pre-ordination committee (within the area CB fellowship). This committee is to advise both the candidate and the ordaining church about whether the church should proceed in calling an ordination council. Arrangements for a meeting with the pre-ordination committee should be made with the Area Moderator at the request of the candidate.

III. Preliminary Arrangements for Calling a Council

- A. The ordaining church should oversee the previous procedures.
- B. The letter of invitation calling for an ordination council should meet the following requirements: (*See Appendix A*)
1. It should be sent by the ordaining church not the candidate.
 2. It should be addressed to all CB churches and individual CB members in the area fellowships. The regional CB Executive Director, Associate Director and other selected guests should also receive invitations. A separate letter may be addressed to non-CB churches and individuals inviting them to the ordination council as nonvoting participants.
 3. It should include the purpose of the letter.
 4. It should include the name of the candidate.
 5. It should include the time and place the council will meet.
 6. It should request a response indicating who, if anyone will represent the invited church at the council, and should be sent in time to allow this response by return mail.
 7. Upon positive response, the church will send out the candidate's doctrinal statement.
- C. An order of procedure should be drawn up, subject to council approval. Suggested steps are listed below under number VI.
- D. A room for private, executive session of the council should be made available. Councils normally require three to four hours to conduct a thorough examination.
- E. Refreshments for the council members should be provided.
- F. A certificate of ordination should be made available by the ordaining church.
- G. A member of the ordaining church should be prepared to convene the council and present the candidate to the council.
- H. It is recommended that prior to the ordination council the preordination committee select from its members the moderator and secretary to oversee the ordination council.

IV. The Candidate at the Council

- A. His demeanor should be modest and patient.
- B. It is proper for the candidate to stand during the presentation and examination.
- C. He should be prepared to narrate the paper he has prepared (*see Section II above*).
- D. In presenting his doctrine the candidate should be careful to:
1. Answer questions fully but succinctly.
 2. Be prepared to answer without reference to written sources other than the doctrinal paper and Scripture.
 3. Accentuate positive belief statements—telling what he believes, not so much what he does not believe.

4. State the practical aspects of doctrine, not simply deal with theory.
5. Support his beliefs by Scripture and sound principles of interpretation.
6. He must seek to be logically consistent in his views.
7. Be honest—e.g. if he does not know how to answer a question, he should simply state this.
8. He should not answer a question that was not asked.

V. The Responsibilities of the Council

- A. To be present and punctual.
- B. To be respectful and professional consistent with the importance of the occasion. The council should seek to let Scripture and the highest spiritual standards influence the ordination procedure.
- C. To do no other business than that for which it was called.
- D. To always give a searching examination, yet one concerned with a candidate's overall gifts and beliefs, not one concerned with incidentals.
- E. To examine the candidate to ascertain what he believes and not to demonstrate the knowledge of the council.
- F. To foster a spirit of edification, not interrogation.

VI. Suggested Order of Procedure for the Council

- A. At the date and time set for the council to meet, a temporary moderator (*pro tem*) selected by the local church (usually the clerk or the chairman of the board) shall call the meeting to order. This person will then state the purpose of the meeting and introduce the candidate to those gathered. He will recognize the members of the pre-ordination committee who have been designated to serve as the council moderator and clerk (*see Appendix B* for suggested guidelines concerning the moderator and clerk).
- B. Prayer for the Candidate and the Council.
- C. The moderator *pro tem* should read the official action of the church and the letter(s) of invitation sent to the churches. The roll call of the churches should then be taken and recorded. The Conservative Baptist messengers and other invited credentialed guests are to form the examining council. However, only Conservative Baptist messengers may vote to recommend Conservative Baptist ordination during the executive session at the close of the examination. A minimum of five ordained Conservative Baptist messengers must be present. Since the council is called to advise the church, no member of the church should vote during the executive session.
- D. The council moderator will take charge of the meeting. It is the moderator's responsibility to preside, keep order and assure a timely and complete examination. The clerk will keep a detailed record of the proceedings (*see Appendix B*).
- E. The presentation of each of the candidate's statements will proceed at the moderator's discretion. Time for questioning each section is to be allowed.
- F. Vote to conclude the public examination aspect of the council and to enter into executive session. During the session the candidate and members of his immediate family are asked to withdraw. Before deliberations begin, the moderator will ask that a few local church members who so desire may speak briefly on behalf of the candidate. The moderator will also read any written expressions of support from those unable to attend the council. The executive session will then consider the candidates readiness for ordination.
- G. In the executive session there is discussion and a vote whether to recommend ordination by the local church. While a candidate is approved for ordination by a simple majority vote, it is recommended to the church that a minimum positive vote of three-fourths (75%) is received. The decision of the council should be written and read at the ordination service. Any recommendations should be given to the candidate directly.

- H. If the vote is favorable, a certificate of ordination may be signed by all the pastors taking part on the council, and presented to the candidate at his ordination service, along with a copy of the minutes of the examining council. A copy of the decision of the council and the minutes of the council should also be sent to the Venture Northeast Ministry Center for its' files.
- I. Announce the findings of the council to the candidate and assembled guests.
- J. Motion to Dissolve Council.

VII. Suggested Ordination Service

The following suggested outline includes the fundamental features of a service of ordination. This should be a public service with as many pastors taking part as possible.

Processional Hymn/Chorus
Invocation
Welcome
Scripture Reading
Special Music/Choir/Worship Team
Report of the Council
Charge to the Candidate *
Hymn or Special Music
Charge to the Congregation *
Prayer of Ordination
Welcome to the Gospel Ministry
Presentation of Ordination Certificate
Hymn/Chorus
Benediction by Newly Ordained Pastor
Recessional Hymn/Chorus

* may be combined into a single message

Appendix A

Letter of Invitation Calling for an Ordination Council

The letter may utilize the following example that may be adapted onto church stationery:

Date

CALL FOR CONSERVATIVE BAPTIST ORDINATION COUNCIL

Church Name

Address

Dear Friends:

By the unanimous recommendation of the *(name of the church-governing board)* and by congregational vote, an ordination council is being formed to consider *(name of candidate)* for ordination to the Gospel Ministry. Mr. *(name of candidate)* has met with a Conservative Baptist pre-ordination committee, and it is with their recommendation that we convene this council.

You are invited to send your pastor(s) and two members of your church as messengers to this council on *(date)* at *(time)*. Others from your church will be welcomed as observers to the council. The council will meet at *(place of meeting)*. Mr. *(name of candidate)* is *(single/married to name of wife)*, and has *(number of children)*. His training for ministry consists of *(academic institutions and church ministry experience)*.

He is presently serving as *(name of position)* at *(name of church or ministry)*. He began his ministry *(date began)*.

Thank you for your prompt reply to this invitation by *(date of expected response)*. The candidate's doctrinal position will be sent to all confirmed messengers to the council.

Sincerely Yours,

Church Clerk

Appendix B

Suggested Guidelines Concerning the Moderator and Clerk

The moderator and the clerk should be chosen by the pre-ordination committee prior to the convening of the council. If possible, they should be members of the pre-ordination committee. The moderator should be an ordained member of Venture Northeast, who is both theologically astute and irenic in nature.

MODERATOR:

It shall be the moderator's responsibility to:

1. Determine among those present, in conjunction with the moderator *pro tem*, those who will be qualified to participate as voting and/or examining members of the council.
2. Call for a motion and vote stating that those present and qualified shall constitute the official examining council.
3. Oversee the examination of the candidate, keeping before those assembled the purpose for such an examination, i.e. to examine fitness for and calling to the pastoral ministry, not for the debate of personal theological positions insofar as the positions of the candidate are found to be within the bounds of orthodoxy.
4. The moderator shall move the examination through the following areas:
 - a. Personal history
 - b. Church history
 - c. Doctrinal
 - d. Practical and pastoral ministerial issues
5. Excuse the candidate and preside over discussion of the candidate's fitness for ordination.
6. Call for a motion and vote with regard to a recommendation to the ordaining church concerning the candidate's fitness or lack thereof as well as recommendations for further study and preparation.
7. Report the findings of the council to the candidate.
8. Close the council in prayer.
9. Call upon those who are to sign the Certificate of Ordination to do so.

CLERK:

The Clerk will make written record of the following:

1. Procure an ordination certificate to bring to the ordination council.
2. Listing of examining persons and churches represented.
3. Resolution of the Church Board as read by the moderator in the council minutes.
4. Any and all motions and votes as shall take place in the convened council.
5. Pattern of examination as clerk sees fit or as directed by moderator or council.
6. Statement of recommended action by the examining council.
7. Clerk will also oversee the signing of the Ordination Certificate to be held by the church until the ordination service.
8. Clerk will send copy of proceedings to the church, the candidate, the area moderator and the Venture Northeast Ministry Center.

APPENDIX C:

A LOOK AT THE HEART – Biblical Qualifications for ministry

After prayerfully completing this heart check, consider reviewing it with a close, trusted friend for further insight and support. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest and best rating. Beyond assigning a number, consider the ways you have been growing in each area, and where more growth is needed.

1	2	3	4	A	Am I a man of good reputation in that no one can point their finger with accurate accusation regarding an unchristian life-style or blight on my character which would hinder me as a spiritual leader?
1	2	3	4	B	Am I a man of sexual purity, not guilty of sexual immorality and, if married, devoted solely to my wife?
1	2	3	4	C	Am I clearheaded, not self-indulgent, known to be moderate and balanced in every area of life?
1	2	3	4	D	Am I serious about spiritual things, being one who possesses a clear and accurate understanding of Christian truth and the ability to put that knowledge into action?
1	2	3	4	E	Am I a man of “good behavior” who approaches all aspects of life in a systematic, orderly manner? Am I able to work through even the toughest of problems with clear, wise, and decisive thought?
1	2	3	4	F	Am I genuinely friendly and approachable, not cool and aloof? Do I care for others and their need? Do I work at ministering to those needs?
1	2	3	4	G	Am I “skilled in teaching”, able to effectively communicate the Word of God enabling others to comprehend and apply it to their lives?
1	2	3	4	H	Do I practice what I teach thereby setting an example for others to follow?
1	2	3	4	I	Am I free from addiction to alcoholic beverages, drugs other than those prescribed for medical reasons, or any other habit forming condition which would hinder my personal Christian testimony?
1	2	3	4	J	Am I able to solve differences or handle problems with other individuals, whether Christians or unbelievers, with a cool head and a gentle spirit?
1	2	3	4	K	Am I considerate, congenial, forbearing, gracious, gentle, and a person who, in a practical sense, demonstrates the ability to remember the good in another person and not the evil?
1	2	3	4	L	Am I a peacemaker, and not quarrelsome?
1	2	3	4	M	Do I have the joy of recognizing God’s provision for my needs?
1	2	3	4	N	Do I demonstrate an ability to manage my home and family well, showing leadership at home wherein my wife and children (if applicable) follow my leadership?
1	2	3	4	O	Do I demonstrate Christian maturity as described in 1Timothy 4:12 “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but <i>set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity</i> ”?
1	2	3	4	P	Am I a man who has good internal character and a good external reputation or testimony both with Christians and non-Christians alike?
1	2	3	4	Q	Responsible: Able to faithfully assume and carry out responsibilities.
1	2	3	4	R	Adaptable: Able to adjust to changes in circumstances.
1	2	3	4	S	Perseverance: Able to move ahead in the face of adversity.
1	2	3	4	T	Cooperation/Teamwork: Able to work with other people.
1	2	3	4	U	Leadership: Concrete evidence of ability to direct, conduct, guide or influence people.
1	2	3	4	V	Teachable: Ready and willing to learn.
1	2	3	4	W	Creative: Insightful, innovative thoughts and ideas.
1	2	3	4	X	Faithful to Commitments: Personal, Financial, Family, Promises, Appointments.
1	2	3	4	Y	Servant-Leader: Demonstrates humility and a genuine concern for others.
1	2	3	4	Z	Encourager: Instills hope and courage in others; Believes God is able!

1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9

**Above reproach—
blameless**

Husband of one wife

Temperate

Self-controlled

Respectable

Hospitable

Able to teach

**Not given to
drunkenness**

Not violent but gentle

Not quarrelsome

Not a lover of money

**Manages his own
family well**

**His children believe
and are obedient**

Not a recent convert

**Good reputation with
outsiders**

Not overbearing

Not quick-tempered

**Does not pursue
dishonest gain**

Loves what is good

Upright, holy

Disciplined

**Keeps hold of the
truth**

Appendix D

Ordination Information Form

The following pages should be downloaded from our website and completed using Microsoft Word on a computer (Look for the “Ordination Information Form”). The completed forms should be emailed to the Venture Northeast Ministry Center, the chairman of the Pre-Ordination Committee, and the Area Moderator. Additionally, the pages containing signatures should be printed and mailed or faxed to the CBMNE Ministry Center. Please contact the CBMNE Ministry Center if you need assistance.

The Ordination Information Form not only provides important information to Venture Northeast, but it also aids in your preparation for the Ordination Council. The candidate will review the Ordination Information Form with his Pre-Ordination Committee.

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

6. List ministry responsibilities and roles that you have had either in a lay or paid staff capacity. Identify your strengths in ministry and share how your past Christian service experience has demonstrated those abilities (e.g. preaching, teaching, administration, counseling, strategic planning, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, etc.).
7. Considering the teaching of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, do you have any serious problems that the ordination council would need to know as they evaluate you as a candidate for ordination? Yes No If yes, please explain:
8. Where and in what capacity are you currently serving in Christian ministry?
9. Where do you intend to serve as an ordained minister?
10. Are you currently licensed? Yes No If so, when and where did this take place?

PRACTICAL AND PASTORAL MINISTRY ISSUES

Questions like these may be asked at the ordination council. In preparation for that, please respond to the following questions in the space provided below.

11. Concerning Scripture: Do you feel people are still “getting revelation” today?
How do you defend the closure of the canon of Scripture?
12. What is your personal practice of Scripture reading and prayer?
13. Describe your view of church government. What is the role of the pastor, lay leaders, etc? Should there be a plurality of elders in leadership or should there be a sole elder/pastor assisted by deacons?
14. To what degree and in what areas should the congregation be engaged in decision-making (e.g. accepting new members, electing leadership, revising the constitution, approving the budget and/or church discipline)?
15. Describe your view of women serving in ministries in the local church: Does the Bible give support to women serving as pastor/elders or as deacon/deaconesses?
16. What is your conviction concerning believers’ baptism and membership in the local church?

The following additional questions are often asked at an ordination council. Although you should be prepared to answer them, a written response now is not required.

17. What translations of the Bible do you prefer?

Do you recommend the use of paraphrases?

18. Concerning Christ: In what sense did Christ “empty Himself” in the incarnation?

19. Could Christ have sinned?

20. Your view of Calvinism versus Arminianism: Did Christ die for everyone or only for the elect?

21. In salvation, does faith precede regeneration?

22. To what degree can a believer be influenced by demonic control?

23. Your plan of worship services (including use and style of music).

24. Your convictions on tongues, miracles and healings. Have any of the spiritual gifts ceased to be operative today?

25. Your convictions on divorce and remarriage: Would you marry a couple where divorce is involved?

26. Your convictions on the use of alcoholic beverages.

27. Your convictions concerning the security of the believer.

28. Your practice of church discipline.

29. What course of action should you take if a member resigns during the process of church discipline?

30. Your view of creation: Does the biblical text require a recent earth and six literal days of creation?

31. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

32. What relationship should the local church have to government and the political process?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

ORDINATION PAPER

The candidate should prepare a paper that includes the following information. Please use the following outline.

PERSONAL HISTORY

State when and how you came to Christ.

State your call to the pastoral ministry and qualifying gifts.

State your understanding of ordination.

State your theological training and preparation for ministry.

CHURCH HISTORY

What are the historic Baptist distinctives with supporting Scripture references?

What are the historical roots of the Conservative Baptists?

DOCTRINAL BELIEFS

A detailed doctrinal statement affirming the positive aspects of the candidate's beliefs lessens the need for questioning. The paper should demonstrate biblical support for the candidate's doctrinal views, and show skill in biblical interpretation and practical application. The paper should avoid excessive quotations from sources other than the Bible.

1. Doctrine of the Scriptures (Bibliology including revelation, inspiration, authority, illumination and canon)
2. Doctrine of God (Theology Proper including nature, attributes, trinity, and works of creation, sovereign rule, providence)
3. Doctrine of Christ (Christology including His person and work)
4. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology including His personhood, deity, ministry and gifts)
5. Doctrine of Angels, Satan and Demons (Angelology)
6. Doctrine of Man (Anthropology)
7. Doctrine of Sin (Hamartiology)
8. Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology including faith, repentance, regeneration, justification, election and predestination, and sanctification)
9. Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology including origin, organization, officers, ordinances, mission, membership requirements and church discipline)
10. Doctrine of Last Things (Eschatology including Christ's return, the resurrections, the judgments, millennium, tribulation and final destiny)
11. A statement on Hermeneutics and Homiletics

PRACTICAL AND PASTORAL MINISTRY ISSUES

The candidate for ordination should prepare position statements on current issues confronting the church and the pastoral ministry as guided by his Pre-ordination Committee.

Declaration of Faith

Venture Northeast



THE WORD OF GOD

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, complete as the revelation of God's will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak.

THE TRINITY

We believe in one God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.

GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of humanity, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, and has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe further that He is not only true God, but true human, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His priestly intercession on behalf of His people, and His personal, visible return from heaven.

HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, His personality, and His work in regeneration, sanctification, and preservation. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost and empowering the believer for godly living and service.

HUMANITY

We believe God created humanity, male and female, in the image of God and free from sin. We further believe all people are sinners by nature and choice and are therefore spiritually dead. We also believe that those who repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

SALVATION

We believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We further believe that this salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God, and was purchased by Christ on the cross, and is received through faith, apart from any human merit, works, or ritual. We further believe salvation results in righteous living, good works, and proper social concern.

THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church is the spiritual body of which Christ is the head. We believe that the true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We believe that this body expresses itself in local assemblies whose members have been immersed upon a credible confession of faith and have associated themselves for worship, for instruction, for evangelism, and for service. We believe the ordinances of the local church are believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. We also believe in the interdependence of local churches and the mutual submission of believers to each other in love.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

We believe that each local church is self governing in function, and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. We further believe that every human being is directly responsible to God in matters of faith and life, and that each should be free to worship God according to the dictates of his or her conscience.

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that the supreme task of all believers is to glorify God in their lives; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves the full stature of maturity in Christ.

LAST THINGS

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and the lost, the eternal existence of both in either heaven or hell, in divine judgments, rewards, and punishments.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____



A MINISTERIAL CODE OF ETHICS

We believe it is important in this day of questionable practices in public ministry to affirm our commitment to godliness and Christian ethics.

In recognition of the high calling of God upon an individual to public ministry in the local church, I am firmly committed to and in agreement with the following principles of Christian ethics, and will endeavor to faithfully practice such as a minister of the Gospel and a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church:

I. MY PERSONAL LIFE

- Establish & maintain personal habits & disciplines of spiritual, mental, & physical growth & health that are consistent with Scriptural principles & with expectations I would have for members of my congregation.
- Faithfully provide for the physical, emotional & spiritual needs of my family according to Eph. 5 & I Tim. 3.
- Demonstrate personal purity & holiness in my relationships with others & in my personal habits.
- Be faithful in prayer & study of God's Word.
- Demonstrate honesty & integrity in the use of my finances & personal resources as a steward of God, & promote a healthy expectation by others in my profession.
- Cultivate a lifestyle that is honoring to Christ & presents a positive witness for the Lord Jesus Christ & His church among the unchurched and other believers.

II. MY MINISTRY

- Strive always to conduct myself in ways that are appropriate for a man of God & a minister of Christ including my relationship & actions toward the opposite sex that might be viewed as questionable or suspicious.
- Respect confidentiality as sacred trusts, careful to not disclose information that would hurt others, unless in so doing I must protect the greater good (i.e. crime, abuse, personal danger).
- Perform my duties & responsibilities as a pastor with careful diligence, not slothful or using my position to take advantage of others or to solicit special favors.
- Safeguard the pulpit from which I am privileged to speak for God, being diligent in my preparation, carefully guarding against false teaching or intemperate attitudes that may dilute truth, & giving credit to the authors of any extensive material I use in my preaching/teaching ministry.
- Guard the relationships within former ministries where I have served, seeking to remove myself from involvement, issues or concerns that may impact a former church or the ministry of its current pastor.

- Minister as a servant, not lord of the church I serve, without selfish motivation, striving for unity at all times, refraining from any word or action that would divide the church, wholly committing myself to loving & impartial leadership that will build up, nurture, equip & encourage God's people toward growth, productivity & personal ministry.
- Guard the dignity & worth of former pastors in my speech, conduct, & attitudes.
- Work to build positive, constructive ties with other Bible-believing pastors & churches in my area based upon our common faith & purpose in the work of the kingdom of God, & to avoid territorial attitudes that would hinder the Spirit of God in this purpose.
- Honor in spirit the constitutional procedures of my church, preserving the participation of the congregation in important decisions, & providing for effective systems for doing business. When changes to the constitution need to be made, I will do so within established guidelines & with sensitivity.
- Solicit input & opinions of others with a teachable spirit so I may learn & grow in my leadership of the church.
- Candidate at only ONE church at a time, dealing fairly & without deceit with that church as well as the one I presently serve.

III. MY DENOMINATION/ASSOCIATION

- Treat the Conservative Baptist Association as important in the history and preference of the church I serve, & therefore, worthy of my respect & participation.
- Encourage my church to financially support the various works & agencies of the Association.
- Offer my resignation if I am unable to affirm the doctrinal positions of the church I serve or the statement of faith of the Conservative Baptist Association.
- Submit willingly to the directives of my Board or congregation if I fall morally or ethically, & be willing to work with my CB brethren in whatever disciplinary processes they deem wise & necessary, including the possible surrender of my ordination credentials if required.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

RECOMMENDATION OF THE ORDAINING CHURCH



The candidate pursuing ordination must have the support of the ordaining church as he begins the process.

1. Name of the candidate for ordination:
2. Name of the church:
City: State:
3. Are you currently a church affiliated with CB Northeast? Yes No
4. How long has the candidate been part of your church?
5. In what ways has the candidate been involved in ministry at your church?
6. Based on the character qualities set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, do you have any serious concerns that the Preordination Committee or the Ordination Council need to know as they evaluate the candidate?
 Yes No If yes, please explain:

7. Additional Comments:

After a season of observation of the candidate, prayer, personal reflection and discussion, we the ruling board of the church recommend the candidate for ordination. We pledge to continue to work with him throughout the process, looking to the truths of God's Word, the guidance of His Spirit, and the wisdom of His people to direct our steps and our decisions.

Chairman of the Board:

Address:

City:

St:

Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Chairman of the Board's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____