

The Busy Pastor's Ordination Resource:

A Guide to the Ordination Process in Baptist and  
Congregational fellowships.

Developed For  
The Mid-Atlantic Association of Conservative Baptists  
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## FORWARD

The title of this booklet, "The Busy Pastor's Ordination Resource," reflects precisely and correctly the goal, and accomplishment, of the authors. All good pastors are busy pastors, and all will greatly benefit from a concise resource like this when planning for their own ordination, helping with the ordination of a member of their staff, or serving as a pre-council mentor.

What you will find here is a useful and practical manual, not obtuse ruminations on the theology of ordination. The authors have been careful to stress the autonomy of the local church while demonstrating the importance of networking with multiple churches, pastors, and other spiritual leaders so as to create standardized model (process) that can be utilized in whole or part, as desired.

This will be a valuable working tool for the overworked pastor, a streamlined handbook that clearly outlines an ideal, yet flexible, process from beginning to end. Before you start reading, first skip ahead to the calendar worksheet on page 11, or just peruse some of the helpful advise under the topic "Post-Ordination" (Step Six). These will give you a sneak review of how valuable this guidebook will be for you. I know that if you are a "busy pastor," you'll give thanks for it.

Dr. Don MacKenzie,  
Regional Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Conservative Baptist Association  
Enola, PA, Spring 2003

## INTRODUCTION

This resource has been designed and developed to help busy pastors who are seeking ordination themselves or oversee the ordination of an associate, assistant, or other minister of the Gospel. It is designed with Baptist churches in mind, but may be readily adapted for use in “baptistic” churches or other congregationally ruled churches, as well as creatively altered to fit many nondenominational and ecclesiastical settings (denominations will have their own pre-established protocol for ordination).

The resource is most helpful when used “as is,” but that will obviously be up to the pastor using it. This resource is NOT an attempt to diminish church autonomy, nor is it an attempt to serve as a primer for an ordination “policy manual.” It is simply to serve as a compilation of helpful ideas that will assist in executing the necessary steps of the ordination process. As a resource, the “Busy Pastor’s Ordination Resource” will provide pastors with a “guideline” (from beginning to end) for the ordination of prospective candidates for ministry.

This resource does not present a theology or philosophy of ordination. Nor does it define ordination. These issues are for the local church and association of churches (or denominations) to decide. It is assumed that one using this resource already has a working theology of ordination and understands the purpose of ordination. The authors also assume that those who use this resource have a Biblical concept of what it means to “be called into” the ministry. Without the special call and anointing of God on the ordination candidate, the whole process is a farce. Remember, ordination is not a professional credential (in the purest sense of the word); it is a recognition and affirmation of a “calling.”

This resource is structured in the following logical and sequential way:

### STEP ONE: THE PROCEDURES

A summary of steps that must take place in the ordination process; it provides a quick synopsis of what to expect. This section is vital in helping establish a process and a timeframe for ordination, from beginning to end. Use this section to budget time for preparations and establish benchmarks for progress toward the goal of ordination.

### STEP TWO: THE PREPARATION

In this second step we will lay out a plan that will help the pastor or candidate in preparing for the ordination process. There are many bridges to cross before the actual ordination council, and this section will map the way.

### STEP THREE: THE PAPER

Arguably, the most important aspect of the ordination process, the ordination “paper” (or dissertation, thesis, doctrinal statement, or whatever one calls it) is vital to the effective preparation for the ordination council. This section will help the candidate outline his paper in a logical way, offering a loose “standardization” for churches and associations. A well-done paper will facilitate a well-done council.

### STEP FOUR: THE PANEL

The panel (ordination council) consists of a group of ordained men and qualified laymen (though only ordained men will sign the certificate and vote on the recommendation) who will serve as a team questioning, encouraging, instructing, and evaluating the ordination candidate. Many candidates find it difficult to establish and mobilize such a council, so this section should prove to be quite helpful to that end.

### STEP FIVE: THE PRESENTATION

After all the preparation and hard work, it is finally time to “present” the candidate for ordination to the church that has called for his ordination. This presentation may be called the “ordination ceremony,” the “ordination service,” or simply the “ordination.” Regardless of its name, this is the event at which the candidate actually receives the credential of ordination. This is the most exciting aspect of the entire process. In this section, the candidate will find assistance in putting together a meaningful ordination service.

### STEP SIX: THE POST-ORDINATION

In the final section we will deal briefly with the newly-ordained Pastor's responsibility regarding his post-ordination. Issues like integrity, accountability, potentiality, and follow-up will be dealt with. It will be tempting to skip over this last section, but doing so may be hazardous!

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**DISCLAIMER:** Throughout this resource the author refer to the “pastor” and “candidate” in the male gender. This is deliberate, as we believe that the role of pastor/elder is reserved exclusively for men.

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## STEP ONE: THE PROCEDURES

This section could just as well be titled “The Process of Ordination,” because that is exactly what it describes. Below is a logical order of procedures to see you through ordination, from beginning to end.

### A. Vision for Ordination

Every church and pastor must have a “vision” for ordination. This is the starting point. Without a vision for ordination, the process will be mundane at worst, and insignificant at best. With no vision for ordination the candidate and the church may just “go through the motions.” In other words, pastors and churches must see the “value” of ordination and have a clear picture of what the “finished product” will look like. Permit us to give a list of values derived from ordination.

1. Ordination clarifies the beliefs of the candidate through the enforced discipline of writing those beliefs and orally defending them before others capable of testing deep truths.
2. Ordination clarifies and establishes the orthodoxy of the candidate and is a check on the growth of heresy.
3. Ordination homogenizes the product of our churches within the broad historic perspective of our polity.
4. Ordination recognizes the office. Paul said to desire to be a Bishop is a GOOD thing (1 Timothy 3). Such a good thing is worthy of recognition.

If you are a pastor or elder (deacons, etc.) calling for the ordination of someone, take the lead and help instill in him a vision for ordination. If you are the ordination candidate, seek the counsel of a mentor and search the Scriptures for a clear picture of the paramount importance of this credential.

As stated in the introduction, this resource will not develop or defend a theology or philosophy for ordination, but it is vitally important that the ordaining church and/or pastor do so. With a vision in sight, proceed with the process.

### B. A Concern for Autonomy

It is imperative that denominations and associations, including their respective leaders and administrators, insist on and allow for congregational autonomy in the ordination process. That autonomy should include:

Identification of candidates for ordination.

Accountability to the lay board for progress with mentors, timetable, and papers

Inclusion of the congregation in the ordination council.

Final decision making authority in the ordination of the candidate.

It is the “local church” that must call for the ordination of a man of God. No pastor or ordination council can authorize an ordination; only the local church can do that.

Autonomy, however, does not mean pure “independence.” A pastor or ordination candidate or church cannot maintain the idea that since they are autonomous the ordination process that they undertake is “no one else’s business.” On the contrary, New Testament churches are “inter-dependent,” and must rely on the help, encouragement, and accountability of sister churches (of like mind and faith).

The practical realities are that the average congregation feels inadequate to measure and evaluate a candidate for ordination. Nor are they necessarily comfortable with undertaking such an act without the advice and consent of other churches. The best interest of the local church is served by including as many of our brethren in our sister churches as possible. This will not only insure a well-balanced process, but also will bless and encourage a greater number of believers, and effectively have a greater impact in the long-term. The ordination candidate will be thankful in the years to come.

### C. A Need for “Voluntary” Standardization

The objective in this resource is to formulate a “voluntary standardization” of ordination within our association and to offer that standardization to other independent fellowships. As pastors, we have observed, over the years, the inconsistency among churches in the ordination process. One really does not know what to expect when participating in an ordination, nor can one always predict the outcome. The great chefs in fine restaurants always work with a written recipe and measuring tools so that the product is always the same. You may be partial to home cooking, but we have observed the kitchen flops of the “wing-it” chefs. Yes, we want to maintain our simplicity as Baptist churches that does not identify a clergy/laity distinction but our inability to standardize our ordination will eventually lead to such an inconsistent product that we will end the portability of the confirmation that ordination brings or, worse, lead to fracture as false leaders work their way into the structure through lax standards.

Additionally, this inconsistency and lack of standardization creates a situation where congregations are perpetually reinventing the proverbial wheel. Instead of gleaning from the ideas and successes of others, they must “start from scratch,” and thus exert and time that could have been saved for other ministry.

The concept of inter-church participation is a Biblical one, and one that will greatly enhance the overall outcome of the process. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabus to Antioch (Acts 11) to confirm the church and to participate in its leadership, and Paul sent

Titus to Crete to ordain Elders. If you are in an independent church with no affiliation or association, network with other similar churches and involve as many godly men as possible. If you are part of an association, affiliation, or denomination, then by all means take advantage of the network that already exists.

It is very important in the case of independent churches that only pastors and churches of like mind and faith are included in the process. Otherwise, you will end up with a controversial council at best, and a confusing and “blurry” one at worst. The ordination council is not the time or place to debate with opposing theological structures.

#### D. Godly Counsel

No one should entertain the idea of ordination without Godly support structures. It is in a multitude of counselors that we find great wisdom and, while the thoughts and beliefs of the candidate should be his own, it is within Godly counsel that we all find clarity and understanding. We recommend two structures that will serve to guide the candidate through the pre-council process, assisting him with questions, concerns, and the formulation of his ordination paper. These counselors will also observe the candidate and evaluate his readiness to be ordained.

##### 1. The Pre-Council Mentor

The candidate's senior pastor should serve as the Pre-Council Mentor (from here on “mentor”). If this is not practical, the candidate, with the help of his pastor, may select a man who is ordained, experienced in the ministry, relational, and mutually concerned with the process. Some practical situations where someone other than the Senior Pastor may not practically serve as the mentor may include:

The candidate is himself the senior or solo pastor

The Senior Pastor has been ordained or served in the ministry for less than 3 years.

The Senior Pastor declines the opportunity to serve.<sup>1</sup>

If the candidate is already a senior pastor, then he should choose a mentor (usually a colleague) who is more mature and experienced. The mentor should meet with the candidate several times before the pre-council for prayer, guidance, and leadership. He should assist in the early stages of the development of the ordination paper, and be prepared to help the candidate as much as is reasonable. The mentor should be local and committed to frequent, regular dialogue with the candidate.

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<sup>1</sup> Care should be taken to discern whether this is a personal inadequacy, matter of work load, or a “noconfidence” vote in the candidate. If the latter, we recommend solidifying the relationship and satisfying all issues prior to proceeding.



## 2. The Pre-Council Support Team

This team should consist of no more than three men. The team may be chosen by the candidate, with the assistance of his mentor and other colleagues and peers. If the fellowship has an established ordination chairman or overseer he should be included in the council, or, if distance is a factor, updated in regard to progress. The pre-council team should meet with the candidate two or three times before the council. Because the council is aware of the local issues, and wording preferences of the final council they will clarify the candidate's doctrine without replacing it with their own. The team goes a step further than the mentor in that it will act as a "mock council." They will probe, inquire, and otherwise "interrogate" the candidate to help him prepare for the "big day." They should have the candidate's best interest at heart, and must never insult, humiliate or belittle the candidate. They are there to prepare and encourage him. The precouncil support team should have the integrity to advise the candidate to wait for his ordination. The best interest of the church and the candidate may well be served by the support team rescheduling the council date.

## E. An Implementation Plan

The following is a plan for the ordination process. It is strongly recommended that none of the steps be bypassed. A thorough plan will result in a great ordination service.

### 1. Contact Your Senior Pastor, Board Chairman,

The first step in the ordination process is to contact whoever will be responsible for calling for your ordination. This is usually the Senior Pastor or church board who will then take the necessary steps to get the ball rolling. This is the point in the process where you secure "permission" (or blessing) to proceed with the ordination. The Pastor or board should contact MACBA at [www.MACBA.org](http://www.MACBA.org) for more information and direction.

### 2. Contact the Ordinations chairman of MACBA or your denomination for a personal review of your ordination plan.

The ordination chair will review your plan with you and assist you in structuring your immediate needs for ordination. He will also advise you of other ordinations that you may observe and protocols that you do not want to miss. Make the most of this resource person.

3. Develop (With the Pastor, Chairman, etc.) a Preliminary Plan and Calendar of Events

Using this resource as a guide, sit down with the one calling for your ordination and design a preliminary plan. This plan will consist of just the basics, at this point. Setting dates and making sketchy lists will be about all that happens at this juncture. Be sure to permit adequate time to read, write, and countercheck.

4. Set Appropriate Dates

It may seem premature on the surface, but you need to set dates before going too far in the process. A lot of candidates make the mistake of setting their ordination date when they are comfortable with their paper, secure with themselves, etc. But this always puts the ordination “some time in the future.” Additionally, by setting dates later in the game, you run the risk of not being able to ensure the attendance of some of the invited council members.

We recommend that you set the date of the actual ordination service (which is generally on a Sunday evening) and then “work backwards” from there with your plan. The date should be at least six months in advance and a year is not out of the question. Much depends on your personal preparation for this moment. If you have looked forward to this moment through your years in Seminary and internship/licensure, doing preparatory research then a near date of six months is well in hand. Once you know the ordination date, set the council date a few weeks before that. Set the paper deadline a few weeks before the council. Invite your prospective council members a couple of months before the council, etc. This method will secure you plenty of time and allow room for errors and emergencies.

5. Select and Appoint a Mentor for the Candidate

As mentioned earlier, it is preferable that someone be designated as the candidate's mentor. This should be done early in the process, for the mentor will help the candidate through the rest of the process. While it is desirable that the mentor be someone who is close in proximity, it is not necessary. Through emails, phone calls, and faxes, the mentor and candidate can communicate, exchange information, and “tweak” the process “from a distance.” However, if at all possible, appoint someone who can be with the candidate face-to-face at least once in the process. The mentor should have a copy of this resource so that he and the candidate are on the same “wave-length.” Near the end of the process, and just before the ordination council, the mentor should write a letter of recommendation on behalf of the candidate to the ordination council, stating his affirmation of the candidate's readiness. Keep in mind that there may be some on the council who do not personally know the candidate (which is good).

6. Establish a Pre-Council Support Team (Pastoral Review Committee)

The mentor (or Pastor, Denominational Director, etc.) should help the candidate select three men who will serve as an “advisory team” for the candidate. This team will interview, pray with, and question the candidate in all pertinent areas regarding ministry and the call to the pastorate. This team, throughout the precouncil process, should:

- a. Meet with and get acquainted with the candidate.
- b. Become familiar with the candidate's salvation experience and call to ministry.
- c. Ascertain the candidate's theological knowledge and orientation.
- d. Inquire of his personal and devotional life, including his marriage and family, as well as his private habits, etc. to establish an understanding of his character.
- e. Review the candidate's preliminary outline for his paper.
- f. Challenge unorthodox views, clarify ambiguous views, and affirm correct views concerning theology, etc.
- g. Answer the candidate's questions and address his concerns.
- h. Review the paper in progress.
- i. Review the “final draft” of the paper before it is submitted to the council.
- j. Encourage the candidate up to and through the council process.

7. Establish a List of Ordained Pastors to be Invited to the Ordination Council

Remember that this needs to be done at least two months before the ordination council, but more time is preferable. Pastors are extremely busy people, and their calendars fill up quickly. The candidate should draw from three sources in establishing a council: 1) his own colleagues and mentors (i.e. college professors, previous pastors, etc.); 2) his mentor's (or Senior Pastor's) network of peers; and 3) his associational network.

It has been the experience of the author that formulating a council is a “numbers game.” In other words, only a relatively small number of men you invite will actually come. For example, in our association, if a candidate desires to have fifteen

men present at his council, he needs to invite about 100. While that sounds like a high and impractical number, keep in mind that many can be invited by email, which saves a lot of time. Concerning the invitation of council members, the candidate should:

- a. Invite many men.
- b. Invite them many months before the council date.
- c. Request an RSVP.
- d. Follow up with another invitation about a month before the council.
- e. Establish a system (by mail, email, or phone) of confirmation.
- f. Mail (or email by attachment) the council members the final ordination paper at least four weeks before the council.
- g. Send a thank-you and reminder one week before the council.
- h. Send a follow-up letter of appreciation after the council.

#### 8. Begin (or Edit) the Ordination Paper

Once the candidate is comfortable with the pre-council advice concerning an ordination paper, he should begin writing his ordination paper (a thorough description of this process is found later in this resource). Since most candidates are graduates of colleges and seminaries, writing a thesis is nothing new. The key is "timing." One must time himself so that he has a "completed" paper for the council at least one month before the council date.

#### 9. Meet With the Pre-Council Support Team

In step number five above, we suggested the forming of a Pre-Council Support Team. Schedule at least three meetings with this team. See step five for the purpose and general direction of these meetings. Make these meetings a part of the ordination "master calendar." Don't make the mistake of many candidates, who simply say, "Let's get together in the next month or so." Schedule the meetings and follow through with them. You'll be glad you did.

#### 10. Finalize Paper

Taking the suggestions of your mentor and pre-council team seriously, tweak your paper, have it reviewed; tweak it some more, have it reviewed again; and again... When you and your mentor are comfortable with the draft, “finalize” it and have it printed and bound (preferable, but not necessary). Remember, this is something you will keep the rest of your life. Your paper is something to be proud of. Take it seriously. (Note: Some council members will have a negative predisposition toward you if you have a sloppy, ill-prepared paper. Just a thought.)

#### 11. Send the Final Paper to the Ordination Council

Send the final paper packaged as attractively as you can afford. Since the paper will be referenced frequently at the council, make sure every council member has the “same” paper. Page numbers, points and sub-points, etc. must be identical. If you email the final paper, make sure to inform your recipients of the format by which they must open the document. Let them know that if they cannot open the document in your designated format, they should request a “hard copy” of the document. Print an extra third of your paper for the day of the council. Many will forget their copy or want an unmarked copy for their files.

#### 12. Ordination Council

As scheduled months earlier, have and enjoy the ordination council. More will be said about this later, but the time and day of the council is vitally important. Make sure that this is in keeping with the trends and needs of those you have invited. While the day of the week is highly subject to local matters, take into consideration that

Most Pastors take Mondays or Fridays off

Saturdays and Sundays are out of the question

Wednesday is the common day for mid-week services and, if the council goes long (which most do) there will be pastors leaving prior to the vote.

#### 13. Ordination Service

Assuming a successful council at which the council members “sign off” on your ordination certificate, enjoy the big day (or night) of your ordination service. There is a whole section in this resource devoted to this event, but suffice to say here that you should take this event seriously. Be sure to include your wife and family in the process, and with the help of your mentor, involve your church as much as possible. This day is as important for them as for you!

## The Busy Pastor's Ordination Resource

That takes care of the procedures of ordination. If followed closely and conscientiously, this plan should serve to save you a lot of headaches and keep you on track to enjoy the biggest event in your ministry. Now let's look at some things you must do to prepare for the ordination.

### STEP TWO: PREPARATION

Now that a process for ordination has been established, it's time to begin your preparations. This section is by far the briefest in the resource, but that is not to say it is unimportant. Here you will find:

- I. An Ordination Calendar Worksheet
- II. A Council Member Invitation Worksheet
- III. A Council Member Follow-Up Worksheet
- IV. A Reading and Resources Worksheet
- V. An Ordination Paper Template
- VI. Note Pages

These worksheets are self-explanatory.

## ORDINATION CALENDAR WORKSHEET

Working Backwards (For Planning)		Working Forward (For Action)	
	DATE		DATE
21. After-Ord. Follow-Up	_____	1. Approval of Ordination	_____
20. Ordination Service	_____	2. Assign Mentor	_____
19. Ordination Council	_____	3. Meet With Mentor	_____
18. Council Reminders	_____	4. Plan ordination Calendar	_____
17. Mail Final Paper	_____	5. 1 <sup>st</sup> Pre-Council Team Meeting	_____
16. Finalize Paper	_____	6. Meet With Mentor	_____
15. Finalize Council	_____	7. Begin Paper	_____
14. Send 2 <sup>nd</sup> Council Inv.	_____	8. Send 1 <sup>st</sup> Council Invitations	_____
13. Tweak Paper	_____	9. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pre-Council Team Meeting	_____
12. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Pre-Council Team	_____	10. Tweak Paper	_____
11. Meet With Mentor	_____	11. Meet With Mentor	_____
10. Tweak Paper	_____	12. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Pre-Council Team Meeting	_____

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|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 9. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pre-Council Team Mtg. _____    | 13. Tweak Paper _____                              |
| 8. Send 1 <sup>st</sup> Council Invitations _____ | 14. Send 2 <sup>nd</sup> Council Invitations _____ |
| 7. Begin Paper _____                              | 15. Finalize Council _____                         |
| 6. Meet With Mentor _____                         | 16. Finalize Paper _____                           |
| 5. 1 <sup>st</sup> Pre-Council Team Mtg. _____    | 17. Mail Final Paper _____                         |
| 4. Plan Ordination Calendar _____                 | 18. Council Member Reminders _____                 |
| 3. Meet With Mentor _____                         | 19. Ordination Council _____                       |
| 2. Assign Mentor _____                            | 20. Ordination Service _____                       |
| 1. Approval of Ordination _____                   | 21. After-Ordination Follow-Up _____               |

# ORDINATION COUNCIL WORKSHEET

## Part One: Inviting Potential Council Members

[illegible]



## FINAL LIST OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

[illegible]

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Contact Council With Final Date, Place, and Time of Council: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Contacted

Follow-Up With Council Regarding Questions or Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Contacted

Send Council Members Final Paper and Pertinent Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Contacted

Mail Council Members Final Reminder (Postcard) of Council: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Contacted

Other Contacts ( \_\_\_\_\_ ): \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Contacted

NOTES:

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READING AND RESOURCES WORKSHEET

Suggested Reading	Recommended By	Action Taken
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## The Busy Pastor's Ordination Resource

### AREAS OF DIFFICULTY

### ACTION TO BE TAKEN

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### AREAS LACKING IN INITIAL PAPER OR THESIS

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### SUGGESTIONS BY MENTOR

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### SUGGESTIONS BY PRE-COUNCIL

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## ORDINATION PAPER TEMPLATE

A. Statement of Conversion

B. Statement of Call to the Ministry

C. Systematic Theology

1. Bibliology/Prolegomena

2. Theology Proper

3. Christology

4. Pneumatology

5. Anthropology

6. Hamartology

7. Soteriology

8. Angelology

9. Ecclesiology

10. Eschatology

11. Other

D. Philosophy of Ministry

E. Philosophy of Worship

F. Character Issues

1. Personal Strengths

2. Personal Weaknesses

3. Spiritual Gifts

4. Temperament

5. Marriage and Family Issues

6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

G. Current Ethical Issues

1. Abortion
2. Euthanasia
3. Homosexuality
4. Egalitarian View versus Complementarian View of Manhood/Womanhood
5. The Ordination of Women
6. Political Activism
7. Situational Ethics
8. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

H. Current Social Issues

1. Feminism
2. Gambling
3. Alcohol Usage
4. Separation
5. Marriage and Divorce
6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Current Practical Issues

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J. A Passage of Exegesis

K. Wife's Conversion and Affirmation of Calling

L. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

M. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

N. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

O. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

### STEP THREE: THE PAPER

As stated earlier, the ordination paper is perhaps the most important step in the whole process. The paper will reveal the following about the candidate:

- \* The authenticity of his conversion
- \* The genuineness of his call
- \* The correctness of his theological beliefs
- \* The practicality of his philosophy of ministry
- \* The appropriateness of his character
- \* The stability of his marriage and family
- \* The passion of his heart
- \* The preparedness of his mind
- \* The competency of his ability
- \* The support of his family
- \* And more...

Using the ordination paper template from the previous section, we will now summarize the categories and sub-categories that are necessarily developed in a good ordination paper. While this template is adaptable, one will find it quite comprehensive and readily usable.

Treat the preparation of the paper as you would the composition of a thesis paper, or dissertation. Strive for accurate grammar, punctuation, notation, formatting, logic and comprehensibility. In essence, you will be “defending” your paper, so do a good job. Shun the temptation to pull out and tweak the old Systematic Theology paper you did in your



terminal year of seminary. Your paper should be fresh and represent views you currently hold. Your mentor and Pre-Council Support Team will assist you along the way in the development of your paper. Finally, make it your work. While you may review other ordination papers and the opinions of professors and authors it is you and you alone who will answer questions regarding the content. At a recent ordination a council member said to the candidate, "this is an impressive paper, but having heard your defense, I am not sure it is yours." We are giving you an outline, but the content must be yours.

## THE PAPER SUMMARIZED

### A. Statement of Conversion

The summary of your conversion does not need to be lengthy, but it must be thorough. Conciseness is the key, as a tedious and redundant testimony will not make much of an impression. "The bottom line" is the bottom line. What the council will look for here is the obvious but easily overlooked: a clear description of your salvation experience that leaves no doubt you are saved! This should be no more than half a page or so.

### B. Statement of Call to the Ministry

Keep the same principles in mind as in your conversion statement. Your "calling," however, is more "subjective" than your conversion. Be clear in how you communicate that subjective "miracle" of calling, and delineate what you believe constitutes the call to ministry. Think of circumstances, people, scriptures, events, etc. that made you feel and know a calling to pastoral ministry.

### C. Systematic Theology

There may be much variation here as to what to include in your paper, but the following will serve as a primer, and in most cases, as a complete template for your paper. We have chosen to categorize all theologies under ten broad headings.

#### 1. Bibliology/Prolegomena

What you believe about the Bible will determine what you believe about all other theologies (at least it should). Be sure to include your view of: 1) inspiration (i.e. plenary, concursive, etc.); 2) preservation of the texts; 3) authority of scripture; 4) how scripture is relevant today;

#### 2. Theology Proper

...Your view of "God," specifically, "God the Father." You will want to delineate your beliefs about His attributes (omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, etc.); His eternality, His deity, His role in the Trinity (Godhead), His role in creation, His interaction with man.

### 3. Christology

...Your view of Christ. As with theology proper, you will want to develop your convictions about Christ's deity, His attributes, His work in redemption, His role in creation, His second advent, His intercessory role in Heaven, His submission to the Father.

### 4. Pneumatology

Your view of the Holy Spirit will be developed much the same way as with the Father and the Son. Additionally, be sure to discuss the differences between the "filling," the "anointing," the "indwelling," etc. You will want to state clearly your beliefs about the revelatory gifts (the "sign" gifts). State whether you are a cessationsist (the sign gifts have ceased), moderationist (the sign gifts are "sometimes" used today), charismatic, etc. This is a hot topic for an ordination council. To play the middle of the road or fail to do your homework here is not a good idea. Be sure you know what YOU believe and why YOU believe it.

### 5. Anthropology

State what you believe about man. Include your beliefs about man's creation, fall, depravity, inability to save himself, his sin nature, his personality, attributes, etc. Explain your view of the "makeup" of man, i.e. are you a trichotomist, dichotomist, etc.? What's your view of evolution, Adam and Eve? What is your view about the nature of man?

### 6. Hamartiology

The doctrine of sin is not popular today, and any council will want to know where you stand on the "sin issue." When did sin begin? IN whom did sin begin? From where did sin come? Is man "totally" depraved? What about the problem of evil? How has sin affected every aspect of man?

### 7. Soteriology

What you believe about salvation is not to be assumed. The council will want you to state clearly what you believe about faith without works, the origin of faith, the process of salvation, the resource of salvation, the work of Christ, the role of the Holy Spirit, your

view of Calvinism (Arminianism), etc. Can one be saved without calling on the actual Name of Jesus? What is your view on universalism? What is your philosophy of evangelism?

#### 8. Angelology

When developing your doctrine of angels, include both good (elect) and evil (fallen) angels. Why were they created? When? What are their roles? How did Satan fall? What does this mean? What Scriptures teach us the fall of Satan? What is the current role of angels in the lives of mankind? How do they relate to Jesus? What is their ultimate destination or place?

#### 9. Ecclesiology

What do you believe about the church? When did it begin (at Pentecost, the ascension, etc.)? Who comprises the Church? How does one “enter” or become part of the Church? Is the Church local or universal? If both, what is the difference? What authority does the church have today? What role does the Church play in society? What place does the Church play in the life of the Christian? Is baptism necessary for Church membership? If so, what mode? What does the Bible teach about baptism by immersion? What role does the ordinance of communion play in the Church? What does communion mean? Who can administer the ordinances?

#### 10. Eschatology

What is your view concerning end times (dispensational vs. covenant)? Are you “pretrib”? Post-trib? Pan-trib (it will all “pan” out)? What is your view of the Millennium? When will Christ return? What is Armageddon? What difference does your end-times beliefs make? Can you defend your views? Is eschatology central to your faith? If not, why? What does eschatology have to do with today? The Church? The individual believer? Evangelism? What did Jesus have to say about the end-times? What are your beliefs on heaven and hell? Are they real? Be prepared to explain and define death. Define your views of God's judgment of all men,

#### 11. Other

There may, of course, be other theological subcategories and topics you may want to include and develop at this point.

#### D. Philosophy of Ministry

It will be quite helpful if the candidate provides the council with a “philosophy of ministry.” This is a description of one’s ideals, desires, preferences, convictions, and philosophies that guide his ministry and determine his approaches to all things. It is essentially a “paradigm” of ministry.

#### E. Philosophy of Worship

The candidate should write a similar description of his philosophy of worship, detailing his opinions and convictions regarding private and public (corporate) worship. Utilize Scriptures to support your philosophy.

#### F. Character Issues

Character issues have to do with one’s integrity and personal testimony. Character flaws can be overcome (by God’s grace), but they must be revealed and dealt with. This does not mean that the candidate “spills his guts” and tells all, but he must be able to delineate his strengths and his weaknesses.

##### 1. Personal Strengths

Feel free to write your strengths. Do not be afraid of sounding arrogant. Your confidence in your God and what He is doing in your life is something to celebrate and praise Him for.

##### 2. Personal Weaknesses

Weaknesses, such as lack of discipline in this area or that, or areas of struggle, as well as weaknesses in giftedness that may affect the candidate’s ministry potential should be discussed at an appropriate level. Your mentor can really help here.

##### 3. Spiritual Gifts

If you know your Spiritual Gifts (both primary and secondary), list them here. Be prepared to show how these gifts have equipped you for ministry.

##### 4. Marriage and Family Issues

Most of the councils the author has participated in have shown a keen interest in the candidate’s marriage and family life. It would behoove the candidate to describe

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his marriage and his experiences regarding parenting. The council may be helpful, at this point.

5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### G. Current Ethical Issues

While theology is of the utmost importance in ministry, pastoring takes place in the “real world,” so one’s stand on and views of various ethical issues are important. The following list is not exhaustive, but should help you get a start in this area. Write out your views, giving Scriptural support, for the following topics:

1. Abortion
2. Euthanasia
3. Homosexuality
4. Egalitarian View Versus Complementarian View of Manhood/Womanhood
5. The Ordination of Women
6. Political Activism
7. Situational Ethics
8. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### H. Current Social Issues

As with ethical issues, social issues are quite important in the modern ministry arena. Again, this list is not exhaustive, but it will get you started. Write out your views, with Scriptural support:

1. Feminism

2. Gambling
3. Alcohol Usage
4. Separation
5. Marriage and Divorce
6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Current Practical Issues

Church Growth theories, spiritual renewal, personal development, etc. all contribute to ministry success. Write about your insights in such areas of thought.

J. A Passage of Exegesis

With the help of your mentor, select a passage from the Bible (three to ten verses) and exegete it. This will demonstrate your skills in hermeneutics and homiletics. You may be called on to defend it.

K. Wife's Conversion and Affirmation of Calling

Have your wife write out her conversion and call to the ministry, as well as how she supports your call to the ministry. She should be creative, yet concise. This will be a blessing to you, her, and the council.

L. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

M. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

N. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

O. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If you follow these guidelines, you should be able to produce a thorough, useful, and consistent paper that will serve as a springboard for your council. Remember, you only have one chance in your life to produce your ordination paper; make it a good one!

## STEP FOUR: THE PANEL

The ordination council (panel) is perhaps the apex of the ordination process. While it is a local church that will authorize and actuate an ordination, the council will determine if the candidate should be ordained. Most churches will follow the advice of the council, and men with integrity will follow their advice, as well. The following is a guideline for an effective and enjoyable council. See Appendix 1 for a sample of an actual local church guideline.

### A. Organizational Concepts

The first step to success for a council is organization. The better organized you are, the more likely your council will run smoothly and swiftly. Since many council members will be traveling great distances, it is imperative that you be sensitive to time. Don't rush your council, but don't fool around, either. Here are some tips.

#### 1. The Location of the Council

The location is very important. In almost all cases, a church facility will be used (highly recommended). Depending on size, often a church sanctuary is perfect, since it already has the necessary components (seating, lecterns, microphones, etc.). Common sense and a little foresight should help in picking a location.

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- a. Decide Seating Arrangements, etc.
- b. Have Lecterns, Projectors, Pens and Paper, Ice Water, etc. in Place
- c. Table Up Front for Moderator and Secretary (Clerk), etc.
- d. Lighting and Sound Up and Running.
- e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. The Role of the Host Pastor

The “host pastor” is the pastor of the church who has called for the ordination. In most cases, he should serve as moderator until one is appointed. Here are a few things he should do.

- a. Welcome Council Participants
- b. Introduce Candidate and Family
- c. Convene Session with Prayer
- d. Serve as Moderator Until the Appointment of a Moderator.

### 3. Appoint Leaders

Under the leadership of the host pastor, the council will select leaders from among its members. While there may be non-ordained pastors or attendees present, “officers” should be limited to ordained council members. Here are some suggested leaders.

## The Case for a Neutral Moderator

If the local church is calling for the ordination and the host Pastor has convened the meeting why should we elect a different Moderator?

The issue at hand is objectivity

The Senior Pastor has a vested interest in the candidate which removes his objectivity. His desire to see the candidate ordained could lead to the restriction of questioning necessary to the council's understanding. His presence in leading the council may stifle others asking



questions. Conversely, his desire to seem objective may yield the candidate to frivolous questioning and undue stress.

a. Moderator – The “Head” of the Council

i. He Should Know Many or Most of Those Attending.

In having knowledge of the council members the Moderator may call upon pastors by name. He also garners the respect of the participants and exercises control by understanding the particular “pet doctrines” and issues that individuals may have.

ii. He Directs the Meeting

iii. He “Protects” the Candidate

While many of my colleagues disagree with me here, I believe the moderator must protect the candidate from well-intentioned but misguided council members who barrage the candidate, ask irrelevant and “loaded” or “trick” questions, and pose a nonnurturing attitude toward the candidate.

iv. He Keeps the Process Moving

The moderator should limit questions and comments to areas in which the ordination paper was ambiguous, inaccurate, or incomplete. The candidate and the rest of the council should not have to suffer because someone did not read and study the paper in advance. If there is limited time for the council, the moderator should “pace” the meeting according to the format of the paper. For example, if there are only six hours allowed, and the paper has twelve major sections, he may want to allot a half hour for each section.

v. He Performs Such Other Duties that Will Facilitate the Meeting

b. The Clerk –The Record Keeper for the Council

This person may be called the secretary, as well. The clerk's job is to take general notes of the session, and be prepared to “remind” the council of particular issues. He may also be asked to write a letter of recommendation to the ordaining church.

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- i. He Records the General Flow of Questions and Answers.
- ii. He References Notes During the Executive Session.

The Executive Session is the meeting that takes place after the council meeting at which the candidate and family is absent. This meeting determines the “outcome” of the council.

- iii. He Documents the Meetings and Prepares the Ordination Certificate. (The host Pastor should purchase this for the meeting and have it available for the secretary at the end of the council.)
- iv. He does Such Other Duties that Will Document the Council.

### B. General Session – Open to All Who Desire to Attend

The General Session is open to “the public,” if you will. In other words, anyone can attend, though questions should come mainly from ordained ministers or other pastors. Some lay people will “take control” if you are not careful. The following suggestions will help you with the General Session.

### What Are We Looking For?

We would hope that, by the time an ordination council was called that the local church would have determined that the candidate has those basic biblical qualities necessary for service in the pulpit including a good name, solid supportive family, self control, balance, integrity, management skills and the ability to teach. The ordination council finalizes the process and should focus on the fine points...

1. The ability to organize thoughts on paper.
2. The ability to communicate.
3. The ability to think.
4. Poise.
5. Comfort with the Scripture – even in an uncomfortable situation.
6. Strength of character.

Delegates to an ordination council should study the candidate's paper before the council, reviewing it to determine if it sounds like a theology class the candidate may have taken, and looking for a lack of annotated material. If a delegate believes or thinks a statement is too "canned" without a solid explanation or a footnote he should formulate a question that tests the candidate for integrity. Delegates should also consider situational questions to test the candidate's practical ability to move doctrine to the reality of the living church.

1. Questions for the Candidate:

- a. Unclear Statements in the Paper
- b. Issues Developed from the Paper
- c. Omissions from the Paper
- d. Do NOT focus on matters clearly covered by the paper
- e. Use the Ordination Template as a Guide for the Questioning Session
- f. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do Not "Instruct" the Candidate

It is not the council's job to instruct the candidate. While it is appropriate to offer gracious examples and useful tips, this is neither the time nor place to "teach" the candidate. The purpose of the council is to determine the candidate's views and opinions, not to tell him what they ought to be!

3. Gracious interview of candidate's wife.

- a. A Short Testimony
- b. Some Sense of "Call"
- c. Remember: the Candidate's Wife May or May Not Be Comfortable with Public Speaking. Affirm Her Role as a Helpmeet and Assure Her Comfort.

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4. Testimonial Affirmation of the Candidate's Call
5. The Moderator Should Dismiss Non-Delegates and Convene an Executive Session

### C. Executive Session – Delegates Only

#### 1. Defining a Delegate

- a. Pastors in Good Standing in Your Fellowship
  - i. Senior Pastors
  - ii. Associate Pastors
- b. Baptist Pastors (or Your Denomination) Invited by the Candidate or the Church

The candidate's denomination or affiliation should be well-represented. In some cases, it is appropriate to limit attendance to those of the candidate's denomination or that of the ordaining church.

- c. A Defined Number of Lay Representatives from Invited Churches.

(Note: Normally the invitation to fellowshiping churches embraces the deacon/elder board of the church and one or two deacons/elders may accompany their pastor to an ordination. These are available at some Christian bookstores or at [www.Lifeway.com](http://www.Lifeway.com))

- d. The Board Chairman of the Host Church
- e. Bible College and Seminary Professors
- f. Para-Church Leaders
- g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The Moderator Begins the Executive Committee with a Motion and a Second to Recommend that the Calling church Ordain the Candidate. The motion should echo this form:

We, the delegates called to council on \_\_\_\_\_ (Insert Date) \_\_\_\_\_ at the

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\_\_\_\_\_(Insert location of Council)\_\_\_\_\_ affirm the desire of \_\_\_\_\_(Insert Name of Church)\_\_\_\_\_ to ordain \_\_\_\_\_(Insert name of Candidate)\_\_\_\_\_ and recommend him to the congregation for their final action with all due speed.

### 3. The Following Statements Should be Entered to Affirm the Call:

- a. A Statement from the Official Board of the Ordaining Church Affirming the Candidate
- b. If Applicable: Statement from the Senior Pastor Affirming the Candidate
- c. A Statement from the Review Committee (the Pre-Council Support Team)

### 4. Discussion of the Motion

This will take a skilled moderator. It is difficult to “manage” a bunch of preachers, so maybe these guidelines will help.

- a. Discuss Deficiencies, NOT Differences
- b. While the Matter of Heresy Should not arise because of the Pre-Council Assistance of a Senior Pastor, Mentor and Review Committee, Any blatant heresy should be discussed in keeping with the broad concepts of Baptist (or Your Denomination) doctrine.

### 5. A Vote Shall be Called

- a. Amendments: Should the candidate have specific areas of knowledge deficiency, but a clear sense of call, as well as the confidence of the council, an amendment may be stipulated, recommending a conditional approval based upon the candidate's research to bring up the deficiency prior to his ordination.
- b. Important Note: The Autonomous Local Church Ordains (or Recognizes the Ordination) of a Candidate, but the Individual Pastors and Corporate Body of the Council have Been Asked to Confirm that Call by the Local Church. The Importance of this Can Not be Lost in the Minds of the Candidate, the Council and the Calling Church. To Vote “Yes” Because of the Influence of the Senior Pastor or the Desire of the Church is NOT Serving the Local Church or our Savior.

6. Presentation of a Gift

The council may collect a monetary gift to assist the candidate in augmenting his library, or such other gift that may be deemed appropriate.

7. A Decision

- a. The Moderator Will Call in the Candidate
- b. The Clerk Will Read the Motion of the Council Complete with Amendments and Requirements.
- c. The Ordained Members of the Council Will Sign the Ordination Certificate
- d. The Moderator Will Commit the Candidate with Prayer
- e. The Moderator Will Adjourn the Council.

It is customary to provide a light meal for the delegates of the council.

## STEP FIVE: THE PRESENTATION

The big night (or morning) is finally here! It is time for your church to “officially” ordain you for the Gospel Ministry. This is sure to be one of the highlights of your life! As with a wedding, you have only one chance to “pull this off,” so plan and execute wisely and efficiently. You have already set the date and made the preparations. Here are some tips to make your ordination a success.

## A. Who Should Be at the Ordination Service?

The first thing you have to do is decide who will be participating in the ordination service. You will need the following positions filled to assure a great ceremony.

### 1. Speakers

You will need at least two speakers, though you may want to have more. You should invite ordained men who have impacted your life. These may be pastors, college and seminary professors, mentors, etc. Two of your speakers should each address one of the following:

#### a. Charge to the Pastor (Candidate)

One speaker will want to address the ordination candidate with a timely and Scriptural message that will speak of the candidate's calling, responsibility, expectations, etc. This should be a sober, yet encouraging message.

#### b. Charge to the People (Church)

One of the remaining speakers should address the congregation. This message should speak of the congregation's responsibility in encouraging and supporting the candidate, as well as a reminder of its duty to follow a pastor's leading. It should be an upbeat and positive message.

#### c. Other

Other speakers may address such topics as the church or candidate deem appropriate and necessary.

### 2. Musicians

Most candidates will want music at their service. There are many hymns and popular songs that are appropriate for such an occasion, and only your creativity will limit you here. You will want to consider:

#### a. Instrumentalists (piano, organ, praise band, etc.)

#### b. Vocalists

#### c. Choir

#### d. Praise Team

e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Elders (Or Deacons)

The candidate may want to include the elders (or deacons), as they will be instrumental in his ministry and potential success. In some cases, they are the ones who called the candidate. This can be very meaningful to the church.

### 3. Family

You may want to include family members, at least in a “testimonial” role. A father or mother (or both parents), sibling, etc., can really add to the personal-ness of the service.

### 4. The Ordination Council

If at all possible, try to have the men (or a portion) who served on the ordination council present at the actual ordination. This will add to the “official-ness” of the meeting, and add credibility to the process. This is also a real joy for the council members.

### 5. Master of Ceremonies (MC)

Someone will need to lead the ceremony. This may be the candidate's pastor, the chairman of the ordination council, or whomever the candidate or church deems appropriate.

### 6. Attendees

Of course, anyone and everyone who has a love for and interest in the candidate (his church, family, friends, etc.) should be officially invited (preferably by written invitation) to the ceremony.

### 7. Press Release

Consider sending a press release to the local newspaper inviting the general public. This may interest searching individuals who may continue their search at the church in the future.

9. Others: \_\_\_\_\_



B. Where Should the Service be Conducted?

Generally, the service will be conducted at the church in which the candidate serves, or in the church calling for his ordination. Sometimes geographical, space, and time issues may warrant another location. The location should be appropriate for a holy event.

C. When is the Service Scheduled?

While we have already considered the date of the service in a previous chapter, you need to consider the time. Will you have an AM or PM ordination service? In almost all cases, a PM is preferable for a variety of reasons, but the choice is up to you. The main thing is to consider all the components of the service, and scrutinize the variables that will be affected by the time you choose.

D. Order of Ordination Service

There are many elements of an ordination service. The following is a partial list:

1. Music
  - a. Congregational Music
  - b. Special Music
2. Messages
  - a. Charge to the Candidate
  - b. Charge to the Congregation
3. Recognitions (Wife, Family, Mentors, etc.)
4. Prayer and Anointing (Laying on of Hands by Ordained Men or Elders)
5. Testimonies
6. Presentation of the Candidate
7. Presentation of the Certificate
8. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Gifts to be Given

It is quite appropriate to give the new “Reverend” a gift. This can be a new Bible (preferably a genuine leather one, not bonded leather or other imitation), books, money, desk accessory, etc. Be creative. Unless it is a surprise, consult the candidate in advance. If you want to surprise him, consult his wife. This should be presented at or near the end of the service.

F. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If you will follow these guideline, or some like them, you will enjoy a very exciting, organized, and well-executed ordination service that will be a fond memory for you for the rest of your life.

Note: It is recommended that the ordination candidate attend at least one ordination council and one ordination service (preferably more) prior to his own. This way he can see and hear and experience firsthand what he can expect at his own. It will also help him in his creativity.

## STEP SIX: THE POST-ORDINATION

We finally made it! We have brought you through the entire ordination process, from beginning to end. It is now time to discuss a few items that take place after the ordination is over.

### A. Ordination Follow-Up

It is very important that you do not skip this section. While it may be timeconsuming, the dividends are worth the effort. Plus, it is the right thing to do. Here are a few things you will need to do after the ordination is over.

#### 1. Send Thank-You Notes

Do this by “snail-mail,” not email. Handwritten notes are best, but a typed letter on letterhead is also appropriate. Send thank-you notes to:

- a. The Ordaining Church (Chairman of Board and Congregation)
- b. The Pastor Who Called for Your Ordination
- c. The Pre-Council Mentor
- d. The Pre-Council Support Team Members
- e. The Council Members
- f. The Ordination Service Participants (Musicians, Instrumentalists, Speakers, etc.)
- g. “Behind the Scenes” People (Those Who Prepared Food, Ran Errands, Did Typing, etc.)
- h. The Hosting Church (If Different Than the Ordaining Church)
- i. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

j. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

k. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. File Papers and Certificates

- a. You will want to file your ordination paper and certificate (copy) away in a safe place. It is recommended that you file this in at least two locations (different buildings), as well as in your church office (secretaries remember more than us pastors!).
- b. File the ordination certificate at your township, city, or county clerk's office. This allows you to perform weddings and funerals in the United States.
- c. File your ordination at such other places as your local municipality requires, etc.
- d. Nicely frame your ordination certificate (pinch no pennies, here), and place it in a prominent place in your study or office. Allow other people to celebrate the big day with you.

## 3. Continually Praise God!

### B. Maintain Doctrinal, Personal, and Ministry Integrity

Remember that a local church has ordained you. They have done so by the authority of the Lord and the New Testament. You must surrender your ordination to your ordaining church if at any time in the future you:

1. Alter Your Doctrinal Stance On Any Major Doctrine (Especially if it places You in Opposition to the Ordaining Church's Fundamental Doctrinal Statement as it was When They Ordained You)
2. Fall Into Sin That Disqualifies You From the Ministry (e.g. Divorce, Adultery, Scandal, Embezzlement, Sinful Family Practices, Etc.)
3. Leave the Ministry with No Intentions of Returning

There may be other reasons that might warrant the surrender of ordination. The important thing is to be a man of integrity and do what is right, even if it means personal embarrassment, failure, or loss. Let's pray that this will never happen.

### C. Mentor Others

Finally, you should make a commitment now to mentor other potential ordination candidates in the future. Make an investment in others that godly men have made in your life. Never be too busy to pass the torch on to the next generation of Church leaders.

## CONCLUSION

Thank you for utilizing the Busy Pastor's Ordination Resource. It is my prayer that this tool has been of assistance as you have sought the noble process of ordination. Please contact me if you have any suggestions that will make this resource a better one. In the meantime, may God richly bless you, your family, and your current and all future ministries.

George Stephens April 1, 2006  
[gstephens@forkedRiverBaptist.co  
m](mailto:gstephens@forkedRiverBaptist.com)

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## APPENDIX 1 A SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL CHURCH POLICY FOR ORDINATION (First Baptist, Doylestown, PA)

Definition and Purpose of Ordination - Ordination is a formal recognition of the call of God upon a man's life to some aspect of full-time, life-long, pastoral ministry. The ordination service sets that individual apart for ministry through prayer accompanied by the laying on of hands.

We understand this to be the biblical responsibility of the local church as seen in 1 Timothy 2:7 and Titus 1:5 ("appoint" is the Greek word for ordain).

### I. Qualifications for Ordination

1. The candidate must be a male who clearly demonstrates the qualities of a Christian leader. (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1)
2. The candidate must provide testimony of God's calling of his life as well as give evidence of experience and acceptance in ministry.
3. The candidate shall have a minimum of college education as well as a working knowledge of biblical theology. Seminary training is preferred.

### II. The Preliminary Procedure for Ordination

1. The candidate shall either approach the leadership of the church or the leadership may approach the candidate with the ordination challenge. Interviews with the pastor and/or Board of Elders shall take place according to needs of the individual situation.
2. If appropriate, the candidate may be asked to preach to the congregation to demonstrate giftedness and development.

3. After a vote of the Board of Elders, the Elders shall make a motion to the congregation to call a council of ordination.
4. At the approval of the congregation, a council shall be called to examine the candidate.

### III. The Formal Procedure of Ordination

1. Upon successful completion of the Preliminary Procedures, the candidate shall be examined by a council of pastors and layman (numbering not less than five in addition to the moderator and secretary) who have a thorough understanding of biblical doctrine. The council shall probe areas of testimony of salvation, call to ministry, Bible doctrine and practical issues of ministry.

The candidate shall supply a lengthy statement of testimony concerning salvation, call to ministry, and doctrinal beliefs. The paper may also contain positional papers on issues of current significance to ministry (divorce and remarriage, spiritual gifts, etc). The doctrinal section shall cover all the major areas of Bible doctrine.

In order for the candidate to be recommended to the church, there must be at least a three-fourths majority vote.

2. Upon recommendation of the council, the church shall proceed with a service of ordination. A service shall be planned taking into account the suggestions of the candidate where possible. An offering may be received at the conclusion of the service to help the newly ordained man continue building a theologically sound library.

### IV. A Suggested Agenda for the Ordination Council

Opening prayer

Welcome and Introductions (host pastor)

Introduction of the candidate (and wife if possible)

- Church Constitutional provision
- Purpose of Ordination
- Purpose of the council

Motion to call the council into being (by host pastor as pro tem moderator)



## The Busy Pastor's Ordination Resource

Election of the moderator

Election of the secretary

Listing of council participants

Ground rules of the Moderator

- Proceed with one section of the statement at a time?
- Division of the statement into equal time segments?
- Assigning of council members question certain areas?
- Will there be a break?
- Others?

Distribution of extra copies of doctrinal statement

Examination of the candidate's salvation testimony

Examination of the candidate's call to ministry

Examination of the candidate's doctrinal positions

Examination of other related issues

Vote to conclude questioning of the candidate

Dismissal of the candidate (and family members)

Motion concerning the candidate

Discussion and vote concerning the candidate

Report results of the council to the candidate

Time of instructing the candidate

Motion to close the council

Signing of the ordination certificate

Prayer

#### V. Items to Include in the Ordination Service

In addition to other elements of the formal service, the following elements should be present.

Reading of the minutes from the council

Recommendation of the council

Charge to the candidate

Ordination message

Vows for the candidate

Ordination prayer and the laying on of hands

Benediction (by the newly ordained man)

#### VI. Review of Past Ordinations

1. A person leaving the ministry should surrender his ordination to the church if he does not expect to return to full time pastoral ministry in the future. If he would do so, and then re-enter the pastorate ministry, the Board of Elders may reinstate his ordination. The exception to this shall be retired pastors.
2. In the event of a church ordained man experiencing church discipline, the ordination may be recalled and nullified. Once restoration is complete, ordination may be reinstated by the Board of Elders.
3. Should the ordained man change any major doctrinal position at any time in his life, he is obligated to notify the church.

## APPENDIX TWO Sample Ordination Papers

Please contact Mission Mid-Atlantic for samples of ordination papers. Many Pastors keep a file of papers and you may be able to find other samples from local pastors. These papers should be used for style and structure only.