

FEB CENTRAL

Ordination Procedures & Credentialing

Introduction

Ordination is the recognition and setting apart of a qualified man for vocational pastoral ministry following a satisfactory examination of his conversion, spiritual life/growth, call to ministry, and statement of beliefs. This is the prerogative of a local church. The local church ordains after formal recognition by FEB Central at an ordination council. Recognition of that Ordination and the granting of credentials to solemnize marriages is the prerogative of the Regional Director. Male pastors and staff, church planters, missionaries and chaplains (all those males who regularly preach and/or teach the Word of God) are those who may be ordained.

This document is designed to outline the required procedures for ordination and credentialing.

Step One: Church Leadership Approach Candidate

When the church leadership believes that one of its male staff members (who is engaged in pastoral-type ministry and has served well in that way for, at least, two years) is qualified to be ordained, he must write a four-part statement (twelve to fifteen pages in length) which states his conversion, spiritual life/growth, call to ministry, and doctrinal statement. It is important that the church leadership review their pastor's four-part statement before moving forward.

In the case of a church planter, the mother church, church planter's core team, or an Association church may initiate the process for ordination (after the church planter has served well for at least two years). The church planting director should be invited to participate.

Step Two: Church Approve Candidate

At a duly called Members meeting, the church must pass a motion to approve the Candidate for Ordination (before an Ordination Council is formed) and request that an Ordination Council be established to examine the Candidate and make a recommendation regarding the Candidate's readiness for Ordination. Depending on the church's governance, a church board may pass this motion. No date should be set for an Ordination Service until a recommendation has been received from the Ordination Council. The church will also delegate to the Association the authority to recognize the Ordination Council when formed.

Step Three: Establish Pre-Ordination Committee

The Pastor will notify the Association Moderator of the need for a pre-ordination committee. The Pastor and Moderator will select three to four credentialed men to serve on this Committee and examine the Candidate and his statement. If satisfied, the Committee Chair will recommend to the church leadership that it proceed with an Ordination Council.

Step Four: Establish Ordination Council

The following tasks must be implemented by the ordaining church:

- ❑ Ask the Association Moderator to serve as the acting Council Moderator or appoint an Association Pastor to serve as the Council Moderator. An acting Clerk must also be appointed.
- ❑ Notify the Regional Director of the date of the Ordination Council.
- ❑ Eight (8) weeks ahead of time, invite Association Pastors and others appointed by their churches to sit on the Ordination Council. Up to 3 from a church may be on the official council. Provide copies of the Candidate's written statement for each council member (at least, two weeks ahead of time.) * No more than three delegates from the ordaining church may serve on the Council. (Appendix A contains a Sample Invitation Letter to an Ordination Council.)

Important Notes:

- ❑ To ensure a good representation of Association Pastors, the ordaining church is encouraged to follow-up the written invitation with phone calls.
- ❑ Relatives of the Candidate should not serve on the Ordination Council.
- ❑ Only those on the official council plus observers approved by the council (such as future candidates for ordination) may attend the full council.

Step Five: Ordination Council

Preliminaries

- ❑ Welcome and Prayer
- ❑ The Association Moderator must ask the appointed acting Council Moderator and acting Clerk to assume the responsibility of conducting and recording the proceedings.
- ❑ The Clerk must read the church's motion of approval of the Candidate and the request to call for an Ordination Council.
- ❑ The Council Moderator must identify the invited churches along with their delegates. At the discretion of the Moderator, additional guests not from the ordaining church may be asked to serve on the Council. The opportunity to question the Candidate will be limited to those who have been appointed to the Council. Only those appointed to the Council from Fellowship churches will vote on proceeding with Ordination.
- ❑ The Council Moderator must ask for a motion for the Council to approve the appointed Moderator and Clerk.
- ❑ The Council Moderator will ask Council members to sit at the front.

Examination *The primary goal of the examination are to ensure the candidates competency in the Scriptures and his call to ministry.

- ❑ The Council Moderator will distribute a specific list of questions that could to be asked. Council members are free to ask other questions as well.
- ❑ The approved Council Moderator will remind the delegates that they are invited to question the candidate, not instruct him. All Council members should participate in asking questions.
- ❑ The Candidate will highlight his conversion statement followed by questions from the Council members.
- ❑ The Candidate will highlight his spiritual life/growth statement followed by questions from the Council members.
- ❑ The Candidate will highlight his call to ministry statement followed by questions from the Council members.
- ❑ The Candidate will answer, section by section, questions from the Council members, related to his doctrinal statement. *It does not need to be read as it was sent out ahead of time.
- ❑ Time should be allowed for additional questions from Council members on areas not addressed in the written statement. If not asked by this time, any remaining questions on the specific list could be asked.
- ❑ The Council Moderator must ask for a formal vote to end the examination.

Deliberation

- ❑ The Council must meet alone to review the Candidate's four- part statement.
- ❑ In terms of assessing the candidate's four-part statement, especially his doctrinal statement, the Fellowship Statement of Faith will be used as the reference point.
- ❑ Any pertinent comments and/or recommendations to be passed along to the Candidate should be recorded in written form.
- ❑ The Council Moderator must ask for a motion to fellowship the candidate based on his four-part statement. The vote would be "yes" or "delay/postpone the decision".
- ❑ If the above motion is "yes", then, the Council Moderator must ask for a motion recommending to the church to proceed with Ordination.

Announcement

- ❑ The Council Moderator must inform the Candidate of the Council's motion as well as any other pertinent comments regarding the Candidate.
- ❑ The Clerk must inform the ordaining church in writing of the Council's recommendation.
- ❑ The Council Moderator must inform the ordaining church that it is the church's responsibility to inform the Regional Director of the Council's recommendation for the church to proceed with Ordination and the Region to proceed with credentialing.

Prayer and Adjournment

Step Six: Ordination Service

Following a positive recommendation from the Ordination Council, the church should establish a date for the Ordination Service and notify the Regional Director (Appendix B contains Elements of an Ordination Service.)

Additional Notes

A. Recognition of Other Ordinations

The following procedures are to be applied when churches want the Region to recognize men who have been previously ordained by:

- ❑ Evangelical Denominations - (On approval of Regional Director)

The church must contact the Association Moderator and ask that a Recognition Council—comprised of at least three to four Association Pastors—recognize the Candidate's Ordination. The Candidate must present his written (four-part) document which states his conversion, spiritual life/growth call to ministry, and doctrinal statement. Following the interview, the Recognition Council Chair will inform the church leadership, Association, and Regional Director of its recommendation.

In the case of a previously ordained church planter, the mother church, church planter's core team, or an Association church may initiate the process for recognition. The church planting director should be invited to participate.

- ❑ Non-Evangelical Denominations

In such cases the usual Ordination procedure will be followed.

B. Withdrawal of Credentials

Withdrawal of an individual's Credentials will result when:

- i. The individual is no longer in active service with the FEBCC in FEB CENTRAL Region;
- ii. The Association, or local church notifies the Regional Director of termination of employment due to serious doctrinal deviation from the FEB Affirmation of Faith, moral failure, or negligence. In extenuating circumstances, the Regional Board may terminate an individual's Credentials.

It is the responsibility of the credentialed individual, or the ordaining church to inform the Office of the Registrar General of the individual's change of status. Failing confirmation of such responsibilities, the Regional Director will notify the governing provincial agency.

C. Notification of Employment or Personal Address Changes

It is the responsibility of the credentialed individual, or the ordaining church to inform the Regional Director of any changes in the individual's employment status or address. The Regional Director will then notify the governing provincial agency.

D. Calling a Pastor to a Local Church

Calling a Pastor to a local church is the church's prerogative, whether or not the individual is Ordained or recognized. The names of all such Pastors in good standing will be included in the appropriate sections of our Regional and National Directories. Where permitted by provincial legislation, the Region will arrange for the individual's gazetting at the written request of the local church.

Sample Invitation Letter to an Ordination Council

Church Letterhead

Date

Name of Invited Church

Address of Invited Church

Dear *Friends,

You are invited to send your pastor and two messengers to serve as part of an Ordination Council to advise us on the wisdom of setting apart Mr. _____ for the work of the gospel ministry within the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.

This Council is called to meet on _____ at _____.

If it is agreed to proceed with the Ordination of _____ we will then advise you of the date on which an Ordination Service will be hosted by our church family.

We do hope that you will be with us on this occasion and would appreciate an early indication of your availability.

Sincerely,

(Church Clerk)

*The invitation should be personally addressed to individuals who are not a part of the Association.

Appendix B

Elements of an Ordination Service

It is recommended that an Ordination Service be conducted when convenient for most of the church family and outside guests. An Ordination Service should contain the following elements:

- ❑ Report of the Council by the Council Clerk
- ❑ Address to the Candidate
- ❑ Address to the Church (or single address to the Candidate and Church)
- ❑ Laying on of hands by the church leadership and other ordained Pastors present
- ❑ Presentation of the Ordination Certificate
- ❑ Opportunity for the Ordained Pastor to respond and/or close the Service in prayer
- ❑ Refreshments following the Service