



**A Suggested Guide for
Ordination of Pastors**

Introduction

The ordination of pastors is generally accepted among Baptists as a necessary function of the local church. The ordination process ultimately serves not only the ordaining church but all of the churches that the candidate may serve in the future. The recommendation of the ordaining church will serve as credentials of ministry for the pastor throughout his career. Because of the growing number of Converge Rocky Mountain churches, there is a need for a guide that will assist churches in evaluating potential candidates for ordination and a suggested procedure for the ordination process. While the following recommendations are not binding, they will be conducive to good order and effective service.

I. Ordination Standards

1. *Spiritual* - an experience of conversion, a divine call to the ministry, a consistent Christian walk, a vital concern for the conversion of the lost and upholding of the church at home and abroad - these are essential elements in the candidate's experience.
2. *Doctrinal* - Candidates will affirm their unequivocal adherence to the evangelical doctrinal position as expressed by the Affirmation of Faith adopted by Converge Worldwide (BGC).
3. *Training* - A candidate for ordination will seek to be competently trained for the ministry. The candidate's statement of faith and other documents will be expected to demonstrate this. The ordaining church will have to evaluate whether or not the candidate's formal training and/or experience in ministry are acceptable for ordination.
4. *Denominational* - All Pastors of Converge Rocky Mountain affirm historic Baptist distinctives in all matters pertaining to church order and practice. Those coming from a non-Converge background, and especially non-Baptists, are advised to take some recommended courses in Baptist polity or complete certain prescribed readings in Baptist polity. A candidate who cannot affirm that he accepts the Affirmation of Faith adopted by Converge Worldwide (BGC) should not seek ordination in a Converge Rocky Mountain church.
5. *Practical Experience* - It is advisable that the candidates for ordination spend at least one year after graduation engaged in preaching and pastoral work before being ordained. Exception to this rule will be made when the candidate has adequate pastoral experience before or during formal training, or when the candidate must seek early ordination to satisfy the requirements for missionary service or chaplaincy.

These requirements, if applied, will help churches and candidates determine the fitness for the ministry. Any uncertainty as to call or other obvious disqualification should bar a candidate from ordination regardless of sincerity or educational attainments.

II. Ordination Procedure

1. *Preliminary evaluation* - The local church, following the guidelines set forth in 1Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, should carefully evaluate the candidate's qualifications for ordination.

2. *District Contact* - If the ordaining church is satisfied with its review of the qualifications of the candidate, the church should contact the regional office and request a meeting with a Pre-ordination review team. A date will be set for a pre-ordination coaching meeting with the candidate after all necessary documents have been completed and submitted. After the pre-ordination coaching review has taken place, the candidate will make any revisions needed and set a date with the Executive Minister for an ordination council.

3. *Necessary Documents* - (Page length approximations)
 - a. A three-page review of the candidate's call to the ministry.
 - b. A twelve-page Statement of Faith. The Statement of Faith will follow the guidelines prepared by CRM.
 - c. A five-page Statement of Pastoral Leadership.
 - d. The candidate's signed acceptance of the Converge Worldwide (BGC) Statement of Faith.
 - e. The candidate's signed acceptance of Code of Ministerial Ethics.

After review by the pre-ordination coaching team, the ordaining church will distribute e-copies of these documents to all CRM partner congregations. A formal letter of invitation to the ordination council will be sent to each partner church.

4. *The Ordination Council* - At a time and location agreed upon by the ordaining church and the Ordination Committee, the members of the Ordination Committee, the Pastor and up to three church representatives of the ordaining church will meet to interview the candidate for ordination. The ordaining church may also invite visitors to witness the Ordination Committee meeting. The candidate's conversion, call to ministry, theological statement, and philosophy of ministry will be carefully reviewed by the Ordination Committee. The Ordination Committee will set aside adequate time to examine seriously and carefully the candidate's readiness for ordination. The outcome of the examination will be a recommendation to the church, either to ordain or not to ordain. The decision to ordain is reserved for the local church.

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In the event that the candidate is not adequately prepared for ordination, the Ordination Committee may suggest a course of study and action which will remove the hindrances to

ordination. The local church, after concluding that the candidate has fulfilled the suggestions of the Ordination Committee, may request the Ordination Committee to interview the candidate again. If the Ordination Committee is satisfied with the candidate's presentation, they will vote to recommend ordination. In some instances, the Ordination Committee may recommend that ordination may be postponed indefinitely until certain remedial steps are taken. If there is evidence of serious lack of character and call as prescribed by Scriptures, the Ordination Committee may recommend that the candidate not be ordained.

5. *The Public Service of Ordination* - It is recommended that this service should not be scheduled until after the vote of approval of the Ordination Committee. The following aspects are usually included in the Ordination service:

- a. Introductory features such as reading of the Scriptures, prayer, special music and reading a recommendation of the Ordination Committee (no vote need be taken by the church at this time on the ground that the church has previously voted to ordain upon receiving a favorable decision of the Ordination Committee).
- b. Ordination sermon, ordination prayer, charge to the candidate, charge to the church and the fellowship, benediction by the ordained.
- c. The local church will plan the service and invite participants.

III. Recognition of Previous Ordination

1. When a minister ordained in another fellowship becomes a Pastor of a Converge Worldwide (BGC) church, the local church may take the following steps:
 - a. Request the Ordination Committee to interview the minister.
 - b. Upon recommendation from the Ordination Committee, the church may proceed with a public recognition service.
2. For an individual whose ordination was in a fellowship widely divergent from that of the churches of Converge Worldwide (BGC), the ordination procedure proposed in this document should be followed.

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Converge Rocky Mountain Ordination Committee

Prior to a meeting with the Converge Rocky Mountain Pre-Ordination Committee, the candidate will submit to the Chairman of the Pre-Ordination Committee the following documents:

I. Call to Ministry

This will be a three-page review of the candidate's call to ministry. It will include information regarding the candidate's childhood, conversion, call to ministry, education and a review of ministry opportunities up to the present date. It will note significant events and/or individuals who influenced the candidate's decision to prepare for the Gospel ministry.

II. Statement of Faith (guidelines attached)

III. Statement of Pastoral Leadership (guidelines attached)

IV. The Candidate's signed acceptance of Converge Worldwide (BGC) Statement of Faith (attached)

V. The Candidate's signed acceptance of the Affirmation of Ministerial Ethics (attached)

If the candidate has questions regarding any of the above items, he is urged to call the Chairman of the Pre-Ordination Committee for any necessary clarification.

Copies of these documents will be retained by the ordained, the ordaining church and the Converge Rocky Mountain office. *Revised December 1996*

Suggested Outline for the Preparation of the Statement of Faith

For those seeking ordination in a Converge Worldwide (BGC) church, the following outline is a guide for what should be included in the Statement of Faith. It is not definitive but suggestive. Other items may be included. The statement should be 12 pages.

The candidate will state his convictions and understanding of each item, which will be supported by Scripture. The candidate will also indicate how the various parts of the Statement of Faith are related and how they form a unified Statement of Doctrine.

- The Doctrine of Scripture
- The Doctrine of God
- The Trinity
- The Doctrine of Man
- Angels and Satan
- The Doctrine of Salvation
- The Church
- Current Issues of The Day
- The Kingdom of God
- Eschatology

The Statement of Faith is not merely a recitation of cardinal doctrines of Scripture. The candidate should strive to prepare a Statement of Faith that is characterized by clarity of thought and logical organization, as well as the candidate's strong conviction that "this is what I believe." The Statement of Faith conveys to the reader the candidate's knowledge of Scripture and the candidate's unwavering commitment to the truth of Scripture.

The style of the Statement of Faith should include major headings, subheadings, paragraph, and page numbers. Scripture should be employed throughout the Statement but judiciously; not more than an average of one quoted verse should be used to support any given point. Additional support reference may be employed by giving location of chapter and verse. The candidate should employ a style that will reflect both knowledge of the Scriptures and the ability to explain the Scriptures in a way that will be appreciated both by fellow pastors and lay people.

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Statement of Pastoral Leadership

The candidate shall prepare a written statement (5 - 7 pages) to be presented along with the Statement of Faith to the Ordination Committee. The following four major areas are suggested with appropriate questions to be covered.

I. Theology of Ministry

1. What makes a church distinct from any other group or Institution?
2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing ministry in your church?
3. How is the direction of ministry and growth determined?
4. Describe your understanding of the interdependent natures of the Holy Spirit, Pastor and people in your congregation.
5. Describe the mission and purpose of your church.

II. Leadership Style

1. How would you describe your leadership style to a colleague?
2. How do you use your personality and spiritual gifts to assist other people in their movement toward maturity?
3. What do you believe are the basic elements in motivating people in your congregation?
4. What are some of the issues involved in managing conflict and how do you perceive your role in those situations?
5. How do you handle crises and what have you learned through those experiences?
6. In what settings do you work best? one-on-one, small groups, large groups?

III. Personal and Professional Goals

1. What growth goals do you have for yourself and family?
2. What areas of personal strengths and/or spiritual gifts do you intend to capitalize on in your ministry?
3. What areas do you intend to develop into strengths?
Examples for #2 and #3:
Time management, Meeting people
Parenting, Administrative skills
Relationship to spouse, Preaching, teaching

Leisure time, Counseling
Crisis management, Visitation

4. What further training do you intend to pursue (if any)?
5. What are your plans for staying current with the developments in ministry and society?
6. How do you intend to relate to your colleagues in ministry?

IV. Contemporary Issues

The candidate will be prepared to discuss verbally items raised by the Ordination Committee.

Affirmation of Ministerial Ethics in Converge Worldwide

The following standards are set forth in an effort to create professional understanding and to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of our chosen profession, the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Scriptures: *1 Timothy 4:7b-16 II Corinthians 2:17, 4:1-2 James 1:26-27 I Corinthians 1:18-2:5 I Peter 5:1-3 Matthew 28:18-20*

My Person

1. I will endeavor to pray daily; to read, study and meditate upon God's Word; and to maintain extended times of contemplation.
2. I will plan time to be with my family, realizing my special relationship to them, and their position as important members of my congregation.
3. I will seek to keep my body physically fit through proper eating habits and planned exercise, renewing myself through weekly time off and through vacations.
4. I will try to keep myself emotionally fit, keeping in touch with my feelings and growing in healthy control of them.
5. I will strive to grow through comprehensive reading and through participation in professional educational opportunities.
6. I will be a servant of God seeking to maintain a life of purity, integrity and truthfulness. I will avoid lust, pornography and sexual sin. I will not abuse my own body and will avoid addictions of all kinds.
7. I will not emotionally, verbally, physically or sexually abuse my spouse, my children or any other person.
8. I will seek professional help promptly when I need personal support or intervention.
9. I will seek to develop accountable relationships with one or more of my peers of the same gender.

My Calling

1. I will seek to conduct myself consistently with my calling and commitment as a servant of God.

2. I will give priority to my congregation and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry in the congregation.
 3. I will consider a confidential statement made to me as a sacred trust.
 4. I will responsibly exercise the freedom of the pulpit, speaking the truth of God's Word with conviction in love; and will acknowledge any extensive use of material prepared by someone else.
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My Finances

1. I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession and will assist the congregation in understanding that a minister should not expect or require fees for pastoral services to them.
2. I will be honest in my stewardship of money, paying bills promptly, asking no personal favors or discounts on the basis of my professional status.
3. I will give tithes and/or offerings as a good steward.

My Congregation

1. I will seek to regard all persons in the congregation with equal love and concern, and undertake to minister impartially to their needs and refrain from behavior that will be divisive.
2. I will treat all those in the church with dignity and respect, while retaining the right to establish close friendships within the congregation.
3. I will exercise confidence in the lay leadership, assisting in their training and mobilizing their creativity.
4. I will seek to lead the church in a positive direction. I will remain open to constructive criticism and to suggestions intended to strengthen our common ministry.
5. I will candidate at only one church at a time. I will respond promptly and definitely to a call, and I shall seek to deal fairly with the church I am presently serving.

My Colleagues

1. I will seek to maintain supportive, caring and accountable relationships with my colleagues in the ministry. I will seek and honor all commitments made with other pastors, and I will respect the pastoral relationships that my neighboring pastors have with their parishioners.
2. I will, upon my departure, sever my pastoral relations with the congregation, recognizing that all pastoral functions should henceforth rightfully be conducted by my successor. I will not agree to perform any pastoral services in a church I have previously served until I have first obtained permission from the current pastor.
3. I will, upon retirement or withdrawal from the ministry, refrain from engaging in pastoral functions within our church fellowship unless requested by the pastor.

My Denomination

1. I will cooperate with the personnel of Converge Worldwide (BGC) and of the district in which I serve and offer responsible criticism in order that our common service in the kingdom of God might be more effective. In the event that I seriously violate the vows I have made to God and my church, I will submit to the restoration/reconciliation process established by my denomination and my church.
2. Furthermore, I will use my influence to affirm and edify the fellowship of this church with the district and Converge Worldwide (BGC).

I affirm my commitment to abide by the Affirmation of Ministerial Ethics.

Signed _____ Date _____
(revised October 1998)

An Affirmation of Our Faith

1. The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

2. The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

3. God the Father

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

4. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

5. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

6. Regeneration

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

7. The Church

We believe in the universal church; a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible confession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship.

We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

8. Christian Conduct

We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; 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 and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

9. The Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

10. Religious Liberty

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

11. Church Cooperation

We believe that the local church can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary basis.

12. The Last Things

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

*Adopted by the Baptist General Conference in 1951,
reaffirmed in 1990 and revised in June, 1998.*

Signed _____

Date _____