

## **Ordination Procedures**

### **Motion for Licensing & Ordaining Ministers**

All ministers must be licensed or ordained. Both of these are cultural practices to signify the individual's calling by God and the church to ministry. This also signifies to civil authorities (such as the IRS) that the individual is a duly appointed and credentialed minister. The motion will appear as:

- Background: All ministers must be licensed, commissioned or ordained. This process is the formal recognition by the church of his or her ministry in the church. None of these classifications are expressly biblical in nature but serve as cultural and statutory markers of position.
- Motion: *"To license (name) to gospel ministry at Northwest Bible Church."*
- Second:
- Vote:

### **Motion for Watch-Care Status for Ordination**

- Background: Ordination is the process of recognizing a person as called and qualified for full-time ministry. Adequate biblical training must occur. A three to six month "watch-care" status is entered. In this time, the candidate meets with the appointed Chairman of the Ordination Council and informally examined as ready for ordination. The culmination of the watch-care process is the Ordination Council, approval of the Council's recommendation by the Elder Board, and ordination in the worship services.
- Motion: *"To approve the watch-care status of (name) leading to ordination and to appoint Elder (name) as the Chairman of the watch-care process and ordination council."*
- Second:
- Vote:

## **Ordination Policy**

### **Definition and Basis**

Ordination is the action of our congregation to set apart a person for specific ministry (e.g., pastorate, chaplaincy, administration, missions), whereby we confirm the person's eligibility for this ministry and acknowledge the Holy Spirit's calling of that person. Through ordination, we demonstrate our confidence in the person and accept responsibility for the candidate's specific ministry, symbolized by the laying on of hands. This follows the pattern seen in Acts wherein the congregation and its leaders singled out various people to accept and accomplish special ministries of leadership and mission. Examples of the ordination procedure can be seen in Acts 6:1-4; Acts 13:1-3 (sometimes called commissioning); Acts 14:23; II Timothy 1:6.

## **Purpose**

To affirm a broad range of authority and responsibility which the congregation is to acknowledge and esteem (I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17).

## **Rights of the Ordained Person**

In terms of the church, ordination gives one the right to officiate in the capacity which reflects the spiritual gifts and abilities previously recognized of church leadership with the permission of that congregation. Further, it entitles that person to financial support from the congregation consistent with the level of the congregation's financial income. (I Corinthians 9:4-14). In terms of the State's interests, it qualifies that person to perform and certify marriages.

## **Qualifications for Ordination**

The candidate must affirm Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. The candidate must have demonstrated spiritual and general maturity and must not be a new believer. (Hebrews 5:12-14; Ephesians 4:13-15; I Timothy 3:6). The candidate must have demonstrated quality of character and life as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Galatians 5:22-23. The candidate must have demonstrated proficiency and fruitfulness in ministry as evidenced by positive changes and effects in the lives of those ministered to and/or by other specific accomplishments. (John 15:16; Matthew 7:17-20). The candidate must have demonstrated both possession and proper use of spiritual gifts and abilities consistent with the specific ministry to which the candidate wishes to be ordained (I Corinthians 12:1-11; Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:6). The candidate, if a woman, must not be seeking a ministry which would place her in a position of spiritual headship either over her husband, if married, or over men in the context of a local church congregation. This would permit ordination to such positions as Minister to Women, Minister to Children, Ministry of Caring and Fellowship, Minister of Counseling, or a Hospital Chaplain, but would exclude ordination as a Pastor.

## **Procedures**

Northwest Bible Church utilizes a two-step process in assisting a candidate toward ordination.

### Step 1: "Watch-Care Status"

Purpose: An extended period of time is intended to increase the familiarity of the Board of Elders with the candidate's life, ministry and call; to guide the candidate's preparation toward ordination, and to provide the Board with an opportunity to encourage or discourage the candidate's pursuit of ordination.

Time Frame: Each candidate for ordination shall participate in at least a nine month watch-care period before proceeding to the second step. Previous ministry at NBC may, upon action of the Board of Elders, be deemed to fulfill this time requirement.

Initiating "Watch-Care Status:" A candidate must submit a letter requesting "watch care" relationship with the Board. The Board shall then invite the candidate to a regular meeting of the Board at which the candidate will make a brief statement that includes both the candidate testimony and the candidate interest in ordination. A 3/4 vote of the Board is necessary to initiate the "watch care" relationship.

Oversight: With the Board's approval, the Pastor will appoint a three-person "Candidate Oversight Committee" composed of two Elders and one person from the ministerial staff who will be selected by the Senior Pastor. This committee assumes responsibility for guiding the candidate through the ordination process and serves as a liaison between the Board and the candidate. After the appropriate time period, and/or when the committee is satisfied with the candidate's preparation, they will recommend that the Board advance the candidate to the second step in the ordination process.

#### Step 2: Examination Status

Purpose: This period of time allows the Board to oversee the evaluation of the candidate's readiness for ordination.

Time Frame: This time period is relatively brief, normally no more than two to four months.

Process of Examination: The candidate shall submit to the Candidate Oversight Committee:

- A concise, personalized statement of faith.
- A transcript or transcripts demonstrating theological and biblical preparation (See Appendix A).
- The results of an acceptable psychological fitness examination. (See Appendix B).
- If the candidate does not anticipate serving within the ranks of NBC's pastoral staff, a letter (must be written) explaining the reasons for ordination through Northwest Bible Church.

Application for ordination will not be accepted unless the candidate can demonstrate a calling to a specific form of congregational ministry or a specific ministry through a missionary agency recognized by Northwest Bible Church.

The committee shall receive and review these documents. If the documentation is satisfactory, the committee will recommend that the Board call Ordination Council. The Senior Pastor and Candidate Oversight Committee will assume responsibility for arranging this council which will usually be convened within two months.

The Ordination Council assumes the responsibility for recommending whether or not Northwest Bible Church should proceed to ordain the candidate. The Ordination Council will normally be made up from members of the NBC pastoral staff, Elders and representatives of sister churches whom the candidate would like to invite to participate. The council elects a chairman and a secretary to take minutes.

On behalf of the council, the chairman instructs the candidate to make three basic statements: the candidate's conversion and evidences of its authenticity; the candidate's call to ministry and evidences pertaining; the candidate's statement of doctrinal conviction and persuasion. The third statement should be quite complete, offering not only doctrinal affirmations but supporting Scripture.

The candidate should be able to respond to questions regarding personal life, spiritual life, doctrinal convictions, and a practical application of Scripture and principles of ministry. Normally, any question within these bounds is permitted. The examination should be sufficient to demonstrate that the candidate is proficient, accurately handling the Word of God in accord with biblical standards of living. Following the examination, the candidate is

dismissed while the council goes into executive session. Discussion is followed by a vote in which a majority vote prevails.

The Ordination Council's decision should be acknowledged and accepted at the Board's next meeting. The Board's ratification constitutes approval to ordain. The Board will instruct the Senior Minister to plan the ordination service.

### **Board Formation of Watch-Care Status**

Ordination is the process of recognizing a person as called and qualified for full-time ministry. Adequate biblical training must occur. A three to six month "watch-care" status is entered. In this time, the candidate meets with the appointed Chairman of the Ordination Council and informally examined as ready for ordination. The culmination of the watch-care process is the Ordination Council, approval of the Council's recommendation by the Elder Board, and ordination in the worship services.

### **Ordination Service**

The Senior Pastor will consult with the candidate concerning participants from other churches. In the case of outside speakers or service participants, Northwest Bible Church will not normally assume responsibility for either traveling fees or honoraria. It is the candidate's responsibility to make this plain to the prospective participants. The candidate should also be advised that all participants in the service must be previously approved by the Senior Pastor. The candidate must understand that Northwest Bible Church is under no obligation to proceed with ordination should the convening council or the Elders fail to approve the candidate at examination time.

Oversight and Review of the Ordained Person: The Board will instruct those ordained by Northwest Bible Church of the following:

It is assumed that if one joins the NBC ministry staff, that oversight and review will be an ongoing responsibility of the supervisor.

For those not formally a part of NBC's ministry staff, it should be realized that NBC is accepting a certain responsibility for the ordained person's status. Therefore, those ordained by NBC and not serving on NBC's staff, shall submit a periodic report to the Board.

The Board holds the right to withdraw the act of ordination upon receipt of evidence and conviction (by whatever means of hearing) of an offense against the Gospel and the Gospel ministry. The Board may also withdraw the act of ordination should the candidate leave the ministry to pursue other forms of work for whatever reason after discussion with the candidate and an attempt by the Board to give counsel and direction regarding ministry. The Board reserves the right to make discriminating decisions in this area.

### **Appendix A**

Education: Specific educational requirements outline basic and essential content knowledge for ministry. It is the task of the Candidate Oversight Committee to determine appropriate educational requirements for the particular ministry to be undertaken. In certain instances, "life experiences" may be evaluated as a substitute for formal academic course work. Generally, a candidate for ordination will have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited educational institution. A Master of Divinity degree will be the expected level of graduate study to be attained by the candidate.

In particular circumstances, this latter requirement may be modified. However, even when the candidate will be fulfilling a particular staff position which requires specialized training (e.g., music, administration, education, etc.), basic Biblical and theological background is expected.

The following minimum academic program is generally expected of each candidate, prior to ordination:

- Survey of the entire body of Scripture.
- Courses focused upon skill in Biblical exegesis.
- Courses reflecting a survey of Church History.
- Courses formal Theology.
- Normally, at least one Biblical language course.
- Courses in an area of concentration in ministry (i.e., Pastoral Counseling, Christian Education, Youth Ministries, etc.).

## **Appendix B**

Psychological Evaluation: A growing awareness of whole person issues has led many ordaining bodies and mission boards to require a careful psychological examination for every candidate. Each candidate for ordination by Northwest Bible Church must present a completed psychological evaluation to the Candidate Oversight Committee. This evaluation or profile will subsequently be reported to the Board of Elders. The psychological evaluation may be completed at any recognized center, pre-approved by the Candidate Oversight Committee.

Psychological Evaluation Outline:

- Autobiographical Sketch.
- A standard personality test, e.g., MMPI, Myer-Briggs Type Indicator, Taylor Johnson, DISC.
- A Career Assessment Survey.
- A measure of interpersonal style and effectiveness.
- A measure of interests/preferences.
- A measure of skills for ministry.

Ordination Worksheet: Request for ordination is submitted to the Elders who place the candidate under watch-care and where appropriate, issue a license to preach under the authority of the Pastor and Elders of Northwest Bible Church. The Senior Pastor appoints a three member Candidate Oversight Committee consisting of a minister and two elders. The Committee establishes guidelines with the Candidate for examination and work in the following areas:

Academic preparation (see Appendix A): Degrees held, Degree in process, Degree recommended, further study recommended, date completed: Bible Survey, Bible Exegesis, Church History, Systematic Theology, Apologetics, Practical Theology, other psychological

fitness (see Appendix B). Practical experience recommended before ordination. Candidate approved by Committee and recommended to Elders for final interview.

Interview with Elders, Senior Pastor, and Committee arrange for convening an Ordination Council made up of the following: NBC Staff Member, Elders, Sister Church Representatives.

Other: Ordination examination and recommendation: Recommendation accepted by Elders. Service of ordination and laying on of hands to be scheduled and planned by the Senior Pastor and the candidate.