

FOUNTAINGATE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY LICENSING/ORDINATION/COMMISSIONING POLICY

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LICENSING, COMMISSIONING AND ORDINATION

Spiritual - An applicant must:

- A. show evidence of a genuine experience in regeneration (new birth).
John 1:12-13; 3:3-7; I Peter 1:18-25.
- B. show evidence of a consistent Christian life.
Romans 6:4; 13:13-14; Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:11-20; I John 1:5-7.
- C. meet qualifications according to scripture.
I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9; I Peter 5:1-4.
- D. be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues.
Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46; 19:1-7.
- E. fully subscribe to the tenants of faith as set forth in our church's constitution.
- F. be willing to attend and contribute regularly to support the church, according to his/her ability. Hebrews 10:25; Malachi 3:8-12; II Corinthians 9:6-10.

Educational - An applicant must:

- A. be a three-year Bible College graduate, or have five years of active ministry immediately prior to application.
- B. When there is a combination of Bible College and active ministry, the discretion of the church board will apply.
- C. All applicants will fulfil a one year internship under senior leadership prior to being issued a licence to preach.

PROCEDURE FOR LICENSING

1. An applicant must submit a written application to the Board of Directors.
2. Upon approval of an application by the Board of Directors, a license will be issued after the time the applicant has completed a minimum of a one year internship.
3. A service will be held in conjunction with the presentation of the license to the applicant.

PROCEDURE FOR ORDINATION/COMMISSIONING

1. Upon completion of a minimum of:
 - A. two years active ministry (one year internship and one year under a License), after graduation from Bible College, or
 - B. five years of active ministry,

a written application for ordination or commissioning will be considered. In the case of a combination of (a) and (b), or in the case of (b), the church board may require an applicant to operate under a License for a period of up to two years.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES DELIBERATIONS FOR LICENSED AND ORDAINED MINISTERS

I. INTRODUCTION

It is evident that many of our ministers (FCA) are reflecting the idea that the standards used to judge candidates for Licensed, Ordained, or Commissioned Ministry should be more rigorous. The goal is to improve ministry effectiveness. Therefore, the following deliberations are being set forth. This however is not intended to be an exhaustive study on the subject.

II. DEFINITION OF LICENSE AND ORDINATION AND INTERNSHIP

INTERNSHIP - An 'intern' is an advanced student who is undergoing supervised training (II Timothy 2:2). The purpose of ministry internship, like discipleship, is to bring the intern from an immature dependency upon the leader to a mature independency upon Christ, equipping him with the necessary skills so that the intern is able to move into a position of leadership.

LICENSING - A person may be licensed to exercise his gifts in the preaching of the Gospel when the church is convinced of his Christian character and of his evident call to the ministry. The probation period (under a license) is at the discretion of the local church. (A minimum of one year.)

ORDINATION/COMMISSIONING - The word 'ordain' never denotes the ecclesiastical ceremony of ordination in scripture. The word is used six times in connection with the sacred office, Mark 3:14; Acts 1:22; 17:30; I Timothy 2:7 (KJV), but never to a formal ceremony but to the choice or appointment to a sacred office.

There are instances of ordination, or the public setting apart, to church office found in the New Testament: that of the seven in Acts 6:6, that of Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13:1-3, and that of Timothy in I Timothy 4:14. Here we could add also the admonition in I Timothy 5:22 to "lay hands suddenly on no man." Therefore, ordination sets a man or woman apart for a particular ministry, after a proven usefulness in the local church. Ordination is regarded as the church's solemn approval and public attestation of the inward call (I Timothy 2; Acts 20).

III. FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Our concept of ministry is set firmly within a context of rugged congregationalism. Ministers were made, ordained, and called by a local congregation. It is as Alexander Campbell (Disciples of Christ) put it, *"The call to the ministry consisted neither in a personal ambition on the part of the one called, a mandate from the Holy Spirit, or a transmission of authority from a sacerdotal system, but in a social contract with the church."* The social contract was between the local congregation and the minister. The premise for securing and ordaining ministers left the whole matter to congregational individualism.

Other forms of church government (denominational structure) is not with congregations, but with regional offices of the church under terms set by the regional body. Ordination standards are established at the regional level of the denomination. However, ordination certification whether through the local church, or denomination, has not decisively changed the concept of ministry. It is still the contract between the minister and the congregation that remains the determining factor in establishing a ministry. The 'credentialing' procedure is secondary to the purpose of ministry itself.

IV. VALIDITY OF ORDINATION AND INTER-CHURCH COOPERATION

Since our Fellowship churches are independent of each other, they can operate independently of each other in ordaining a candidate. The validity of ordination is ensured by the inclusion of pastors and laity from at least two FCA churches in the "laying on of hands". However, since our Fellowship is in associational relationship with other churches and desires to have its ordination procedure recognized by the churches that are in fellowship with it, it may choose to have a representation of this group of churches likewise to recognize the call of the candidate who is to be ordained. This becomes a means of strengthening of the ties between the churches as well as the candidate for ordination. It is expected that the candidate will hold membership in the ordaining church.

It must be understood clearly in this contract, that a congregation sees a minister first and foremost as its own leader and only secondly as an embodiment of some larger concept of the church's purpose. It is this relationship that ordination confirms and formalizes.

While some earlier forms of congregational structure restricted ordination both in scope and in time to that local church, and thus was invalid when he left, this is not our position. Two factors have modified our position:

1. we accept the assurance of other churches that a candidate is fully qualified for pastoral ministry. This came about because numerous independent Fellowship churches were ordaining men;

2. the understandable desire of many churches to ordain one who had been raised in their midst even though the reason for his ordination was the call he had received to be pastor of some other church. It is only proper that his home church should have this opportunity to set him apart for the work of the pastoral ministry.

V. SUGGESTED ELEMENTS AT THE ORDINATION SERVICE

Opening Hymn

Scripture and Prayer

Minutes of the Church, as to its decision to ordain

Congregational Hymn or other music

Ordaining Sermon

Ordaining Prayer

Charge to the Church

Charge to the Candidate

Hand of Fellowship and Welcome to the Minister with the (FCA)

Presentation of Ordination Certificate (supplied by FCA secretary, if requested).

Benediction by the Newly Ordained Minister

STATEMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS

1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ENDORSING CHURCH TO THE LICENSED OR ORDAINED MINISTER

- A. To give affirmation of Divine call.
- B. To provide spiritual guidance and counsel.
- C. To commission through 1) licensing, 2) ordination process , and 3) missionary commissioning.
- D. To provide personal recommendation, and ministry endorsements to other churches.
- E. To assist in placements, and in times of transition between ministry positions.
- F. To assume responsibility for correction and discipline in matters of wrong doctrine or conduct, and provide means of restoration.
- G. To encourage continuous ministry development, training, and education.
- H. To ensure that the minister recognizes his/her new privileges, status, and position and fulfils the commitment in love and humility.
- I. To ensure that the minister recognizes and is willing to cooperate within the guidelines of a local church autonomy.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LICENSED OR ORDAINED MINISTER TO THE ENDORSING CHURCH

- A. To recognize and voluntarily submit to the spiritual authority of the Endorsing Church eldership committee.
- B. To maintain open channels of communication through visits, correspondence, attending of conventions and other appropriate means.
- C. To be supportive of the Endorsing Church, always cooperating in a spirit of love and fellowship.
- D. To live an exemplary Christian life, first as a servant of God, and also as an extension of the ministry of this local church.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINISTERS TO OTHER MINISTERS

- A. To maintain true fellowship for mutual edification.
- B. To voluntarily cooperate in interchurch events and projects.
- C. To voluntarily respect and submit to one another in areas of delegated leadership.
- D. To develop and maintain a high standard of ministerial ethics.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCHES TO OTHER CHURCHES

- A. To recognize and respect the autonomy and authority of each other.
- B. To maintain open channels of communication on matters of mutual concern.
- C. To cooperate fully for the future development of the fellowship of churches.
- D. To follow agreed upon guidelines in matters of Fellowship Concerns such as ordination policies.
- E. To assist each other in ministerial placements, transitions, etc.

FOUNTAINGATE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY CHURCH LEADER'S SELF-EVALUATION

(Please do not try to answer each question on paper, but honestly answer before the Lord as you measure yourself in each area.)

I will examine myself in relationship to:

1. My Scriptural Qualifications:

- a. Please check the Biblical qualifications for your position, noting your strong and weak areas.
- b. Determine to strengthen the weak areas to be to the glory of God.
- c. Consult with the Pastor if any significant deficiency is noted which might impair your effective service.

2. My Call of God to this Ministry:

- a. Do you feel 'motivated' by the Spirit for this ministry?
- b. Have you grown in experience and conviction to serve in this place at this time?
- c. What assurance do you sense in prayer that God is leading in this way?
- d. Can you openly accept the idea of being identified to the people as an office holder in this capacity?
- e. Do you feel you stand before God as His minister?

3. My Spiritual Experience:

"I have followed the Lord in each experience as He has led."
Think back in your life to review His dealing and how long it has been since
Salvation? _____; Baptism in the Spirit? _____;
Water Baptism? _____; Beginning ministry and growth
development? _____.

4. My Commitment to this Local Body of Christ at Fountaingate Christian Assembly:

- a. I have been coming to Fountaingate Christian Assembly for _____ years.
- b. I am wholeheartedly with the church and its Pastor, and can support the ministry here completely without reservation.
- c. I feel led of God that this is my church, where I fit, I belong and I serve.
- d. I will faithfully attend and support the church.

5. My Association with Family:

- a. I have taken a stand for godliness, and everybody knows where I stand in my Christian convictions.
- b. "As for me and my house, we will serve the lord."
- c. My example is such as to be respected.
- d. I endeavour to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in my actions and relationships.
- e. I love my wife (husband) and children and try to show it.
- f. As far as I know, our family is in scriptural order.

6. My Reputation in the World:

- a. Our neighbours and business associates know of our Christian stand and commitment.
- b. I am above reproach and completely honest in all my business dealings.
- c. I am financially responsible and not excessively in debt.
- d. My word can be depended on.
- e. As far as I know, there is no area of accusation of my life and business dealings which could bring reproach on the cause of Christ.

7. My Victory in My Personal Life and Habits:

- a. I have renounced all sinful and worldly habits, having been cleansed of past defilements.
- b. I am free from all immorality and uncleanness, having presented my body to the Lord and His service.
- c. I stand for holiness and a life above reproach.

8. My Life of Prayer, the Word and Worship:

Recognizing the importance and need of these, I covenant to continually develop:

- a. My prayer life, interceding for the church, the people and the ministry;
- b. My personal Bible study and knowledge of the Word, having personal devotions and family altar as often as possible;
- c. My participation and leadership in corporate praise and worship.

As a leader, I will try to set an example in these matters.

9. My Relationship with Other People in the Church:

- a. I harbour no ill-will or hard feelings toward any others in the church.
- b. This includes past problems, grudges and unforgiveness, as well as present associations. There is nothing between me and another person in the church, so that I feel I can openly pray for and counsel with any person in the church.
- c. My heart is clean and open before God and His people.

10. Love..."the greatest of these is love":

I can honestly say I have a love for Fountaingate Christian Assembly, the Pastor, the staff, and all the ministries in the church, and I long to reach the world with the message of Jesus Christ. I will pray for and always remain in openness and love for my fellow-labourers in the church and everything I do shall be motivated by love.

PLEDGE OF COMMITMENT

If chosen, I pledge myself to work untiringly and unselfishly for the good of this people.

I will work in whole-hearted cooperation with the Pastor and other leadership in this Assembly to see the work of God prosper.

I will be unselfish in my decisions and opinions; always seeking the mind of Christ for His people and their spiritual welfare, which shall be more important than my personal wishes.

If for any reason, at any time, I am unable to continue this pledge, either for personal incompatibility with the principles and practices of the church and its leadership; for unrepentant sin or repeated failure in my life; a doubt of the call of God to this office; or merely a lack of time, strength or energy, I will most naturally and willingly request to be removed from this office of leadership and relinquish my place of authority. I will return all the original copies of licensing, commissioning, and/or ordination to my local church.

As long as I remain in office, my highest goal is to do His work in regard to the Assembly, its Pastor and other leaders.

With all good conscience before God, I am prepared to serve this congregation (or continue to serve) as a/an _____.
(Please write in your office: Pastor, Elder, Deacon, Deaconess, etc.)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

After prayerful evaluation, I do not feel I should serve in this capacity at this time.

Signed: _____

Date: _____