**SUGGESTED ORDINATION STANDARDS**

**PRE-EXAMINATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

I. EVIDENCE OF GOD’S CALL

When God calls a man, He will indicate that fact in some way. Therefore, we deem it of major importance to withhold ordination, however worthy of it a man may seem to be, until the Lord has indicated His call through a call from some mission board or congregation, or such other developments as may indicate without doubt that Divine ordination has already taken place.

II. INITIAL ACTION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. Determining the Qualification of Candidate

Upon reception of a request for ordination, the ability of the candidate to meet the oral and written requirements of ordination is to be determined through action of the local church board by a committee of three pastors who are in agreement with the doctrinal position of IFCA International. One of these may be the host pastor. One must be a member of IFCA International.

1. This committee shall examine the candidate in relation to the following three areas:

a. His personal assurance of salvation, specific call to the Christian ministry, and qualifications for ordination. The committee should be satisfied that God has called this man into the ministry, and that he possesses the qualities of life required for this responsibility as listed in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

b. His doctrinal position. The committee should be satisfied that he is in basic agreement with the position of IFCA International.

c. His Philosophy of the Christian ministry, especially in the areas of the nature and purpose of the church, the great commission, spiritual leadership, and the purpose and function of the pastor in the local church.

2. The committee shall counsel the candidate as to his standing in the above areas.

Areas of strength should be commended, and weakness should be clearly noted, along with constructive recommendations for improvement. The candidate should fully understand the requirements and procedure for ordination, and he should be actively working toward satisfactory completion of those requirements. The committee shall send an official report to the local church board stating their recommendation concerning the candidate.

B. Granting a License

1. If a man requesting ordination appears to be called of God and spiritually fit, and if he subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the IFCA International, by action of the official board or the congregation of the local church, be shall be licensed to preach the gospel for a probationary period of one year. If continued, this license must be renewed annually.

2. The candidate who is licensed shall be given a License Certificate bearing such authority as deemed necessary and appropriate for the individual situation, such authority to be determined by the local church.

**CALLING AN ORDINATION COUNCIL**

1. OFFICIAL ACTION BY THE CHURCH

Upon completion of the license period, if the candidate appears prepared to meet the requirements for ordination, the church shall take official action, either in a congregational meeting or through its official board, to call an ordination council.

1. INVITATION TO COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS

The ordination council shall consist of not less than six ministers together with one delegate from each church pastored by these ministers in addition to the minister and two delegates from the local church calling the council. The council may also include approved individual ministers. At least four of the minister and four of the delegates must be respectively, IFCA International members or from member churches.

III. SUGGESTED FORM LETTER OF INVITATION TO THE COUNCIL

Date

Address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

(Name of Church) requests you and one delegate appointed from your church (if minister is pastor of church) to sit in an Ecclesiastical Council to be constituted as stated below, hereby called to meet at (Place-of Meeting) on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ day of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_o’clock to take into consideration the expediency of ordaining to the work of the Gospel Ministry (Name--of Candidate)

The date of ordination will be set if and when the candidate has successfully passed his examination. The enclosed card is for your reply to this request together with the name of your delegate. The pastors and churches invited are as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (etc.)

On behalf of the church, *Signed*

IV. DESIGNATION OF WRITTEN REQUIREMENTS

1. It is recommended that the candidate for ordination prepare a minimum of three written documents.
2. A doctrinal statement.
3. An exegesis of 1000 words on a Greek or Hebrew passage. In the event of an absence of language study, an exposition of similar length of the English of an approved passage.
4. A full sermon manuscript designed for twenty-minute delivery.

B. All manuscripts shall be submitted in triplicate to the host pastor or host church board.

C. The manuscripts shall be assigned for evaluation to men who have agreed to sit in the ordination council. It is recommended that each manuscript be assigned to two men for their consideration.

D. After the ordination council, the ordaining church retains the first copy of each of the manuscripts as part of the official record, the other two being returned to the candidate.

V. HOST CHURCH PREPARATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING

A. Adequate, comfortable, and private meeting space.

B. Refreshments and/or lunch for break times.

C. Computer or note pad for use by the council secretary.

D. A certificate of ordination to be signed by council members.



**CONSTITUTING THE ORDINATION COUNCIL**

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNCIL

It is suggested that a leader of the ordaining church lead the council in the election of a Chairman who will then direct the proceedings.

A. Chairman

1. He may be any official delegate, but it is thought wise that the host pastor serve as the permanent chairman.

2. He should have the qualifications of knowledge and skill in guiding the deliberations of an assembly.

B. Secretary

1. He may be any official delegate, but it is thought wise that the clerk of the host church serve as secretary.

2. He shall keep a record of the minutes, providing a typed copy for the church’s Official Board calling the council, and a copy for the candidate.

3. He shall arrange for the prompt signing by delegates of the Certificate of Ordination authorized by the council.

C. QUORUM

1. A quorum shall consist of a least twelve official delegates.

2. It is recommended that this examining council meet privately.

D. VOTING

1. Only authorized representatives shall have the power to vote in the council meeting.

2. A majority shall determine routine business and the “arresting” of examination parts.

3. A three-fourths majority vote shall be required to pass the final recommendation of the examining council to the host church.

II. DOCKET OF THE COUNCIL

1. Meeting called to order by host pastor or church official
2. Hymn
3. Prayer by individual or group.
4. Election Chairman
5. Election of Secretary
6. Read minutes of the church calling the council, and the letter of call to the council.
7. Roll call by secretary and certification of delegates.
8. Motion, if quorum is present, that gathering be constituted an ordination council.
9. Motion to proceed to Examination
10. Decision as to method of Examination (Individual examiners or council as a whole). If the first method was previously contemplated, the host pastor should have previously designated the assigned parts to competent delegates, but the final decision for method rests with the council.

**EXAMINING THE CANDIDATE**

I. EXAMINATION OF THE CANDIDATE’S BACKGROUND, PREPARATION, AND CHARACTER

A. Examination as to Christian Experience. Motion: “This portion to be arrested”.

B. Examination as to ordination standards. This should include the following items:

1. Educational background.

2. Call to the ministry.

3. Reasons for seeking ordination.

C. Examination of personal qualifications for spiritual leadership as listed in I Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

It is recommended that the council go through each qualification and get some positive response from the candidate. Testimonies of those present as to his meeting of these standards may also be requested.

Motion: “This portion to be arrested.”

1. REVIEW OF WRITTEN MANUSCRIPTS.

A brief evaluation of each manuscript listed below is to be given by the two reviewing pastors.

1. A doctrinal statement.
2. An exegesis of 1000 words on a Greek or Hebrew passage. In the event of an absence of language study, an exposition of similar length of the English of an approved passage.
3. A full sermon manuscript designed for twenty-minute delivery.

A motion is made at the conclusion of all the reviews that the written part be received as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

III. EXAMINATION OF THEOLOGY, BIBLE KNOWLEDGE, AND CHURCH HISTORY AND POLITY

1. Examination as to doctrine including English Bible and Theology. The doctrinal position of the IFCA shall form the overall basis for the doctrinal examination.

Motion: “This portion to be arrested.”

1. Examination in church history and polity.

Church history should focus on an appreciation of our Reformation heritage, and on contemporary theological issues. Polity should include the following items:

1. The nature and purpose of the church including the specific functions of the local church in the light of the Great commission as stated in Mart. 28:18-20.
2. The nature and function of the pastor as the leader of the local church, especially as seen in Ephesians 4:1 - 16 and the Pastoral Epistles.

Motion: “This portion to be arrested.”

1. Delivery of any or all of a twenty-minute sermon if the council so desires.

Motion: “Examination as a whole be arrested and council meet in closed session.”

**DECISION OF THE COUNCIL**

I. CLOSED SESSION MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

1. Discussion by the council whether to recommend ordination, recommend ordination upon further study/experience, recommend not to ordain, or postpone final decision until further examination.
2. Motion as appropriate for one of the above options. Three-fourths majority required to pass.

II. CONCLUDING MATTERS

1. Advise candidate of decision. Congratulations. Prayer.
2. Plans for Ordination Service by host pastor, candidate, and chairman.
3. Miscellaneous business and announcements.
4. Motion: “To recess, to reconvene a time and place of ordination service.”
5. Closing Prayer.

This document was adopted by the Pacific Northwest Regional of IFCA International and modified for use by N.I.C.E. pastors and churches.