



# ASSOCIATION MINISTRY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

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April 2021

## Preamble

CBOQ is comprised of 16 formal Associations and one informal group which was once an Association. While each can differ from the other, Associations voluntarily have chosen to work collaboratively through CBOQ. An Association is “A voluntary grouping of local churches in good standing that has fulfilled the membership qualifications to be an association in accordance with CBOQ’s General Operating By-law.”<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, “Associations are established by local Churches, in consultation with the CBOQ Board and other Associations, as the primary means of strengthening fellowship and mission among Local Churches. Each Local Church situated within the boundaries of an Association shall be a member of such Association. Associations are either separate legal entities with legal standing outside of the CBOQ or are unincorporated entities.”<sup>2</sup>

Together, Associations and local churches are stronger, and can accomplish more. Historically, Canadian Baptists have cherished this dual commitment to autonomy and association. Although this duality is challenging, it is biblical. (1 Corinthians 12: 12-14)

As Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec, we are a family of churches, transformed by Christ, revealing God’s kingdom. To that end, churches and leaders are being equipped as they engage in their mission from God in their community.

As a family of churches, we hold the following core values:

- Faith
- Community
- Mission
- Churches
- Cooperation
- Leadership
- Learning
- Prayer

The mandate of CBOQ is to resource churches, develop leaders, foster partnerships and strengthen relationships and identity. This handbook is created as part of this mandate, to assist your Association in its ministry to leaders.

## Purpose of the Handbook

CBOQ cherishes the autonomy of the local church and local Associations. Therefore, this document is not prescriptive. Its aim is to help your Association Ministry Committee (AMC) understand its role, especially in the area of accreditation and ordination. It is meant to be informative and ensure a standardized approach to your role, especially in the accreditation process. Indeed, when the AMC meets a candidate, it must bear in mind that this person will likely serve outside your AMC at one point in their ministry. Perhaps they have come from another Association. Therefore, your responsibility is more than just to your Association.

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions, CBOQ General Operating By-law 3, p. 3

<sup>2</sup> Article 2.03, CBOQ General Operating By-law 3, p. 8

Before we delve into recommendations for your AMC's procedures, we must clarify what is meant by ordination and accreditation.

### **Ordination Versus Accreditation<sup>3</sup>**

Ordination. CBOQ affirms the right of the local church to ordain, that is, the setting apart as a recognition and commissioning of a person's vocational ministry call from God. While a local church invites other churches in its Association to examine the theological suitability of a candidate and to confirm his/her call, it is the local church that ordains; it is not CBOQ. Thus, the autonomy of the local church is preserved (See Acts 6: 1- 7).

CBOQ considers ordination to be a one-time event, much like believer's baptism is a one-time event in a believer's life. This means that once a person has been ordained by a local church (or another denomination), it will not require the person to be re-ordained. However, an Association may wish to re-examine a candidate on their faith and theology to be satisfied that such a candidate meets its criteria, especially when the ordination was performed solely by a local church without examination by a wider body. <sup>4</sup> Ordinations by recognised denominations and fellowships, when a letter of good standing has been received by CBOQ, should not normally require a re-examination.

CBOQ understands ordination as being different from accreditation. An ordination is a public recognition of a vocationally called individual. It confirms and declares a candidate's spiritual gifts, beliefs, suitability, and calling to vocational Christian ministry. In the act of ordination, both the congregation and the candidate confirm the vocational ministry call. A candidate promises "to give his/her life to the ministry of Jesus Christ in accordance to the principles of ministry as set forth in the Word of God."<sup>5</sup> This is a promise that is purposely general in nature. The call is extended to a person for life, not explicitly for only one church or family of churches. There is no specific standard of accountability in the ordination. This standard belongs to the accreditation.

Accreditation. While the local church ordains, CBOQ accredits its pastoral leaders. In other words, CBOQ, on behalf of its family of churches, ensure that a candidate has attained the proper level of education for the ministry he/she is called to perform, is competent in the skills required, possesses the suitable character to fulfil his/her calling, demonstrates CBOQ ministry leaders' core competencies, and that he/she agrees with CBOQ's beliefs and polity (See Acts 14:21-23). In addition, the accreditation verifies that the candidate is willing to be held accountable for his/her practice of ministry (See James 3: 1). Holding credentials is a confirmation that one is currently in good standing with CBOQ, adhering to its guidelines, practices and beliefs. Credentialed ministry leaders serve the kingdom of God with the sponsorship, support and blessing of CBOQ.

CBOQ has several accreditation categories. These are found in the *CBOQ Accreditation, Ordination, and Induction Manual*. A person may be accredited but not ordained. The reverse is also true. An ordained person might not

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1 for a reflection on Ordination.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Sample Baptist Church ordained pastor Saintly five years ago. It was an "in-house" ordination where deacons and senior pastor decided it would be good to ordain pastor Saintly. Pastor Saintly now wishes to be accredited and have his ordination recognised. The AMC can recommend to the Credentials Committee that pastor Saintly be examined by the Association in order to have his ordination recognised. (The Credentials Committee can make that determination independently also.) Once the Credentials Committee makes its determination on accreditation it will inform the Association with the recommendation that Sample Baptist Church hold an Ordination Examination Council for the ordination to be recognised by CBOQ and pastor Saintly be fully accredited.

<sup>5</sup> A Manual for Worship and Services Prepared for Canadian Baptist Churches, Canadian Baptist Ministries, 1998, p.138

be accredited. This would be the case for some whose ordination is not recognised by CBOQ, as noted in the example at note 3. It is important to understand that accreditation is tied to membership in a CBOQ church. Thus, when a ministry leader leaves a CBOQ church to either worship or minister in a setting outside CBOQ, or approved by CBOQ, or ceases to be a ministry leader in any church or ministry, that person is no longer considered to be an active, accredited ministry leader of CBOQ.<sup>6</sup> Such a person must seek re-accreditation when he/she becomes a CBOQ church ministry leader again.

The bottom line of accreditation is this: It is about creating strong and healthy vocational ministry leaders who in turn will lead churches toward healthy discipleship and mission. It is the promotion of a dynamic for ministry that is meant to be transformative. Your AMC has an important role to play in this.

### **CBOQ's Accreditation Process**

In order to better understand your role, here is an overview of the CBOQ's accreditation procedures.

1. Candidates let CBOQ know their desire to be accredited through filling a Form 1 or 1A.
2. CBOQ replies to candidates letting them know they need to meet their AMC. AMC is also contacted to let it know someone has applied to be accredited and needs a meeting.
3. The AMC meets with candidates. The AMC reports to CBOQ to let it know whether to proceed or let it know there are issues that must be addressed first.
4. Once the AMC gives go ahead to proceed, CBOQ appoints accreditation supervisors for the candidates.
5. Candidates are asked to attend the New CBOQ Pastors Orientation Retreat.
6. Once supervision is completed and all applicable forms and other requirements are received and completed, candidates are asked to meet with the AMC a second time. (This is generally only applicable to those who are not transferring from another recognised denomination or family of churches.)
7. Once the AMC reports on the second meeting, if applicable, then candidate is invited to meet with Credentials Committee.
8. Credentials Committee approves candidate to move towards ordination or gives further instruction to candidate before he/she can proceed to ordination.

## Role of the Association Ministry Committee

**Please note:** This section includes suggestions to AMCs for ministry leaders' support outside of the accreditation/ordination process. It is understood that some Associations have a formal process and appointed people that ensure ministry leaders and their families are supported. The suggestions listed below are not meant to replace those Association's current practices. Rather, they are designed for Associations that do not have such formal systems so as to encourage each Association to have something in place for the support of their ministry leaders, especially those new to CBOQ.

The AMC provides a bridge between the local church and its pastor, the Association and CBOQ. Its purposes are to:

1. Provide insight to the local church and CBOQ at the beginning of the accreditation/ordination process and at its end; to give its opinion of candidates to the Credentials Committee.
2. Give counsel, guidance and affirmation to those from within the Association who sense a call to ministry.

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<sup>6</sup> CBOQ considers CBOQ ministry leaders who retire and remain members of a CBOQ church as being accredited.

3. Give responsible care and encouragement to candidates for ministry and student ministry candidates within the Association.
4. Assist ordination candidates in final preparation for the Ordination Examination Council by reviewing the candidates' Statement of Faith and providing feedback.
5. Assist the Ministry Resource Committee Executive in investigating complaints against a clergy member, as per the Discipline and Restoration Protocols.<sup>7</sup>
  - a. An investigation Team consists of three people:
    - i. Two will be appointed from the Credentials Committee. The Credentials Committee members receive yearly training in case they are called upon to participate in an investigation.
    - ii. One will be a member of the AMC where the clergy member is located.<sup>8</sup> The AMC may appoint someone from the Association who is not on the committee.
  - b. The MRC Executive will make the contact if the services of the AMC is required.
6. Assist the Ministry Resource Committee in providing care for a pastor and his/her family who has been disciplined.
  - a. This may take the form of pastoral care or benevolent assistance.
7. Assist, promote, guide Association Ministerial or ministry leaders' clusters, so ministry leaders can meet regularly:
  - a. To pray with each other.
  - b. To encourage and speak into each other's lives.
  - c. To include ministry spouses in their gathering at least once a year, preferably twice.
8. Promote a yearly or biannual Pastor's day training for ministry leaders of the Association.<sup>9</sup>
9. Assist and care for ministry leaders that are in transition, especially those who are seeking a placement:
  - a. Through regular communication.
  - b. By encouraging them to remain actively involved in a church.
10. Assist ministry leaders who are new to the Association (and are not in the accreditation stream):
  - a. To inform them about the works and ministries of the Association, including its meetings and ministerial cluster(s).
  - b. To answer questions they may have about the region.
  - c. To promote good communication between churches.
11. Assist and care for ministry leaders and their families that face difficulties, especially those who are on Long-Term Disability:
  - a. Through regular communication.
  - b. Offering guidance and recommendation for counseling, spiritual direction, or other professional services as required.
  - c. Letting CBOQ know of needs for benevolent or other types of assistance.

### **Suggested Membership of Association Ministry Association**

1. The AMC is a committee of the Association. While it does assist CBOQ with the accreditation process by providing its recommendations on candidates, its primary role is the development of its ministry leaders. Therefore:

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<sup>7</sup> When a member of the AMC is serving with an investigative team, this person is seconded to CBOQ ministry. Therefore, this person will be covered under the insurance umbrella of CBOQ's directors and committee members.

<sup>8</sup> CBOQ will provide training on how to investigate a complaint.

<sup>9</sup> The Association may seek CBOQ's guidance and even resources through a grant proposal.

- a. The AMC members should be formally appointed by the Association. Members should be:
  - i. Members of an Association's local church who are in good standing.
  - ii. Persons of integrity, spiritual maturity, wisdom and sensitivity.
  - iii. Persons interested in ministry leadership and the well being of ministry leaders.
  - iv. Persons who have a high concept and standard for vocational ministry.
  - v. Persons who are familiar with the Association, its churches and the CBOQ in general.
- b. The AMC should normally consist of five (5) members. (Larger Association may require more members while smaller ones will require less.)
- c. The membership should preferably include a mixture of accredited and ordained ministry leaders and regular church members, as much as it is possible.
- d. No members should be seeking accreditation while they serve on the committee. This would be a conflict of interest.

### Suggested Procedures for Association Ministry Committees

**Please Note:** The Credentials Committee usually meets twice a year, at the end of September and April. **It is suggested that AMCs set up a regular meeting schedule in June and November** to best prepare candidates meet with the Credentials Committee. This will prevent last minute scrambles on the part of AMCs and candidate. When there are no candidates in an Association to be interviewed, AMCs do not have to meet.

1. In the case of a person studying towards ministry:
  - a. Meet with the candidate yearly to receive updates on their progress and provide support and guidance.
    - i. Explore with the candidate his/her call to ministry and compatibility with the beliefs held, and standards set for CBOQ ministry leaders.
2. In the case of candidates who transfer from another Canadian Baptist family of churches (CBAC, CBWC, UEBFC):
  - a. Meet with the person once CBOQ has received their Form 1A and a letter of transfer of credentials from their former Canadian Baptist family of churches. CBOQ will contact the AMC once these are received. *This will be the only meeting with the AMC.*<sup>10</sup>
    - i. The purpose of the meeting is to get to know the person, their journey to ministry, including their current ministry.
    - ii. Information should be given to the candidate about the Association, its churches, its meetings and ministerial cluster(s).
  - b. Write a letter to CBOQ's Credentials Committee to verify that the meeting has taken place.
3. In the case of a person seeking accreditation in CBOQ and already ordained by another denomination or family of churches:

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<sup>10</sup> CBOQ recognises the full transferability of the credentials of ministry leaders from the Canadian Baptist family of churches. By Canadian Baptist ministry leaders, it is meant ministry leaders who are accredited and in good standing with Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada, and Union des églises baptistes francophones du Canada. (All three also recognise the full transferability of CBOQ's ministry leaders' credentials.) The meeting with the AMC is to formally welcome the new ministry leaders and get to know them and not to examine them.

- a. Meet with the person once CBOQ has received their Form 1A and a letter of transfer of credentials from their former denomination. CBOQ will contact the AMC once these are received. *This will normally be the only meeting with the AMC.*<sup>11</sup>
    - i. The purpose of the meeting is to get to know the person, their journey to ministry, including their current ministry.
    - ii. The meeting should also be used to determine the beliefs held, and standards set for CBOQ ministry leaders.
      1. Sample questions are provided at the end of the handbook.
    - iii. Information should be given to the candidate about the Association, its churches, its meetings and ministerial cluster(s).
  - b. Write a report of the meeting for CBOQ's Credentials Committee, making recommendations on the suitability of the candidate as a ministry leader within its family of churches.
    - i. Note that CBOQ will normally only proceed with the supervision portion of the accreditation process after the AMC report has been received.<sup>12</sup>
  - c. As much as possible, a member of the AMC should be appointed to communicate regularly with the candidate for encouragement and guidance if necessary.
  - d. The AMC may request from CBOQ the name of the candidate's supervisor. However, it is to be noted that supervision of the candidate is the responsibility of and under the direction of CBOQ.
4. In the case of a person seeking accreditation in CBOQ who also requires ordination (but has completed their theological studies):
- a. Meet the person once CBOQ has received Form 1. CBOQ will contact the AMC once it has received the form. *This will be the first of two meetings with the candidate.*
    - i. The first meeting is to know the person, their journey to ministry, including their current ministry.
    - ii. The meeting should also be used to determine the beliefs held, and standards set for CBOQ ministry leaders.
      1. Sample question are provided at the end of the handbook.
    - iii. Information should be given to the candidate about the Association, its churches, its meetings and ministerial cluster(s).
  - b. Write a report of the meeting to CBOQ's Credentials Committee, listing the strengths and shortcomings of the candidate that may be pertinent to the supervision of the candidate.
    - i. Note that CBOQ will normally only proceed with the supervision portion of the accreditation process after the AMC report has been received.<sup>13</sup>
  - c. As much as possible, a member of the AMC should be appointed to communicate regularly with the candidate for encouragement and guidance if necessary.
  - d. The AMC may request from the CBOQ the name of the candidate's supervisor. However, it is to be noted that supervision of the candidate is the responsibility of and under the direction of CBOQ.

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<sup>11</sup> The current Accreditation and Ordination manual only requires one meeting for ministry leaders who are ordained and have experience, and transfer from another denomination. An AMC may determine that another meeting is necessary. If so, it should advise the Credentials Committee.

<sup>12</sup> Exceptions may be made when an AMC cannot meet with the candidate for several months, to not to delay the process.

<sup>13</sup> Exceptions may be made when an AMC cannot meet with the candidate for several months, to not to delay the process.

- e. Meet the person at the end of their process. CBOQ will let the AMC know when the candidate had completed or is near completion of their supervision and has completed or is near completion of their requirements.
  - i. The second meeting is to review the candidate's development during the year of supervision.
  - ii. Review with the candidate their statement of faith, if candidates so desire.
    1. Sample question are provided at the end of the handbook.
  - iii. Answer any question the person may have regarding the Association.
- f. Write a report of the meeting to CBOQ's Credentials Committee, making recommendations on the suitability of the candidate as a ministry leader within its family of churches.

In all instances, prior to meeting with a candidate, CBOQ will provide the AMC with the pertinent information regarding candidates. This will help the AMC prepare for the interview.

It is important to note that the AMC is not a "rubber-stamping" committee. In the matter of accreditation and ordination, its function is to evaluate candidates concerning their suitability as ministry leaders within CBOQ. The Credentials Committee relies on the evaluation provided by the AMC. The aim of the AMC meeting with the candidate is to help our new CBOQ ministry leaders be encouraged, know who the Association is, create good communication between churches, develop as a person and leader, grow and have a sense of belonging to a larger body.

### **Special Considerations**

1. Women in Ministry
  - a. CBOQ has, since 1947, accredited and ordained women. CBOQ also acknowledges that its member churches and associations are autonomous. Therefore, some churches may not agree, theologically, with women in ministry leadership. However, as members of the same family, we agree to work together for the sake and greater good of the kingdom of God.
  - b. This means that we can accept that some churches may have a different set of theological understandings from ours. We agree to associate and work together. Therefore, when a candidate presents himself or herself and has a different understanding concerning women in ministry than our own, it must not be a stumbling block and a reason to dismiss the candidate.
  - c. It is the official policy of the Credentials Committee to not treat the holding of a "complementarian" theological position, in itself, as a barrier to being accredited with CBOQ. If it is determined that the candidate is willing to "serve harmoniously," then the Credentials Committee should grant the "If and when" letter (if no other problems are noted). The Committee explores how, given candidates' "complementarian" positions, they would seek to serve harmoniously within CBOQ. Those who cannot serve harmoniously may not be accredited and their Associations and churches will be notified.
  - d. Conversely, AMC members who hold to a complementarian theology must not dismiss women candidates simply because of their gender. Women candidates must be examined the same as men candidates: on their conversion, sense of calling, understanding of Scriptures and theology, and their fit as potential accredited CBOQ ministry leaders. Being a woman and understanding what Scriptures may say concerning women in ministry does not demean God's word. As Baptists, we value the fact that the Bible is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit within the community of faith. Therefore, on non-essential elements of faith, we can have divergent interpretations of a same passage.



- e. All in all, the AMC should examine candidates on their core beliefs concerning salvation (including their own journey to acceptance of Christ as Saviour), their call to ministry, and their care for themselves and others.
2. Unconventional Ministry
    - a. Increasingly, ministry leaders seek to find different ways to reach people. Some of those ways are unconventional, that is they are not in and through a traditional church. CBOQ embraces church planters and missional specialists. Such candidates may use terminology that is foreign to us. Many of them are bi-vocational. The different approaches and ideas that such candidates may have should not be a reason to dismiss them.
    - b. Some of these candidates will seek to minister to people who traditionally may have been ignored by the church. This may make some AMC members feel uncomfortable. Candidates should not be excluded based on whom they are seeking to minister to.
    - c. Candidates should be examined on their core beliefs concerning salvation (including their own journey to acceptance of Christ as Saviour), their call to ministry, and their care for themselves and others and agreement on CBOQ policies regarding ministry. It should not be on their unorthodox ways of ministering.

### **Suggestion for Interview Topics and Questions**

#### First Interview or Sole Interview for Those Already Ordained.

- Christian and Vocational Call
  - Please share how you came to follow Jesus Christ. (How did you become a Christian?)
  - Please share how you sensed God calling you into vocational ministry. (how did God call you to be a pastor?)
  - How did you react to this call?
  - What did you do to prepare for the call?
  - Have you ever considered doing something else? If so, what is it?
  - How did you come to be at your current church?
  - What is an ideal disciple of Jesus Christ?
- Personal Life
  - Tell us about your family – of origin and current family.
  - Do you feel your family support you in your vocation ministry?
  - How do you support your family members in their aspirations?
  - How do you nurture your soul?
  - Tell us about a time when you experienced a serious conflict in your life. How did it affect you? How did you handle it?
- Those already ordained:
  - Have you ever faced a disagreement with your Board and or congregation? Did it ever get resolved? How or why not?
  - What is your passion as a ministry leader?
  - What would you say is the proudest moment of your ministry?
  - What is one thing in your ministry that you would change if you could?
  - How do you keep up to date with Biblical and theological research? (What do you do for continuing education?)
  - How important is it to you to belong to a ministerial or association?
    - Do you like to stay only with Baptists, evangelicals or any group of pastors who want to support each other?

- CBOQ
  - What are your thoughts about CBOQ?
  - Are there any values or theological beliefs that you do not share with CBOQ?
    - If so, what are they?
    - If so, can you live with the difference between what you believe and what CBOQ believes?
    - If so and if none, what would be a deal breaker for you to leave CBOQ?
    - In leaving, would you seek to take the church out of CBOQ?
  - A couple comes to see you. They are of the same gender. They ask you to marry them. What is your response?
  - You are visiting a seriously ill patient at the hospital. he asks you for your counsel concerning assisted dying. What do you say?
  - In the course of a conversation, one of your church members reveals that she had an abortion. How do you respond?

### Second Interview for Those Seeking Ordination

- Personal Life
  - How have you been since last time we saw each other?
  - How is your ministry at your church?
  - How is your family handling your ministry?
  - What have you learned about yourself in the past year?
- Vocational and Spiritual Life
  - How is your soul?
  - How has your ministry changed since we saw each other last?
    - What have been the challenges and joys?
  - How is your identity as the pastor (ministry leader) of your church (ministry setting) grown since we last saw each other?
  - What are some things you have learned, ministry-wise, during your supervision?
  - How is your church being spiritually nurtured?
  - How are you nurturing your soul?
  - Do you have someone to turn to when you are “lonely in soul?”
- CBOQ
  - Has anything changed concerning CBOQ since we last met?
  - What is one characteristic you really like about CBOQ?
    - What is one point you would change about CBOQ?
  - A couple comes to see you. They are of the same gender. They ask you to marry them. What is your response?
  - You are visiting a seriously ill patient at the hospital. he asks you for your counsel concerning assisted dying. What do you say?
  - In the course of a conversation, one of your church members reveals that she had an abortion. How do you respond?
  -
- Statement of Faith (This should be the core of the meeting.)
  - Ask pertinent questions as needed for improvement and or clarification.

# Appendix 1

## ORDINATION: A REFLECTION FROM A CANADIAN BAPTIST PERSPECTIVE

What is ordination? Is it a rite of passage for ministry leaders, a special act of recognition, or a ceremony devoid of any real meaning? Does ordination matter at all, and if it does, should it be only the purview of the local church or a recognition by the Christian church as a whole?

These are some of the questions this reflection will attempt to answer not to provide a definitive theology but rather to spur a discussion that may lead to a better understanding of ordination for the local church and association. It is hoped that this discussion will help develop a clearer and stronger theology of ministry leadership and ecclesiology for CBOQ.

### **A Biblical Basis?**

The Bible mentions ordination in only one context: the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests. The pertinent passages are found in Exodus 29: 22, 26, 27, 31, 33, 34 and Leviticus 7: 37; 8: 1, 22, 28, 29, 31, 33. The ceremony, which was to last seven days, provided a way to consecrate and anoint them for service to their God. Moses was the presider over multiple sacrifices that were offered to God in part to atone for Aaron and his sons. This would make them safe to enter the presence of God and offer sacrifices on behalf of His people.

This ordination set apart Levi and all his descendants to a ministry that was specific to them: the Levitical priesthood. It took place in front of the whole nation, by the tent of meetings, God's dwelling place at the time. Following the ordination, on the eighth day, sacrifices were offered on behalf of the people and when Moses and Aaron blessed the people, fire from heaven came down to consume the sacrifices, a sure way to let people know He was present and pleased with what had been done.

It should be noted that the generations of priests that followed did not go through an ordination ceremony, as far as the Bible reveals, so we can presume that ordination was a one time event as the word is not mentioned again. However, we know that kings Saul and David were specifically set apart by God to become kings over Israel. Samuel anointed and consecrated them both for their task, a divine confirmation of their calling. While not ordinations, they resembled one (1 Samuel 10: 1; 16: 13, 1 Chronicles 11: 3).

The New Testament does not make any mention of ordination; however, some events described in the text can be understood as a setting apart of some people for specific ministries. Many of these actions do resemble our acts of ordination today with the laying of hands and prayer.

The first setting apart is that of the 12 apostles. While no acts of commissioning or ordaining are described, it is evident the 12 apostles knew they were set apart from all other disciples and understood their special calling (Matthew 10: 1- 4; Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 6: 12 16; Acts 1: 12-14, 21-26).

Following that, the New Testament describes how the first deacons<sup>14</sup> were set apart from others for the purpose of serving widows and the distribution of food. These seven persons were deliberately chosen for their character and faith and to set them apart in their service, with the church leadership praying and laying their hands over them (Acts 6: 6).

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<sup>14</sup> Note that scholars continue to debate whether the word deacon in the text refers to deacons, a level of leadership, or simply as another kind of servant to the church.

Further, Paul reminds Timothy of his setting apart: the elders had laid their hands over Timothy when he received his pastoral gift as they prophesied over him (1 Timothy 4: 14). Much the same way, Paul and Barnabas were set apart for work in the Gentile world through fasting, prayer and laying of hands after the Holy Spirit revealed they were called to a specific ministry (Acts 13: 3). Paul seemed to have a clear understanding that there was something special in his being set apart.

Yet I have written to you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Romans 15: 15- 16).

Paul mentions to two of his protégés that careful discernment had to be exercised in the calling and appointment of deacons, overseers and elders, with one mention concerning not being hasty to lay hands on leaders (1 Timothy 3: 1- 13; 5: 22 , Titus 1: 5- 9).

As we have seen, the action of ordaining is only found in the Old Testament, in the context of the priesthood of Israel. Even then, it seems to have been reserved only for the consecration of Aaron and his sons. While ordination is never mentioned in the New Testament, actions seem to point to a special setting apart of those called by God and recognised by the Christian Assembly. Thus, the question at hand. Should the Christian church ordain its leaders or not? And if the church should ordain, then how should it be understood?

### **Ordination in the Christian Church: Four Approaches**

Fisher Humphreys, in his essay on ordination in the church, identified four approaches to ordination in the Christian church: sacramental, authorisation, installation, and confirmation and blessings.<sup>15</sup>

#### **1. Ordination as Sacramental**

The first approach to ordination is from a sacramental perspective. This view is generally held by churches that hold of a priesthood model for its clergy, such as the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican Traditions. In this approach, there is a belief that God acts upon the ordained, conferring upon him or her a special sacramental grace. Those who are called (the ordained) have special rights and duties compared to non-ordained (lay) people, because the ordained have been set apart by and for God as He acts upon them. In this perspective, ordination is for life.

While this perspective does take into account the biblical concept of receiving a gift through the setting apart (1 Timothy 4: 14 and 2 Timothy 1: 6), Humphreys is quick to point out that this view should be rejected by Baptists because of the equality of all believers. He argues that only God can confer special grace, and this cannot happen with the laying of hands in an ordination ceremony. The laying of hands cannot effect such grace as it is a human action.<sup>16</sup>

If that is the case, another Baptist theologian, Millard Erickson issues a challenge to Baptists for the need to better develop their doctrine of ordination. He gives as an example the presiding over the Lord's Supper. Indeed, who can preside over it: anyone or someone who has been set apart (ordained)?

In theory, Baptists draw no strong distinction between the laity and clergy. Ordination is frequently understood as merely a public recognition of a divine calling. It does not convey any special power or special authority for ministry that would not be present without it. Yet, many a Baptist church has

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<sup>15</sup> (Humphreys 1991, 291)

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

faced a dilemma of what to do about celebrating the Lord's Supper when neither its pastor nor any other ordained minister is available!<sup>17</sup>

Erickson remarks that some congregations will chose to have a non-Baptist ordained cleric to lead the Lord's Supper when their pastor is absent and no other Baptist ordained pastors are available. Why would this matter if, as many Baptists say, ordination does not confer anything special to a pastor? This would seem to show that ordination is viewed in an sacramental manner for a lay person from the congregation is not asked to lead.<sup>18</sup>

Erickson explains further.

The role of ordination among nonsacramentarians is always something of an enigma, for sacerdotalism tends to be a natural corollary of sacramentalism. In the case of sacramentalists, ordination is clearly a necessity, for without it, there literally cannot be a valid observance of the Lord's Supper. What, however, is the requirement for an effective observance among nonsacramentarians such as Baptists? Is it simply someone possessing the necessary physical and communicational skills to preside in an effective manner? If so, are the spiritual qualifications of the administrant irrelevant? Could it be done by someone who is in no sense a Christian believer, such as an atheistic actor trained to preside at a Lord's Supper scene in a play?<sup>19</sup>

While it is agreed that in a Baptist church, the congregation gives the responsibility and authority to specific persons, Erickson asks, "What is the nature of the recognition of the approval? How formal and permanent should it be?"<sup>20</sup> Indeed, who makes that decision, a few persons on the Board, or the whole congregation? Can it be informal, or should it be public and official?

These questions help us wrestle with our ecclesiology and theological understanding of the Ordinances which are good things. It may not be so easy to dismiss the idea that ordination does have some sacramental meaning.

## 2. Ordination as Authorisation

The second view, first held by Luther and Calvin and retained by many Protestant Churches, considers ordination as an act of authorization given by the church. The ordained person is authorized to preach the Word and administer the sacraments by divine authority through the Church. It is the entry to a function rather than an office.<sup>21</sup> This is an approach that Humphreys rejects.

However, we are left with similar questions as before. Does the practice of many of our Baptist church not fit this approach, even if their stated theologies do not? For example, many churches will seek other "called" people to fill in their pulpit when the pastor is absent. Such called people may be other ordained pastors or people who are working in a recognised Christian ministry. In practice, they seek authorised people to preach the Word.

As with the previous approach, it may not be so easy to dismiss the view that ordination does contain a certain divine authorisation through the church for specific persons. Indeed, if God is not involved in the

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<sup>17</sup> (Erickson 1991, 54)

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 55

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> (Humphreys 1991, 292)

process, then why does the church not call upon any and all of its members to preach, let alone preside over the Ordinances?

### 3. Ordination as Installation

The third approach to ordination as understood by Humphreys, is an installation to the role of pastor for a specific place and time. Thus, such an ordination is not permanent but subject to temporal task. Such perspective does not believe that there is sacramental efficacy to the event or special divine authorisation to the ministry of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. It simply marks the beginning of the ministry of a new pastor.<sup>22</sup>

“If God calls a person into a special phase of ministry, it certainly is biblical for the church to confirm such a call, and ordination is one way to confirm a member’s call.”<sup>23</sup>

Interestingly, Humphreys does not necessarily call an installation an ordination. “It is the widest possible institutional interpretation in the sense that it alone may be acceptable to all Christians.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, such installation is only an ordination if a church wishes to call it that.

This is certainly Marjory Warkentin’s understanding of ordination.

The New Testament provides neither warrants nor precedents for contemporary ordination practices and beliefs. It provides only interpretations of events in its own time, and these are understood as unique moments in salvation’s history and therefore, as being just as unrepeatable as Calvary and Pentecost. All the references to the imposition of hands are descriptive rather than normative<sup>25</sup>.

This is in sharp contrast with Stanley Grenz who believes there is precedent in the New Testament for the idea of ordained ministry. “The New Testament concept of the church balances the emphasis on the people as a whole with an emphasis on leaders serving the whole.”<sup>26</sup>

While Grenz has a high view of ordination, he does not believe it is sacramental. He agrees that pastors receive a special calling by God but their vocation is to lead the people of God in service and not to mediate God’s grace or will to the people.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Grenz approaches ordination as a lifelong calling, “carried by the candidate to whatever future places of service this person may be called.... As an ordained person, this individual will exercise a certain authority in the denomination.”<sup>28</sup>

This position would seem to run contrary to the equality of all believers as found in Galatians 3: 26-29. We will explore this more in detail in the following section.

### 4. Ordination as Confirmation and Blessing

The sacramental and authority understandings of ordination would give one the impression that there are two tiers in the Christian church: those who are ordained and those who are not. While this runs contrary to most Baptists interpretation of the Scriptures, it seems to be how many local churches function in practice.

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<sup>22</sup> (Humphreys 1991, 292)

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 295

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 292

<sup>25</sup> Walkerton as quoted in (Humphreys 1991, 290)

<sup>26</sup> (Grenz 1985, 22)

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 68

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 69

James McClendon believes there should be a return to true equality in the church.

The challenge of radical reformation in ministry: not a set-apart ministry of those who work for God while others work for themselves, and not a flock of secular ‘callings’ ... tended by a shepherd with religious calling ..., but a people set apart, earning their daily bread in honest toil, to be sure, but living to become for others the bread of life. ... Every member is called to discipleship; baptism is commissioning for this ministry; thus, it occupies the place ordination must in churches that celebrate a ‘clergy’... For on this view bishops are part of the laity; on this view every Christian is cleric.<sup>29</sup>

McClendon does not go as far as rejecting the idea of setting someone apart for leadership though. “It is entirely appropriate for a family of faith to confirm and support one of its members in what he and they believe to be God’s call, and to offer their blessing and best wishes.”<sup>30</sup>

This leads us to the fourth approach to ordination, the confirmation of a person’s call to Christian vocational ministry and the blessing of that person in their role. Humphreys believes this is the right approach to understand ordination in a Baptist context as he terms it “a noninstitutional one, a communal one.”<sup>31</sup> After all, given the Baptist’s congregational governance distinctive, the community is far better placed than an institution or denomination to confirm someone’s sense of call and bless that person to exercise the gifts he or she has received from God.

Humphreys argues that while there is not biblical basis for this approach to ordination, it is not required. “No biblical precedent is required, other than the general biblical theme that a church should provide nurture for the faith of its members and guidance for their live.”<sup>32</sup>

He goes even further. Speaking on the inner sense of call and ordination as having no biblical basis, he argues that ordination is not a necessity to confirm the call. Licensing or confirming the call verbally is enough. He continues, “Ordination does not have to wait for an inner sense of call. Surprising as it may appear to many people, the church may be led by God to lay hands on a person who first learned of his call, not from an inner experience, but from the church itself.”<sup>33</sup> This, he says, was the way early Baptists chose their pastors. Humphreys does not consider ordination to be a life long calling necessarily. It can be for a season and a certain place. This decision is a matter for a local church and the called individual to discern.<sup>34</sup>

One may ask whether choosing someone to lead and confirm and bless that person, essentially setting them apart from the rest of the congregation would still create a two-tier system in the local church. John Newport proposes that this is something that is necessary. Someone must be selected from the church to be the holder of what is sacred.

There must be some within the church who are custodians of the gift of proclamation and celebration (1 Corinthians 3: 14, Acts 6: 1- 6, 2 Timothy 1: 11). They do not monopolize these gifts or purpose of the church, but they guard and facilitate them. This is a special ministry within the general ministry of the whole people of God, ‘to fan into flame the gift of God (2 Timothy 1: 6),’ set

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<sup>29</sup> (McClendon 1994, 369)

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 294

<sup>31</sup> (Humphreys 1991, 294)

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 295

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 296

apart from the general ministry for that unique purpose. As a particular ministry signaled by the act of ordination, its gifts and functions are essential to the health and wholeness of the church.<sup>35</sup>

Colin Williams agrees. “Future leaders [after the original apostles] are responsible for keeping the church in continuing with the apostolic word, sacraments, fellowship and liturgy.”<sup>36</sup>

Thus, there is a place for ordained ministry in the Christian church, even if it does give a sense that there is a different category of Christians within the Body. As Grenz understands, ordination is an act of recognition that a person has received the right giftedness by the Holy Spirit for pastoral ministry, the commissioning of a person called by the local church on behalf of the whole Church for that task, and a public declaration that the person is now in a pastoral vocation.<sup>37</sup>

### **Where Does CBOQ stand?**

Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec cherish the autonomy of the local church and celebrates its inter-church association.

Using the four approaches as described by Humphreys, we can deduct that historically, Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec have understood ordination as an act of authorisation with a touch of confirmation and blessing. Ordination has been the recognition, by a local church aided by a larger body of local churches through the ordination council, that a person has indeed experienced a call from God and received special spiritual and human gifts from the Holy Spirit to lead a church. It is a local church publicly authorizing the same person to perform all ministerial duties needed by the Christian church, not just the local church.

Among our churches God furthers this ministry by calling some to special tasks in the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Pastors, both men and women, are set apart to preach the Gospel, teach the word, lead in worship, and exercise pastoral care in Christ’s name. Their ministry is a calling initiated by God and recognized by the local church through ordination and induction.<sup>38</sup>

CBOQ understands ordination as a once in a lifetime event, in the belief that God has called the person to that vocation for more than in one location, possibly for a lifetime. Because ordination is viewed as authorisation, CBOQ does recognise other denominations and family of churches’ ordination after a process of vetting. The CBOQ Accreditation, Ordination and Induction Manual states the following.

We believe that it is in association with other churches that a local congregation seeks the Holy Spirit’s discernment prior to proceeding with ordination. It is through this co-operative process that other churches declare their willingness to recognize and affirm a candidate’s ordination as meeting the requirements expected of an Ordained Minister by member churches. Thus, in Baptist tradition and practice, the act of Ordination is the responsibility of the local church. However, since a minister seldom spends his/her entire ministry in one church, it has been the practice for the local church to invite the churches in his/her Association to participate in the act of Ordination and thus give recognition to the fact that Ordination involves a wider ministry than just one church.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> (Newport 1991, 30)

<sup>36</sup> (Williams 1975, 113)

<sup>37</sup> (Grenz 1985, 69-70)

<sup>38</sup> (Canadian Baptist of Ontario and Quebec 2016, 7.2.2, 7.2.3, p. 18)

<sup>39</sup> (Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec 2018, 5)



Furthermore, in 1931 the BCOQ [as CBOQ was then called] agreed that committees, councils or advisory groups would be developed to work on behalf of local churches, in concert with other churches across the BCOQ, so that the ordination of a candidate can be “recognized” throughout CBOQ. This recognition involves the affirmation of the candidate at the Association Ministry Committee (AMC) and at the Credentials Committee. It is important that regional AMCs and the Credentials Committee continue to implement effective standards and procedures by which a candidate should be assessed and affirmed for ministry with CBOQ churches.

Formal and recognized ordination with CBOQ requires successful application and adherence to agreed upon conditions and procedures (ordination council, etc.). Ordination by a local church in concert with agreed upon standards by other churches (at the Association level) is recognized by our Convention and therefore by the Baptist World Alliance, and the government of Canada.<sup>40</sup>

While Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec does not approach ordination as a sacramental event, conferring a special grace to its ordained pastors in practice many local Baptist churches have seen ordination in that way. They see ordained clergy as the only ones who are qualified to administer the ordinances and preach the gospel from the pulpit.

Increasingly, however, members of CBOQ are approaching the call of their ministry leaders from the perspective of installation with a touch of confirmation and blessings. Therefore, this has created some confusion as to the meaning, purpose, and methodology regarding ordination. This may be a result of ministry leaders who have come from outside CBOQ circles, trained by different denominations or in a non-denominational perspective, bringing their understanding of ordination to their church and associations and local church leaders and members of congregations who have also come from outside CBOQ and done the same. As a result, over time, CBOQ’s historical perspective of ordination is now being changed along with some of its polity.

## **Conclusion**

Holding to our Baptist distinctives and facing the pressures of change from within its membership, CBOQ is left with deciding the importance, value, and purpose of ordination in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As its stands, CBOQ’s documents point to ordination as having an important place in the life of the church as it affirms a pastor’s call from God to serve Him is a special capacity and provides the authority to lead not only a local church but also have a role in guiding the church universal.

Whether the membership wishes to keep this understanding is a matter for all to discuss, even though the topic of ordination is not a rousing one. However, how CBOQ understands ordination influences how our family of churches perceives itself; therefore, such a discussion is an important to have. There is something to be said about a strong theology and ecclesiology.

## **Questions for Discussion**

What is your personal understanding of ordination?

What is your view of the approaches to ordination presented in this Reflection? Which ones resonate with you and which ones do you reject and why?

What is your view of the ordinances (communion and baptism)?

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

Is God present, and if so, in what sense, in the ordinances?

Is God doing anything in the ordinances, if so, what?

Do you think there is a relationship between the ordinances, preaching the Word, and ordination? What are your reasons for saying that?

In your opinion, is it important to have a common understanding of ordination? What are the implications, if any, of not having a common approach to our understanding?

What should be the mechanism of ordination for CBOQ and what is the basis for you saying that?

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# Appendix 2

## Core Competencies

CBOQ expects their accredited ministry leaders to have a minimum level of competencies and a capability and desire to cultivate and mature these core competencies.

The competencies include self-awareness, knowledge, skills, and spiritual insight. It is understood that those who are beginning in their vocational ministry will not have these competencies fully developed.

**CBOQ seeks ministry leaders who are:**

### Biblically and Theologically Integrated

Goal: To lead from a biblically transformed life. (Romans 12: 1- 2)

**CBOQ Ministry Leaders can:**

- Define the meaning of the Gospel for themselves and others
- Acknowledge there are different biblical and theological interpretations
- Apply biblical knowledge to everyday situation
  - Respond to life's challenges in a manner consistent with their Christian beliefs
  - Display their theology through their lifestyle and practice
- Organise their life according to biblical principles
- Defend their theology and biblical interpretation
  - While presenting it in non-confrontational ways
- Demonstrate understanding of key components of conflict resolution from a biblical point of view

### Emotionally and Spiritually Healthy

Goal: To lead and live out of an emotionally healthy spirituality framework, for sustainability and resiliency in life and ministry. (2 Corinthians 5: 16- 21)

**CBOQ Ministry Leaders can:**

- Recognise and cherish their call to vocational ministry
- Be attentive to the Holy Spirit's voice
- Distinguish emotional and spiritual boundaries between congregant and pastor
- Compare healthy emotions and spirituality to their own life to recognise conflicting values and practices that may be present and affect their ministry
- Integrate their emotions to their outward behaviour
- Develop a healthy balance between:
  - Vocational ministry
  - Rest and Sabbath
  - Personal time with others, including family

## Collaboratively Engaged

Goal: To engage in vocational ministry with others, both lay and vocational leaders, within their Association, CBOQ and the wider kingdom. (1 Corinthians 12: 12- 14)

### **CBOQ Ministry Leaders can:**

- Define the concept of the Body of Christ from a scriptural perspective
- Identify spiritual gifts in themselves and others
  - Demonstrate their own personal gifts through using them
- Organise people according to their gifts
- Influence unity within their ministry setting and the kingdom of God
  - Demonstrate a willingness to interact with the local CBOQ Association, CBOQ, and other inter-denominational groups
- Develop a strong, cohesive discipling system within their ministry context
- Compare and understand other people's point of view to help resolve conflicts in ways that prevent or avoid the disintegration of unity in the body of Christ

## Missionally Minded

Goal: To approach vocational ministry and lead their ministry setting with the mindset of Jesus' Great Commission to the Church. (Matthew 28: 18- 20)

### **CBOQ Ministry Leaders can:**

- Define the mission of the Church
- Explain the needs of the community where their ministry setting is located
- Listen to the congregants' understanding and fears concerning being missional
- Construct a framework for the mission of the ministry setting that responds to the needs (one or more) of the community and uses the gifts and capabilities of the ministry setting
  - Compare the current practice of the ministry setting with the framework constructed above
- Create a realistic and feasible plan to teach and lead the ministry setting to become missional
  - Display to the ministry setting a missional example through passion for the community and non-Christians
  - Assist congregants in facing their fears in reaching out to the community
- Organise a mission experience for the ministry setting

## Constructively Leading

Goal: To lead others in a manner that builds others and not destroy, that unites and not pull apart. (1 Peter 4: 7- 11)

### **CBOQ Ministry Leaders can:**

- Show knowledge and understanding of CBOQ history and polity
  - Relate to CBOQ in a constructive manner
  - Display competent leadership with Boards (Deacons, Elders, Councils, Leadership Teams, etc.)
- Illustrate knowledge of communication principles in preaching, relationships and pastoral care

- Experiment in providing leadership and preaching
  - Identify the best leadership methods to be used in a given context
  - Initiate ministry innovation
- Analyse the needs of the ministry setting in matters of discipleship
  - Appreciate others, along with their needs, brokenness, and opposition
  - Answer questions freely without avoidance
- Evaluate how the ministry setting responds to their leadership, preaching and pastoral care
  - Influence others for Christ through their example
- Design a discipleship plan that is realistic and feasible

## Continually Learning

Goal: To seek to grow one's Christian knowledge and practice of ministry without ceasing, in order to become more effective leaders. (2 Peter 3: 17- 18)

### **CBOQ Ministry Leaders can:**

- Compare their own Christian faith and theology with current biblical, theological and practical theological thought
  - Listen to others' perspective on biblical, theological and practical theology thoughts
- Identify differences in theological and biblical approaches
- Take part in formal learning seminars, lectures, or courses
  - Measure the extent which they are prepared to agree with, experiment and incorporate new learning into their practice of ministry.
- Determine areas in their skills and knowledge that require updating and or improvement
- Design a plan to remain knowledgeable and current on biblical, theological, and practical theology thought as well as other areas that affect vocational ministry.
  - Demonstrate visible growth in biblical, theological and practical theology knowledge and practice
- Build on successive learning, even through failures and disappointments, as they explore and experiment with ways to best minister in their context



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