

Policy Manual
for the
Doctrine & Credentials Committee
of the
MoArk Presbytery of General Baptists

Dated: March 24, 2006

Purpose of this Committee:

- To examine all candidates for membership into the MoArk Presbytery as to their meeting the qualifications as stipulated by the Constitution of this body.
- To encourage both those who are members and those who are seeking membership in this body.
- To assist in their assimilation into our body through a mentoring/orientation program.

Members of this Committee:

This Committee is made up of five members who will serve on a 5 year rotation basis. The Presbytery shall each year elect a new man to replace the one man coming off of this committee each year. (Article III)

The Committee in its first meeting, shall choose a man to chair this committee.

In accord with constitutional requirements, no one can be re-elected to another continuous five (5) year term without taking at least one year off. (Article IV)

Duties of this Committee:

We are to examine:

- Ordained men who are transferring their membership from another General Baptist Presbytery upon the reception a letter of request from one of our member churches.
- Men coming before us for examination for licensing as a Minister of the Gospel upon the reception a letter of request from one of our member churches.
- Men coming before us for examination for Ordination as a Deacon upon the reception a letter of request from one of our member churches.
- If a ordained minister is simply transferring his membership from one of our member churches to another, then we do not need to examine him, but a letter from the member church should be sent to the Presbytery Clerk and forwarded to this body so that our records may be kept up to date.

Procedures:

I. Licensing of a Minister going into the Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- A. We must first received a letter of request from a member church who is asking for the candidate's beginning orientation.
 - This request must come within 30 days of a Church's Conference meeting so that we may give the candidate the necessary information to orientate him as to the education requirements, any required doctrinal information, give him a set of questions that he will be required to answer before ordination and assign him to a mentor or help him to choose a mentor to assist and encourage him through the process towards Ordination.
- B. He must reappear before this committee at least annually for the purpose of reporting on his progress towards ordination.
- C. He must appear for one final examination when all requirements for Ordination have been met and the Church has made the proper request for doing so.

II. Ordination of a Minister.

- A. The Church, upon completion of the constitutional requirements, shall send a letter of request to the Presbytery in care of this Committee, stating their desire for the Ordination of said candidate with a stipulation as to the date in which they desire their candidate's ordination. (While Deacons are permitted to be ordained in the local church, no such allowance to date has be afforded to the Minister.) This letter must be sent to this body within 30 days of the regular session of the Presbytery in order for this committee to consider him for ordination.
- B. The Committee shall then examine the candidate as to his fulfillment of all constitutional requirements and to examine his response to the questions given to him during orientation.
- C. The Committee shall make the appropriate recommendations to the MoArk Presbytery once full and complete examination of said candidate has been completed.

III. Ordination of a Deacon.

- A. We must first received a letter of request from a member church who is asking for the candidate's beginning orientation.
- This request must come within 30 days of a Church's Conference meeting so that we may give the candidate the necessary information to orientate him as to the education requirements, any required doctrinal information, give him a set of questions that he will be required to answer before ordination and assign him to a mentor to assist and encourage him through the process towards Ordination.
- B. A Deacon is only in service to the Church in which he is ordained. If he leaves the Church in which he was ordained, the next congregation is not obligated to accept him as a deacon unless they choose to. His former congregation should send a letter to the Clerk of the MoArk Presbytery to inform them of the Deacon's removal from their roll.
- C. The Church, upon completion of the constitutional requirements, shall send a letter of request to the Presbytery in care of this Committee, stating their desire for the Ordination of said candidate with a stipulation as to the date and place in which they desire their candidate's ordination.
- D. This committee shall, upon examination of the candidate make the appropriate recommendation to the Presbytery body in its Regular Session.

IV. Acceptance of New Members coming into MoArk Presbytery.

- A. After a Church has accepted a new Pastor, the church must send him for the examination of his credentials to the Doctrine and Credential's Committee for review. (Article 10 of the Association Constitution)
1. If he has been ordained from another General Baptist Presbytery, so long as no doctrinal or moral issue is found that is contrary to General Baptist Doctrine and he has met all of our educational requirements, and a letter of recommendation is received from his former Presbytery, then he will be accepted into our body. (Article 5)
 2. If he has been ordained from a Non-General Baptist Association, but one that is similar in doctrine, he will be

questioned to verify said doctrine, the circumstances around his ordination and so long as no doctrinal or moral issue is found that is contrary to General Baptist Doctrine and he has met all of our educational requirements, and a letter of recommendation is received from his former Presbytery, if all is found to be in compliance with our Doctrine and Standards, he will be accepted into our body.

3. If he has been ordained from a Non-General Baptist Presbytery Body and it is not from an presbyterial body similar in doctrine and / or is of an Independent body, then he will be required to go through our Ordination Process which will include the studies we require with consideration made in terms of the studies he can show that he has all ready completed that are similar in nature.

V. Transference of Membership from one General Baptist Church to another within the MoArk Association.

- A. This is simply a matter of record keeping. The Clerk should make the necessary change following a letter of such change from the member church.

SPECIAL PROCEDURES:

I. In the Case of a Divorced Individual, these procedures will be followed.

- A. In the event that a candidate for licensing, membership, or ordination has been married and divorced, special consideration will be given to his examination. All sin being equal, divorce and remarriage prior to conversion is forgiven as is all other sins. If the divorce occurs after one's conversion, each case must be investigated and decided upon its own issues and merits, and only then will any recommendation be made to the clerk for further action by the entire body or the presbytery. (Other qualifications of the Presbytery must be met.) (MoArk Presbytery Constitution Article 9)
 1. If further examination is necessary, this committee may require the candidate to provide documentation and / or witnesses to support their position.

II. In the Case of an Individual whose doctrinal beliefs are in conflict with General Baptist' Doctrine, the following procedures have been practiced.

- A. If a man's responses to this Committee suggest and/or clearly state that he is doctrinal conflict with General Baptist Doctrine, then this committee must recommend that such candidate is not to be licensed or ordained and therefore denied acceptance into our body.

Mentoring Process:

- I. We will identify those Mature Minister's and Deacons who are willing to take the ministerial licentiate and/or deacon candidate under his wing and seek to develop a relationship with him, offering him encouragement, advice and guidance throughout his training.
- II. The Mentor will also be responsible for assisting the licentiate / candidate in the completion of his studies as required by the MoArk Presbytery Constitution. The licentiate / candidate is to make a report on each of his required materials and give it to his mentor for evaluation.
- III. The mentor shall give a report of the progress of the licentiate / candidate to the Doctrine and Credentials Committee before the session in which he will be eligible to be ordained.
- IV. The licentiate / candidate shall be provided opportunity to preach at least once per month in one of our sister churches and is expected to willingly participate as part of his training. Each church will be asked to fill out a response form following the sermon and return it to the Director of Preaching Services.
 1. A Director of Preaching Services will be established through the Doctrine & Credential's Committee and will be responsible to setup preaching opportunities for the licentiates of the MoArk Presbytery with Sister Churches within the local association of General Baptist and / or other General Baptist Churches if necessary.
 2. The Director of Preaching Services shall recommend that the churches at the time contact is made that they give the licentiate an honorarium to compensate him for traveling expenses of at least \$25.00.

Church's Responsibility:

- I. **Each member church will make sure that the candidate they are sending is in compliance with General Baptist Doctrine and in agreement with the requirements set forth in the Constitutions of both the MoArk Association and Presbytery.**

II. A letter of request for Orientation of said candidate, must be sent to the MoArk Presbytery's Doctrine and Credential Committee within 30 days of candidate being set aside by the member church in Church Conference.

- He will be given a list of examination questions that he must answer and return to the Doctrine and Credential's Committee prior to his final examination for Ordination.
- He will be given instructions in terms of the educational requirements as stated in the MoArk Minute Book.
- He will be placed with a mentor who will oversee his progress and make a progress report to the Doctrine and Credential's Committee prior to each Presbyterial Session.
- A Deacon Candidate must be set aside for a period of not less than six (6) months in which he must complete his training and cannot officiate over communion.
- A ministerial licentiate can be re-licensed each year so long as the request is made by his local church and he is showing progress towards the completion of all the ordination requirements. After all requirements have been met, the church may request his ordination.

III. Once all requirements for Ordination have been met, the Church must send a letter of request to both the Clerk of the MoArk Presbytery and the Chairman of the of the Doctrine & Credential's Committee, 30 days prior to the setting of the Presbytery, requesting him to be examined one final time by this committee and should stipulate date, time and place for the desired Ordination.

- A. Ministers are ordained in the Regular Session of the MoArk Presbytery while Deacons may choose to either be ordained at the current session or at their home churches at the discretion of the local church body.