Circle of the Elders

This Grace Bible Churches

Bishop and Deacon Credentialing and Ordination Manual

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THIS GRACE BIBLE CHURCHES

A PAULINE DISPENSATIONAL ASSEMBLY

BISHOP & DEACON QUALIFICATIONS, CREDENTIALING & ORDINATION MANUAL

King James Bible (KJB) - Final Written Authority

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PREAMBLE

This Grace Bible Churches establishes this Bishop & Deacon Qualifications, Credentialing & Ordination Manual to provide an orderly ecclesiastical process for examining, recognizing, credentialing, ordaining, maintaining, reviewing, suspending, restoring, and withdrawing ministry credentials. This Manual is subordinate to the King James Bible, the Constitution, Bylaws, Statement of Faith & Foundational Doctrine, Circle of the Elders Charter, and Code of Doctrine, Conduct & Ecclesiastical Discipline.

> *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." - 1 Timothy 3:1 KJB*

ARTICLE I - RECOGNIZED OFFICES

TGBC recognizes the ecclesiastical offices of Bishop and Deacon. TGBC does not establish Pastor as a separate ecclesiastical office. Participation in the Circle of the Elders does not create a third ordained office.

ARTICLE II - GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF QUALIFICATION

Ecclesiastical office is not conferred merely by desire, popularity, family relationship, financial standing, length of attendance, or possession of a certificate. A candidate shall be examined and proved according to Scripture, TGBC foundational doctrine, present conduct, household testimony, maturity, and ability appropriate to the office.

Ordination recognizes demonstrated qualification. It does not manufacture spiritual qualification, impart salvation, confer apostolic succession, or create authority above the Word of God.

ARTICLE III - BISHOP QUALIFICATIONS

A candidate for Bishop shall be examined according to the Pauline qualifications identified by TGBC in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 KJB. Examination shall include blamelessness; marital faithfulness understood within TGBC's adopted 'husband of one wife' position; vigilance; sobriety; good behaviour; hospitality; ability to teach; freedom from disqualifying bondage or violence; freedom from greed for filthy lucre; patient and non-contentious conduct; responsible rule of his own house; spiritual maturity; good report; faithful stewardship; and ability to hold fast the faithful word and teach sound doctrine.

The complete man and his present qualification shall be considered. A bare history of divorce or remarriage shall not be treated as an automatic universal disqualification without examination of present conduct, doctrine, household, testimony, and circumstances.

ARTICLE IV - DEACON QUALIFICATIONS

A candidate for Deacon shall be examined according to the Pauline qualifications identified by TGBC in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 KJB. He shall demonstrate gravity, truthfulness, sobriety, freedom from greed for filthy lucre, faithfulness to the doctrine, a clear conscience, marital faithfulness as understood by TGBC, responsible household rule, and faithful service. A candidate shall first be proved before being recognized in the office.

ARTICLE V - DOCTRINAL QUALIFICATION

Every candidate shall affirm the King James Bible as TGBC's final written authority; the Gospel of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; salvation by grace through faith apart from works; right division; the distinctive apostleship of Paul; the revelation of the Mystery; the Dispensation of the Grace of God; the distinction between Israel's prophetic program and the Body of Christ; and TGBC's teaching concerning the one Body, one new man, and new creature.

A candidate shall also affirm TGBC's positions concerning water baptism and the Lord's Supper and shall not seek to merge TGBC into an external denomination or ecclesiastical authority contrary to its Constitution.

ARTICLE VI - APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION

A man seeking recognition should submit sufficient information for a meaningful ecclesiastical examination. The record may include his full name and contact information; office sought; testimony of salvation; doctrinal affirmation; ministry history; local assembly relationship; relevant household information; prior credentials; references when appropriate; and disclosure of material circumstances bearing upon qualification.

No candidate acquires an office merely by submitting an application. The application initiates examination only.

ARTICLE VII - EXAMINATION

The examining authority shall review the candidate's doctrine, conduct, testimony, household rule, maturity, ability appropriate to the office, agreement with TGBC governing documents, and any substantial matter bearing upon present qualification. Examination may occur in person, by telephone, by video conference, through written questions, or by a combination of reliable methods.

Questions and accusations shall be handled carefully. Ordinary human imperfection, correctable error, personality differences, or temporary difficulty shall not automatically be treated as disqualifying misconduct.

ARTICLE VIII - EXAMINING AUTHORITY

During the natural life of the Founding Bishop, credentialing and ordination procedures shall be administered under authority consistent with the Constitution and procedures approved by the Founding Bishop, with assistance from qualified members of the Circle of the Elders or other persons designated under TGBC governing documents. After the historical Founding Bishop office has ceased, the Overseeing Bishop and Circle shall administer credentialing according to the controlling governing documents.

ARTICLE IX - DECISION AND RECORD

Following examination, the authorized ecclesiastical decision shall be documented. The record should identify the candidate, office, date, examining persons, determination, and any conditions or limitations. Approval shall be entered into TGBC's permanent ecclesiastical records.

ARTICLE X - ORDINATION

When a qualified candidate is approved for ordination, TGBC may conduct an ordination service or formal act of recognition consistent with its doctrine and assembly practice. The act of ordination is ecclesiastical recognition of a man found qualified for the work of the office.

TGBC may issue an Official Ordination Certificate bearing the candidate's name, office, date of ordination, appropriate signatures, and TGBC identification. A certificate is evidence of the recorded ecclesiastical action and is not independent of the underlying permanent record.

ARTICLE XI - CREDENTIALS AND LETTERS OF RECOGNITION

TGBC may issue ordination certificates, ministry credentials, letters of recognition, good-standing letters, or other appropriate ecclesiastical records. Credentials remain subject to the governing documents of TGBC and do not create ownership rights in the TGBC name, property, records, or ministry.

ARTICLE XII - CONTINUING QUALIFICATION

Ordination does not permanently guarantee qualification regardless of later doctrine or conduct. Bishops and Deacons remain subject to the Pauline qualifications applicable to their offices and to TGBC's Code of Doctrine, Conduct & Ecclesiastical Discipline.

ARTICLE XIII - REVIEW, SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL AND RESTORATION

Credentials may be reviewed when substantial evidence raises a question of serious doctrinal departure, disqualifying conduct, abandonment of responsibility, misuse of authority, misuse of church property or funds, or other substantial cause recognized by TGBC governing documents. Any suspension, withdrawal, restoration, or other determination shall follow fair ecclesiastical procedures and shall be permanently recorded.

Removal from a particular administrative assignment or from participation in the Circle of the Elders does not automatically withdraw ordination or credentials unless a separate credentialing determination is made.

ARTICLE XIV - CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS

Credentialing files may contain sensitive ecclesiastical and personal information and may be limited to persons with legitimate responsibility. Confidentiality shall not be used to falsify records, conceal serious wrongdoing, or obstruct lawful reporting. Permanent records shall preserve the material ecclesiastical action while avoiding unnecessary disclosure of unrelated private information.

ARTICLE XV - OVERSEEING BISHOP

After the natural death of the Founding Bishop, a candidate for Overseeing Bishop must first be qualified for the office of Bishop under this Manual and must satisfy the additional succession requirements contained in the Founding Bishop & Succession Declaration. No Overseeing Bishop may claim or receive the historical title Founding Bishop.

ARTICLE XVI - FORMS AND ADMINISTRATION

TGBC may maintain subordinate forms for application, doctrinal affirmation, examination notes, credential approval, ordination record, credential status, restoration, and withdrawal. Forms are administrative records and shall not contradict this Manual or superior governing documents.

ADOPTION

Upon formal adoption, this Manual shall be entered in the Master Governing Document Register and retained among the permanent ecclesiastical records of TGBC.

Founding Bishop: Wesley Scott Ray

Signature: _____

Date: _____