

Guide for Writing an Ordination Paper

Introduction

Within the Ordination Protocol, one very important step is the development of a paper that describes both experience and beliefs. This paper will be submitted first to the regional minister or other assigned coach. The coach will review the paper and make suggestions and recommendations for improvement. The paper will then be submitted to the members of the Credentials Committee who will read it and prepare to interview the candidate. Once again, suggestions and recommendations for improvement will be made and the paper will be edited prior to the calling of an Ordination Council. In the event that the Credentials Committee recommends process continuation, a council will be called and the final draft of the paper will be sent to the participating churches for distribution to the council delegates. At the time of the Ordination Council, the candidate will read the paper and entertain questions. It is based on both the written and verbal expression of beliefs that the council will make its recommendation regarding ordination.

Given the significance of the ordination paper in relation to the entire protocol, it is imperative that appropriate care and attention be given to the development of this document. With this in mind, the following guidelines are to be followed as an ordination candidate prepares the paper. Adherence, even from the earliest stages of development, will facilitate the process and minimize the amount of time and attention absorbed by the coach, Credentials Committee and Ordination Council in editorial discussion.

With this in mind, the following guidelines are designed to enable the candidate to express himself or herself and write in an appropriate manner.

[Title of Your Paper Here]



[leave 13 spaces]



**A STATEMENT OF TESTIMONY, CALL AND BELIEFS
PRESENTED TO**

[First Draft – The NPR Regional Minister or other coach]

[Second Draft – The NPR Credentials Committee]

[Third Draft – The NPR Ordination Council]



[leave 14 spaces]



**In Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Ordination
In the Alberta Baptist Association**



[leave eight spaces]



by

[Insert Your Name Here]

[Insert Name of Place of Ordination]

[Insert Month and Year Here]

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Biographical Sketch	1
Testimony of Conversion.....	1
Call to Ministry	3
Preparation for Ministry.....	4
Theology of Ministry	5
Statement of Beliefs	7
God.....	7
Father	7
Son	8
Holy Spirit.....	9
Scripture.....	10
Salvation	12
Church.....	14
Ordinances	15
Eschatology.....	16
Current Issues.....	17
Conclusion	20

1. Writing Style

A. Font Type – Times New Roman

B. Font Size – 12

C. Line Spacing – Double

D. Margins

Top – 1”

Bottom – 1”

Left – 1.25”

Right – 1.25”

E. Page Numbers – Bottom Centre

F. Outline Format

1.

A.

1)

2)

B.

2.

G. Capitalizations – General rules:

1) Titles are not capitalized unless used with a name, i.e.: pastor, Pastor Bob Jones. The exception to this rule is in relation to Deity, i.e.: Son, Son Jesus Christ

2) Pronouns are not capitalized, i.e.: him, his. The exception to this rule is when the pronoun refers to Deity, i.e.: Him (God), His (Jesus).

3) Words referring to holy writings are capitalized, i.e.: Scripture, Bible, the Word.

4) Titles of religious denominational groups are capitalized, i.e.: Baptist, Catholic.

5) Capitalization of descriptors is mixed, i.e.: the Almighty God, God is almighty.

H. Numbers – Single digit numbers are written out (one, not 1) unless in a reference (Rom 5:1). Multiple digit numbers are not written out unless used to begin a sentence (Twelve disciples ate with Jesus, not 12 disciples ate with Jesus), or unless used in a reference (Rom 12:12).

2. Writing Content

It is the purpose of the ordination paper to express details and information about the candidate in a way that all who read it will understand who the candidate is and what they believe. However, it is not the purpose of the paper to be exhaustive. With this in mind, one must carefully observe the following:

A. Narrate – The paper should be written and presented in a narrative format that is easy to read and understand. Whenever possible avoid the use of bullets, rather use complete sentences. The candidate is telling a story, therefore it should be written and presented conversationally.

B. Summarize – Once again an ordination paper cannot contain everything the candidate believes on every subject, rather the paper expresses the trajectory of belief on a limited number of topics. Likewise, the list of topics should be in keeping with the main theological distinctives or concerns of the denomination

and region in which the ordination is to take place. This being said, not only should the paper be easily understood, even by the average church layperson, but it should be reasonable in length. The writer must also keep in mind that the final draft is to be read and discussed public ally in a meeting that will last two to three hours. Aside from the biographical section of the paper, the doctrinal portion should be 12 to 15 pages in length.

- C. Documentation – Given the purpose and nature of the ordination paper it is recommended that quoting other sources and authorities be avoided. The Credentials Committee and Ordination Council are not interested in what a noted theologian or favorite author believe. Rather their only concern is what the candidate believes. While it is permissible to include a brief quote, it is not recommended. If however the candidate finds quoting unavoidable, proper recognition of the source is required in the form of a footnote citation and bibliography. The acceptable format is as follows:

Footnote:

Single Author

Sydney H. T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 15.

Multiple Authors

Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 9.

Bibliography:

Single Author

Page, Sydney H. T. *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.

Multiple Authors

Grenz, Stanley J., and John R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

3. Plagiarism

While it is understood that the ordination paper is a personal expression of experience and beliefs, and while quoting is not recommended except in limited circumstances, it must also be noted that if and when the writer borrows material from another source appropriate credit must be given. Simply put plagiarism exists any time a writer presents material as if it were their own when in fact they have borrowed it from another. The Taylor Seminary Guide for Research and Writing expresses the following:

There is a fundamental rule of academic life: everyone must always conscientiously acknowledge his or her intellectual debts by giving credit where credit is due. Failure to do so is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is universally recognized as a serious academic offence, and students found plagiarizing may be assigned a failing course grade, or be subject to more serious discipline or even dismissal. To plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written something original which in fact you have borrowed from another without acknowledging that other person's work. Similarly, copying another person's work or submitting the same material for credit in more than one course without permission is strictly forbidden and will have serious consequences.

A common misperception among students is that notes are required only when directly quoting someone. Documentation is actually required whenever you make use of someone else's ideas – even if you use your own words to express them. Every time you rely on another writer's way of conceptualizing a matter, you must note your intellectual debt. That is not to say that you always need to specify the source that you learned some information from. Items of common knowledge (generally accepted facts that can be found in almost every source on a given topic) do not have to be attributed to any one author. An over-documented essay gives the impression that you did not read enough to discover that much of the information you are citing is actually common knowledge. On the other hand, an under-documented essay gives the impression that you need to pretend that you are capable of thinking for yourself, and gets you in a lot of trouble for plagiarism. A properly documented essay will accurately convey the full extent of your research.

Although this statement has been written for use in an academic situation, it reinforces the seriousness of plagiarism as an act of dishonesty when one person steals the work of another and presents it as their own. In the unlikely and unfortunate event, that plagiarism is discovered the ordination process will come to an immediate halt.

4. Abbreviations

While there may be few cases when abbreviations are used, there are a limited number of rules to keep in mind.

A. Denomination or Association – The abbreviations NAB, MBA or NCA may be used if at the first occurrence of the title the abbreviation is indicated in brackets, i.e.: North American Baptist Conference (NAB); Manitoba Baptist Association (MBA); North Central Association (NCA)

Although it has become fashionable and comfortable to use abbreviations one must be careful not to assume that every reader will understand. That being said, it is common and appropriate to use abbreviations in relation to books of the Bible, especially when identifying where personal beliefs are rooted. The proper abbreviations of books of the Bible is as follows (Note the absence of periods):

Old Testament

Gen	Genesis	Song	Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)
Exod	Exodus	Isa	Isaiah
Lev	Leviticus	Jer	Jeremiah
Num	Numbers	Lam	Lamentations
Deut	Deuteronomy	Ezek	Ezekiel
Josh	Joshua	Dan	Daniel
Judg	Judges	Hos	Hosea
Ruth	Ruth	Amos	Amos
1-2 Sam	1-2 Samuel	Joel	Joel
1-2 Kgs	1-2 Kings	Obad	Obadiah
1-2 Chr	1-2 Chronicles	Jonah	Jonah
Ezra	Ezra	Mic	Micah
Neh	Nehemiah	Nah	Nahum
Esth	Esther	Hab	Habakkuk
Job	Job	Zeph	Zephaniah
Ps/Pss	Psalms	Hag	Haggai
Prov	Proverbs	Zech	Zechariah
Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mal	Malachi

New Testament

Matt	Matthew	1-2 Thess	1-2 Thessalonians
Mk	Mark	1-2 Tim	1-2 Timothy
Lk	Luke	Titus	Titus
Jn	John	Phlm	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb	Hebrews
Ro	Romans	Jas	James
1-2 Cor	1-2 Corinthians	1-2 Pet	1-2 Peter
Gal	Galatians	1-2-3 Jn	1-2-3 John
Eph	Ephesians	Jude	Jude
Phil	Philippians	Rev	Revelation
Col	Colossians		

Credit for this summary: Regional Office, Alberta Baptist Association, North American Baptist Conference. Changes have been made to reflect Northern Plains Regional realities.

