

QUALIFICATIONS, DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES FOR CREDENTIALLED MINISTERS

Ministry Described

Christ's gifts to the Church include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers (Ephesians 4:11), exhorters, administrators, leaders, and helpers (Romans 12:6-8). We understand God's call to these ministry gifts is totally within His sovereign discretion without regard to gender, race, disability, or national origin.

Three classifications of ministry are recognized and transferable: the ordained minister, the licensed minister, and the Christian worker. All ordained, and licensed ministers holding current ministerial credentials are authorized to perform the ordinances and ceremonies (sacerdotal functions) of the church.

Basic Qualifications

The following qualifications pertain to all applicants for ministerial recognition:

- a. Salvation.** Testimony to having experienced the new birth (John 3:5-7).
- b. Holy Spirit.** Testimony to having experienced the baptism in the Spirit. (Mark 1:9-13). (Acts 1:4-8). Only after baptism in the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost were the disciples thrust into public ministry. From that point, their ministries were carried out with a striking sense of the Spirit's power and wisdom.
- b. Evidence of call.** Clear evidence of a divine call to the ministry, evidenced by a personal conviction, confirmed by the work of the Spirit and the testimony of fellow ministers.
- c. Christian character.** A blameless Christian life and a good report of those who are without (Titus 1:7-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-13).
- e. Doctrinal position.** A thorough understanding of and agreement with our doctrinal position as contained in the Statement of Fundamental Truths.
- f. West Coast Bible College & Seminary polity.** A satisfactory working knowledge of the principles, practices, and purposes of the West Coast Bible College & Seminary Credentialing Committee.
- g. Voluntary cooperation and commitment.** By voluntary it is meant that, upon learning the principles, doctrines, and practices of the West Coast Bible College & Seminary Credentialing Committee, and by seeing the benefits of being associated with such an organization, persons of their own free choice decide to become members, and subscribe to all which the organization stands.
- h. Basic requirements for all credentials.** Any level of formal academic achievement (diploma or degree) shall not be a requirement for credentials; however, credential applicants shall meet the following criteria:
 - (1) **Complete and submit:** An online application, required fees, character references, & pastoral recommendation as stated on the application. In order to stream line our administrative process and keep cost low, we do not offer any paper applications. The whole process is online.
 - (2) **Formal Recommendation for Credentials:** Be recommended for a credential level by a denomination, denomination committee or two currently ordained pastors as qualifying for credentials through self-study and ministerial experience. Such candidates shall have a proven and fruitful ministry of substantial duration. Requests from a church or currently ordained Pastor for such a candidate shall be presented to the Credentialing Committee office and may be granted on a case-by-case basis. All candidates must complete all requirements for the application process.
- i. Mandatory screening.** All applicants for ministerial credentials shall be screened through a designated screening agency established by the Credentialing Committee office. Screening shall be done by the Credentialing Committee office once online application & fees have been submitted.
- j. Marriage status.** We approve of any married persons holding ministerial credentials with the West Coast Bible College & Seminary Credentialing Committee. The Credentialing Committee office shall have the authority to determine whether an applicant qualifies regarding a former marriage, or if a former marriage ended prior to conversion.
- k. Eligibility of women.** Women who meet the qualifications for ministerial credentials are eligible.
- l. Ministers from other organizations.** If a minister from another reputable body desires to affiliate with the West Coast Bible College & Seminary, the Credentialing Committee is under no obligation to accept, but will view each candidate on his or her own merits as to the level of credentials to be granted. Such applicants shall be required to:
 - (1) Complete and submit an online application, references, recommendations, and required fees.
 - (2) Submit a recommendation from the body with which the minister was formerly affiliated. If such is not available, submit three letters of recommendation from reputable ordained ministers within the applicant's former credentialing body.
 - (3) All previously ordained ministers that are approved shall receive recognition as ordained ministers. All other

applicants that are approved shall receive the appropriate level of credential recognition.

Specific Qualifications

a. Residency requirements of applicants. Applicants for all credentials must be residents of or hold credentials in the United States of America.

b. Christian Worker License.

- (1) Applicants must be 18 years of age or older for certified ministers.
- (2) All currently enrolled W.C.B.C.S students are eligible for a Christian Worker License.
- (3) **General requirements.** They shall show a heart for the ministry. They shall show evidence of a divine call. They shall devote full or part time to Christian ministry and may remain under the supervision of a credentialed pastor, minister, or mentor of the gospel.
- (4) **Pastoral requirements.** In the event a certified minister is serving in the position of pastor, he or she shall be expected to advance to the ministry license level within 1 year of acceptance of the pastorate. Any exceptions shall be at the discretion of the Credentialing Committee & office.
- (5) **Provisional Exceptions.** Christian Worker Credentials may be issued to a person who has not met all the credentialing requirements but who is deemed by the Credentialing Committee office to be essential to a church or a ministry.

c. Licensed Minister. Qualifications for license shall include clear evidence of a divine call, character suitable for that calling, practical ministry experience, and an evident purpose to devote one's life in service to the proclamation of the gospel. Have completed at least 1 year at the Christian Worker level and at least 30 hours of collegiate level education or schooling approved by the Credentialing Committee. In addition:

- (1) Applicants must be 19 years of age or older for licensed ministers.
- (2) All West Coast Bible College & Seminary graduates are eligible for a Licensed Minister Credential.
- (3) **General requirements.** They shall show a heart for the ministry. They shall show evidence of a divine call. They shall devote full time to Christian ministry and proclamation of the gospel.
- (4) **Pastoral requirements.** In the event a licensed minister is serving in the position of pastor, he or she shall be expected to advance to the ordained ministers level within 1 year of acceptance of the pastorate. Any exceptions shall be at the discretion of the Credentialing Committee & office.
- (5) All West Coast Bible College & Seminary graduates are eligible for a licensed minister credential upon completion of a degree.
- (6) **Provisional Exception.** License Minister Credentials may be issued to a person who has not met all the credentialing requirements but who is deemed by the Credentialing Committee office to be essential to a church or a ministry. The reason must be full time & ministry driven. A person who has been granted the License Minister Credentials on a provisional basis must meet the qualifications for an ordained minister within a 2-year period.

d. Ordained Minister. Qualifications for ordination are outlined in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9). Have completed at least 2 years at the Licensed Minister level. In addition:

- (1) Applicants must be 21 years of age or older for ordained ministers.
- (2) All W.C.B.C.S graduates are eligible for an Ordained Minister Credential.
- (3) No person may be ordained to the ministry until he or she has shown evidence of a divine call and has held a Licensed Minister Credential for a minimum of two years and has been actively engaged in ministry and proclamation of the gospel.
- (4) In order to maintain active status, ordained ministers shall be engaged in viable ministry and proclamation of the gospel except for cases of disability or retirement.
- (5) **Provisional Exception.**

e. Exceptions to requirements for credentials. The Credentialing Committee, upon request by the West Coast Bible College & Seminary Board of Directors, President or the Credentialing Committee office and where exceptional circumstances exist, may waive the requirements for an applicant to qualify for issuance of the ministerial credential. Credentials may be issued to a person who has not met all the credentialing requirements but who is deemed by the Credentialing Committee office to be essential to a church or a ministry. The reason must be full time & ministry driven.

Credential Renewals and Reinstatements

a. Expiration date. All licenses are valid for one year and must be renewed annually. The renewing of credentials is the responsibility of the individual. It is the individual responsibility to go online at www.westcostbiblecollege.org and submit the application and fee.

b. Grace period of 14 days. All who have not renewed their licenses online before 14 days after the month license was issued shall be considered delinquent. They shall be required to pay a late fee of \$25 up until 14 days after the month the license was issued.

c. Reinstatement of lapsed minister. Renewal applications that are not submitted online by 14 days after the month license was issued shall be recorded as lapsed. They must make application and pay a nonrefundable fee of \$75. Ministers who do not renew their credentials will not be on the list of ministers. Ministers who elect to remove themselves shall submit a letter of resignation to the Credentialing Committee office.

d. Reinstatement of other than dismissed minister. The application & annual fee must be submitted online and be accompanied with a nonrefundable fee of \$75.

e. Surrender of credentials. In all cases the minister shall be requested to surrender his or her credential (Certificate of Ordination, Ministry License, Christian Worker License) and current card to the Credentialing Committee office.

f. Ministerial Status Changes All changes in a minister's status must be reported to Credentialing Committee office.

Action of Ministerial Licensing Committee

The West Coast Bible College & Seminary Board of Directors delegates to the West Coast Bible College & Credentialing Committee the authority to examine, approve, and recommend candidates who qualify as certified ministers, licensed ministers, and ordained ministers. Credentialing Committee shall make final approval and issuance of the ministerial credential. All ordination services, with the laying on of hands, shall take place under the local church at where the certified ministers, licensed ministers, and ordained ministers reside. The Credentialing Committee shall provide online a suggested order of service for the local church lead pastor to conduct.

Certificates

The Credentialing Committee office is authorized to issue ordination certificates, ministry licenses, and Christian worker licenses to all properly qualified and approved candidates.

Official List

Active ministers. The official list of all credential holders shall be compiled by the Credentialing Committee office and published for the convenience of all and any fellowships. This official list shall be revised annually and shall contain the names of those who are engaged in active ministry.

Ministerial Relations

Cooperation with other fellowships and denominations. Ministers shall be expected to cooperate with other fellowships and denomination in which they work. It is recommended as a standard of proper practice that all ministers conform to the financial policy of the denomination or fellowship with which they work.

Privileged Communications

All ministers are encouraged to respect as sacred and confidential information confided to them while they are functioning in their ministerial capacities as spiritual counselors and are encouraged not to disclose such confidential information except with the permission of the confidant, to prevent the commission of a crime, or if required by law.

Christian Marriage

Marriage was established by God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18, 21-25) and confirmed by Jesus Christ to be a permanent relationship between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6). Christian marriage is a reflection of the love and purity between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:23-33). Even though some marriages may fall short of the biblical ideal, husbands and wives who devote themselves to God and find nurture and instruction in the body of Christ can realize the strength and blessing of God in their relationship.

DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED

LIST OF DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES DISAPPROVED

The Credentialing Committee has declared itself pertaining to disapproval of certain matters as follows:

Legalism

a. Matters of conscience. The Credentialing Committee realizes commitment to holy living sometimes results in sharp differences of opinion among believers on debatable matters of personal conscience. The Credentialing Committee disapproves the practice of pressing these debatable matters of personal conscience upon others (Romans 14:1-4).

b. Adding conditions to salvation. The Credentialing Committee strongly affirms that salvation is received through

repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). The Credentialing Committee disapproves any teaching or practice that seems to add conditions to salvation (Galatians 3:1-5).

Eschatological Errors

a. The restitution of all things. The Credentialing Committee understands the teaching of Acts 3:21, to limit the restoration to that of which the prophets have spoken, thus denying the universal redemption theory. We are opposed to all forms of universalism (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:10).

b. Setting a date for the Lord's return. It is unwise to teach that the Lord will come at some specified time, thereby setting a date for His appearing (Mark 13:32,33; Luke 12:37-40; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). It is also unwise to give out from the platform, or publish, visions of numbers and dates fixing the time of the second coming of the Lord.

c. Credentials jeopardized if made an issue. We recommend that those ministers who embrace any of the items listed refrain from preaching or teaching them. Should they persist in emphasizing these doctrines to the point of making them an issue, their license will be seriously affected.

Membership in Secret Orders

All ministers are requested to use their good influence among church members to dissuade them from such fraternal affiliations.

Divorce and Remarriage

a. Marriage entanglements before conversion. We recommend that these people be received into the membership of the local church and that their marriage complications be left in the hands of the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:17,20,24).

b. Ministerial credentials. If any married minister holding credentials if either minister or spouse is divorce and has repented of their sins and confessed them to their former spouse we believe they are then forgiven (1 Corinthians 7).

c. Performing marriage ceremonies

(1) **Same-sex ceremonies.** No minister shall perform any type of marriage, cohabitation, or covenant ceremony for persons who are of the same sex. Such a ceremony would endorse homosexuality which is a sin and strictly forbidden in God's Word (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26,27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:9-11). Any minister who performs a ceremony for these types of disapproved relations, unless innocently deceived into doing so, shall be dismissed.

(2) **Counsel.** A minister is urged to counsel people for marriage ceremonies with scriptural guidelines for Christian marriage prior to performing the ceremony. A minister may not perform ceremonies for persons who, in the minister's opinion, approach marriage without proper forethought and wisdom.

Abuses of Leadership

a. Tithing

We recognize the duty of tithing and urge all our people to pay tithes to God. In tithing, the ministers ought to be examples. We disapprove, however, of the teaching that all tithes necessarily should belong to the pastor for his or her support.

b. Violations of Ministerial Courtesy

All discourteous conduct is disapproved, and all ministers are advised against interfering with pastors in charge of churches.

c. Ministry in a Church

Ministers shall not be limited or restrained from entering open doors to preach.

d. Interdenominational Relationships

The Credentialing Committee encourages ministers or churches to fellowship with other Christians of like faith.

e. Divine Healing and Professional Medicine

The Credentialing Committee office disapproves of any credentialed minister counseling a believer to exclude medical advice and/or treatment when seeking prayer for physical healing.

Contact Information:

WCBBS
7459 S IH 35
Waco, TX 76706
Phone: 1-(800) 921-4561
Email: credentialing@westcoastbible.org
Email: info@westcoastbible.org