

Preamble

It is crucial in our ministry to the contemporary world that we provide various means for our churches to set apart people for specific roles in ministry which are recognized by the broader Baptist community. The call of God upon the life of a person to pastoral or specific ministries has historically been recognized within Baptist life by the setting apart of that person in the act of ordination. This action is usually associated with full time vocational ministry and is an affirmation by a local church of that call. (*Vocational is defined as being “officially called” to a particular ministry. The particular ministry could be any church, Association, or agency of Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada, a recognized chaplaincy ministry, or an interdenominational ministry. The call could be for full-time, part-time or interim ministry, whether paid or unpaid.*) In practice, ordination is usually sought by those entering pastoral, educational or chaplaincy roles within the church.

There is also the setting apart of a person as a Recognized Lay Leader. This action is usually associated with those who are involved in bi-vocational ministries or who choose, for various reasons, not to seek ordination.

The spiritual standards for both ordained and lay ministry include: a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; a conviction of a call to Christian ministry; a recognition of this call by the church of which the person is a member; a statement of doctrinal beliefs which testifies to the life of faith; and a quality of life in keeping with this faith. Once accepted as a Candidate for Ordained Pastoral Ministry or as a Candidate for Recognized Lay Leader, individuals will be held accountable to comply with the Ministerial Professional Standards adopted by the Convention.

SECTION 4: GENERAL REGULATIONS REGARDING RECOGNIZED LAY LEADERS

4.1 The Role of the Local Church

The issuing of a *Church License to Minister* is an expression of confidence in a person’s call to and suitability for lay leadership. It is important that the church exercise the utmost care and be thoroughly satisfied as to the qualities of mind, character and Christian experience which would fit a person for the important work of a *Recognized Lay Leader* (see Section 5.1).

4.2 The Role of the Association

The granting of an *Association Lay License to Minister* is an expression of confidence in a person’s call to lay leadership, their academic progress, and their suitability for ministry. It is important that the Association exercise the utmost care and be thoroughly satisfied as to the qualities of mind, character and Christian experience which would fit the person for the important work of a *Recognized Lay Leader* (see Section 5.4).

4.3 The Role of the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education (“the Board”)

- A. The Board of Ministerial Standards and Education interviews only those prospective Candidates who are experiencing a call to become a *Recognized Lay Leader* and who are intending to have their name listed on the Lay Leadership Registry upon completion of the Certificate in Lay Leadership. Prospective Candidates must hold a *Church License to Minister* from a Baptist church in fellowship with Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada or an *Association Lay License to Minister* prior to meeting with the Board. The Initial Interview is usually held prior to the commencement of studies, and the Recognition Interview usually takes place once the Candidate has graduated from the Certificate in Lay Leadership.
- B. In the Initial Interview, the Board will determine if the individual is to be accepted as a *Candidate for Lay Leadership* based upon their fitness for lay leadership including conversion, baptism by immersion* (except where precluded by medical condition), call to lay leadership, life and ministry experience, theology, overall suitability for lay leadership in The Convention, and alignment with the Convention's core values (see Section 5.3).
- C. In the Recognition Interview, the Board will examine the Candidate to determine if the individual is to be accepted as a *Recognized Lay Leader* based upon the completion of the academic requirements, their concept of ministry, their statement of faith, and their giftedness and suitability for lay leadership (see Section 5.5).
- D. The Board will respond to allegations of professional misconduct (see Ministerial Standards Document, Sections 5-6). Decisions of the Board relating to professional misconduct may be appealed (see Ministerial Standards Document, Section 7).
- E. The Board may receive and process letters requesting the renewal of lapsed recognition (see Section 5.5 G).

SECTION 5: CANDIDATE'S PROCESS TOWARD APPROVAL AS A RECOGNIZED LAY LEADER

5.1 Church License to Minister for Persons Preparing for Lay Leadership

- A. The first step on the part of persons desiring to be considered as a *Recognized Lay Leader* is to secure a *Church License to Minister* from the church where they are a member.
- B. The *Church License to Minister* is in effect both an affirmation and a recommendation. It is required that a person being considered:
 1. tell of their conversion, their call to lay ministry, their faith and life in Jesus Christ and their view of Christian doctrine with reference to the Bible and their understanding and substantial agreement with the 1905/06 Basis of Union, the foundational statement of agreed doctrine and church polity for the CAB;C;
 2. Give evidence of biblical knowledge and spiritual growth;

3. Have preached, taught and/or given leadership in the ministries of the church to determine their gifts for ministry;
 4. Demonstrate an ethical lifestyle appropriate to a lay leader, including family relationships;
 5. Give an account of their ministries in the church, how they have related to people, and how they have honoured their commitments; and
 6. Articulate their understanding of lay leadership and basic Baptist beliefs.
- C. A *Church License to Minister* should not be granted until the person has been a member of the church for at least one year.
- D. A *Church License to Minister* must be renewed annually. It remains valid as long as the church that grants it considers it valid, but may be rescinded by the church for just cause. It is the responsibility of the recipient to request an annual endorsement by the church until such time as an *Association Lay License to Minister* is granted.

5.2 Educational Standards for Acceptance as a Recognized Lay Leader

Those wishing to become a *Recognized Lay Leader* shall successfully complete the requirements for the Certificate in Lay Leadership.

5.3 Acceptance as a Candidate for Recognized Lay Leadership

- A. A person proceeding toward becoming a Recognized Lay Leader shall normally apply to appear before the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education for an Initial Interview prior to the commencement of studies. (For application forms, please contact the Executive Minister's office.)
- B. In order to appear before the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education for an Initial Interview, the applicant shall have a current *Church License to Minister* from a Baptist church in fellowship with Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada or a current *Association Lay License to Minister*.

5.4 Association Lay License to Minister

- A. A person who as a first step has held a *Church License to Minister* for at least one year and is sensing a call to prepare for lay leadership, whose intention is not set toward ordination, and who has some lay leadership experience, may apply to obtain an *Association Lay License to Minister*.
- B. The *Association Lay License to Minister* is in effect both an affirmation and a recommendation. It is required that a person being considered:
1. tell of their conversion, their baptism by immersion* (except where precluded by medical condition), their call to lay leadership, their faith and life in Jesus Christ and their view of Christian doctrine with reference to the Bible and their

- understanding and substantial agreement with the 1905/06 Basis of Union, the foundational statement of agreed doctrine and church polity for the CABC;
2. Give evidence of biblical knowledge and spiritual growth;
 3. Have given leadership in the ministries of the church to determine their gifts for ministry;
 4. Demonstrate an ethical lifestyle appropriate to a lay leader, including family relationships;
 5. Give an account of their ministries in the church, how they have related to people, and how they have honoured their commitments; and
 6. Articulate their understanding of lay leadership and basic Baptist beliefs.
- C. Such a License may be granted on the following conditions:
1. One year has passed since the applicant was granted an un-rescinded *Church License to Minister*;
 2. The applicant is a member of a church in fellowship with Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada; and
 3. The applicant has given evidence of satisfactory lay leadership.
- D. The Licensing Committee of an Association will examine all applicants for an *Association Lay License to Minister* according to the standards and requirements contained in the above paragraphs and their commitment to the aims, core values and activities of the Association and the Convention.
- E. Application for renewal of an *Association Lay License to Minister* is to be made annually until the applicant has been approved and registered as a *Recognized Lay Leader*. Failure to renew the *Association Lay License to Minister* will require that the person secure a letter of commendation from the Deacons of the church of which they are a member. Before being interviewed for the purpose of having the *Association Lay License to Minister* reinstated, this letter must be presented to the appropriate Association committee.
- F. Upon renewal by an Association, the *Association Lay License to Minister* is to be signed again by the Moderator and Clerk of the Association.

5.5 Becoming a Recognized Lay Leader

- A. A person within the Convention who has been accepted by the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education as a *Candidate for Lay Leadership* may seek approval by the Convention through the Board as a *Recognized Lay Leader*.
- B. In order to appear before the Board for a Recognition Interview, the Candidate shall have a current *Association Lay License to Minister*.
- C. Both male and female Candidates will be eligible to become a *Recognized Lay Leader*.

- D.** Heterosexuals engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage (as defined in the resolution “Statement Affirming a Christian View of Marriage” adopted by Assembly in 1999) and practicing homosexuals (including lesbians), shall not be eligible to become a *Recognized Lay Leader*.
- E.** Following the Recognition Interview the Board will determine whether or not the Candidate qualifies to become a *Recognized Lay Leader*. The decision of the Board shall be sent to the Candidate in an official letter from the Executive Minister.
- F.** The names of those whom the Board approves shall appear on the Convention’s registry of *Recognized Lay Leaders*.
- G.** Recognized Lay Leaders will be registered for a period of five years. After five years, listing on the registry will lapse unless the Recognized Lay Leader contacts the Convention office requesting extension, which will be granted based on continued leadership in a Convention church.
- H.** A *Recognized Lay Leader* will be held accountable to comply with the *Ministerial Professional Standards* adopted by Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (see *Ministerial Professional Standards* within *The Regulations Concerning the Ministry*).
- I.** An allegation of professional misconduct against a *Recognized Lay Leader* will be dealt with by the Board in accordance with *Section 5: Protocol for Cases of Alleged Professional Misconduct* found in its Ministerial Standards Document.

*All individuals seeking ordination/lay recognition must be baptized by immersion (except where precluded by medical condition).