

## VII. THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS

*When the time appointed for ordination shall have come, one of the elders shall present unto the Conference President those who are to be ordained. Their names being read aloud, the Conference President shall say unto the people:*

Brethren, these are they whom we purpose, God willing, this day to ordain as elders. For, after due examination we find not to the contrary, but that they are lawfully called to this function and ministry, and they are persons meet for the same. But if there are any of you who knoweth any impediment or crime in any of them, for the which he ought not to be received into this holy ministry, let him come forth in the name of God, and show what the crime or impediment is.

### **The Epistle: Ephesians 4:7-13**

“Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same that also ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

### **The Gospel: St. John 10:1-16**

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them, but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again: Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.”

*And that done, the President shall say unto them as follows:*

You have heard, brethren, as well in your private examination as in the exhortation which was now made to you, and in the holy lessons taken out of the Gospel and the writings of the apostles, of what dignity and what great importance this office is, whereunto you are called. And now again we exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office you are called; that is to say, to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and admonish; to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this evil world that they may be saved through Christ forever.

Have always, therefore, printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge; for they are the sheep of Christ which He bought with His death and for whom He shed His blood. The church and congregation, whom you must serve, is the spouse and His body. And if it shall happen the same church, or any member thereof, do take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, you know the greatness of the fault and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore, consider with yourselves the end of the ministry toward the children of God, toward the spouse and body of Christ; and see that you have done all that lies in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto the agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.

Forasmuch, then, as your office is both of so great excellency and of so great difficulty, you see with how great care and study you ought to apply yourselves, as well that you may show yourselves dutiful and thankful unto that Lord who has placed you in so high a dignity, as also to beware that neither you yourselves offend. Howbeit, you cannot have a mind and will thereto of yourselves; for that will and ability is given of God alone; therefore, you ought and have need to pray earnestly for His Holy Spirit. And seeing that you cannot by any other means compass the doing of so weighty a work pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the Holy Scriptures and with a life agreeable to the same, consider how studious you ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures; and for the selfsame cause how you ought to forsake and set aside, as much as you may, all worldly cares and studies.

We trust that you have all weighed and pondered these things with yourselves long before this time, and that you have clearly determined by God's grace, to give yourselves wholly to this office, whereunto it hath pleased God to call you; so that as much as lies in you, you will apply yourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all your cares and studies this way, and that you will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Savior, Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Spirit; that by daily reading and weighing the Scriptures you may wax ripener and stronger in your ministry; and that you may so endeavor yourselves, from time to time, to sanctify the lives of you and yours, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that you may be whole-some and godly examples, and patterns for the people to follow.

And now, that this present congregation of Christ here assembled may also understand your minds and wills in these things, and that this your promise may the more move you to do your duties, you shall answer plainly to these things, which we, in the name of God and His Church, shall demand of you touching the same.

Do you think in your heart that you are called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the office and work of an elder in The Bible Methodist Connection of Churches?

*ANSWER: Yes, I do.*

Do you cordially accept our Statement of Faith and agree to declare and defend it?

*ANSWER: I do, in the fear of God.*

Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures are the fully inspired and inerrant Word of God and that they contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? Are you determined out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures?

*ANSWER: I am so persuaded, and have so determined by God's grace.*

Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine, and sacraments, and discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded?

*ANSWER: I will do so by the help of the Lord.*

Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word, and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your charge, as need shall require and occasion be given?

*ANSWER: I will, the Lord being my helper.*

Will you be diligent in prayers and in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and of the flesh?

*ANSWER: I will endeavor to do so, the Lord being my helper.*

Will you be diligent to frame and fashion yourselves and your families according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lies, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?

*ANSWER: I will, the Lord being my helper...*

Will you maintain, and set forward, as much as lies in you, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are, or shall be committed to your charge?

*ANSWER: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.*

## **Prayer**

*The President or officiating elder may pray an appropriate prayer for those who are to be ordained.*

*When this prayer is done the President or officiating elder, with the elders present, shall lay their hands upon the head of every one that receives the Order of Elders—the receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees and the president saying:*

The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Spirit, for the office and work of an elder in the Church of God. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy sacraments; in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*They shall continue to kneel, and the President shall deliver to each one of them the Bible into his hands, and shall say:*

Take thou authority to preach the Word of God and to administer the holy sacraments in the congregation.

*The President or officiating elder shall then, in behalf of the conference, give to each of the persons ordained the right hand of fellowship, welcoming him to the work and labors of the ministry, adding such remarks as he may deem fitting, followed by the benediction.*