OVERVIEW
As a result of District Board action, the amount of documentation required to apply for credentials with Central California District has dramatically increased. It was the intent of the Board to increase the amount of information available to properly evaluate ministerial candidates over a wide variety of characteristics, including their previous involvement with their local church and pastor.

The following procedure was designed to assist those who are involved with processing credential application documents in understanding the proper flow and sequence of those documents. The procedure will help prevent duplication of effort, and assure that all application materials arrive at the District Office in a timely fashion. Those involved would include the Sectional Presbyters, Pastors, applicants, as well as the District Secretary/Treasurer. The combined efforts and cooperation of everyone will be necessary to provide a smooth flow and to obtain the desired results.

This procedure does not represent the final document, and could from time to time need to be adapted or updated. Any input that you may be able to contribute would be greatly appreciated. Throughout this procedure the pronouns “he/his” etc. will not be gender specific.

Paul Gilbert

I. MINISTERIAL CREDENTIAL PRE-APPLICATION

A. The initial interview.
   It is anticipated that most applicants desiring credentials should initially approach their local pastor as to their intent. This may not apply to ministers who already hold credentials with another organization. They may elect to contact a presbyter or another district official. In either case, the person contacted should make an appointment and conduct a formal interview with the applicant to gather background information that will assist in the application process.

   During this interview, the qualifications, talents, and future goals of the applicant should be thoroughly probed. If the applicant is from another organization, or if you are not thoroughly familiar with his doctrinal beliefs, a copy of our doctrinal statement should be made available to him in order to determine if areas of incompatibility exist. This information will assist the interviewer in determining the proper credential level for which the applicant should apply or whether he should apply for credentials at all.

   Some may wish to apply for a Specialized Ministry License if it is determined that they don’t have a definite call of God on their life to preach the gospel.
In the interviewer’s experience, if the applicant has a poor track record and yet displays a definite call to preach, he may recommend a mentoring program under a local pastor. If the applicant has a short history in the local church, the interviewer should inform the applicant of minimum bylaw requirements that may apply prior to making an application.

A proper initial interview will go a long way in eliminating future misunderstanding and confusion. In any case, one should never be timid in making a negative recommendation if the situation warrants it. Due to the increased complexity of the credential application process, if there is anything in the applicant’s history or qualifications that may preclude him from being a viable candidate for credentials, it is imperative to identify and deal with those items at the earliest possible step.

If the interview was conducted by a local pastor and has produced a positive result, the next step is to contact the Sectional Presbyter and to request a pre-application.

B. The Sectional Presbyter.
When a request for a pre-application has been made to the Sectional Presbyter, he should inform the applicant to fill it out completely (no blanks). It is particularly important that full information is supplied about the three character references that are required on the application. The completed pre-application is to be submitted to the local pastor. He should personally review and sign it before forwarding it to the Sectional Presbyter. The Presbyter should review the application, sign it, and forward it to the District Office. It must be postmarked by the fifteenth day of the third month prior to the Board Meeting at which the Applicant wishes to be considered. This step will complete the pre-application process.

II. CREDENTIAL APPLICATION FOR EXHORTER

A. The District Secretary.
When the pre-application arrives at the District Office, the District Secretary shall review it for completeness (incomplete forms will be returned) and to determine which forms will be necessary for the applicant to complete in order to continue the process. Two packets will be mailed out; one to the applicant and the other to the Sectional Presbyter. Reference forms will be mailed to those listed on the pre-application. Applicant must meet the “Qualifications for Exhorter” listed in Article V, Section 4, paragraphs a-c, page 39, of the District Bylaws.

B. Forms to be mailed to the first time Exhorter applicant.
1. General Office Application Form (2).
   Two Copies of this form must be filled out completely and signed by the applicant. Both copies must also have the signatures of the applicant’s Pastor, Presbyter and one other Pentecostal Church of God minister. Both copies must be submitted with the application packet.
2. Authorization To Release Information Form. (This will be used to conduct a Background Check.)
4. Bankruptcy Questionnaire (if applicable).
5. Felony Questionnaire (if applicable).
6. Marriage Questionnaire (if applicable) for each divorce of both the applicant and spouse.
7. General Bylaws (mandatory reading).
8. District Bylaws (mandatory reading) and Quiz for Exhorter applicants.
10. Quiz: Armor Bearer I by Terry Nance. (I & II have been combined into one volume.)
11. Quiz: Armor Bearer II by Terry Nance.
13. Exhorter Questionnaire.

The above books can be ordered from Messenger Publishing at (800) 444-4674.

C. Forms to be mailed to the Sectional Presbyter for first time Exhorter applicants.

1. Ministerial Applicant Processing Checklist.
2. Answer Key for District Bylaw Quiz.
3. Answer Key for Doctrines of the Bible Quiz.
4. Answer Key for Armor Bearer I Quiz.
5. Answer Key for Armor Bearer II Quiz.
7. Character Reference Questionnaire (to be completed by the applicant’s Pastor).

III. CREDENTIAL APPLICATION FOR LICENSE OR ORDINATION

A. Forms to be mailed to the first time License or Ordination applicant.

Note: Applicants in this category must be transferring from a PCCNA organization, a Bible School Graduate, or have equivalent studies and/or experience.

1. Forms listed as 1 through 8 in Section II, paragraph B above shall apply.
2. The Presbyter shall receive forms 1 and 7 listed in Section II, paragraph C above.
3. Applicant must pass a test on the relevant Minister's Study Series I or II.

B. Exhorters applying for Promotion To License.

Note: Applicants in this category must meet the "Qualifications for License" listed in the District Bylaws in Article V, Section 3, paragraphs a-c, page 38, and the following criteria prior to making application for promotion to License.

1. Criteria for Advancement from Exhorter to License.

   (a) Applicant should show evidence through his ministry of the call of God upon his life.

   (b) Applicant should demonstrate how he plans to devote his full time to the ministry.

   (c) Applicant shall support and actively participate in a local PCG church.

   (d) Applicant shall complete Minister's Study Series I.

   (e) Applicant shall read the entire Bible.
(f) Applicant shall receive a passing score on the comprehensive test covering the Minister's Study Series and be issued a certificate of completion.

(g) Applicant shall hold Exhorter’s Credential for a minimum of one year. After two years without advancing, the Exhorter shall meet the District Board to discuss his future plans in regard to full time ministry. At that meeting, the Board may decide whether or not to continue the Exhorter’s status. If the Exhorter is making no movement toward, or preparation for, full-time ministry, the Board should question whether or not the Exhorter should continue as a credentialed minister.

(h) Applicant shall be ministering in his local church and/or other churches on a regular basis.

(i) Applicant should assist his Pastor in officiating at weddings, funerals, communion and baby dedications as the opportunities present themselves.

(j) Applicant shall support all Sectional and District meetings possible.

(k) Applicant shall meet with his Pastor to discuss future ministry plans prior to applying for advancement.

After complying with all the above, applicant should apply to the District for advancement, complete the questionnaire and meet the District Board.

Upon receipt of the Exhorter's application for advancement, the District Secretary shall send out the information questionnaires to the applicant and to his Pastor. These questionnaires shall be returned to the Sectional Presbyter in ample time for inclusion in the applicant’s packet which must be postmarked on the fifteenth day of the second month prior to the scheduled Board meeting. These forms will be included with the Board packets to give them additional information from the applicant and give his Pastor an opportunity to report on the applicant.

The goals of the Board concerning upgrades to License status should be stated clearly and plainly to all applicants prior to their applying for advancement. If the desire of the Board is made clear in advance, the number of applicants may be reduced or the applicants may be encouraged to pursue full-time ministry sooner. It is far better to understand the Board’s policy in advance than to meet the Board expecting approval and be denied.

C. Licensed applicants applying for Promotion to Ordination

1. Applicants in this category must meet the “Qualifications for Ordination” listed in the District Bylaws in Article V, Section 2, paragraphs a-f, pages 37 & 38.

VI. FINAL APPLICATION PROCESSING

A. When all of the above forms and materials have been submitted to the Sectional Presbyter, he is to utilize the Presbyter’s Applicant Processing Checklist to determine if all the necessary
information is complete. When all applicable questions have been checked in the affirmative, the entire packet, along with the checklist, is to be forwarded to the District Office.

NOTE: THIS APPLICATION PACKET MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH PRIOR TO THE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING AT WHICH THE APPLICANT DESIRES TO BE CONSIDERED!

Applicant packets arriving subsequent to this deadline will be processed for the following District Board Meeting.

When the application packet arrives at the District Office, the District Secretary shall review and confirm the application materials and the checklist. If review of the “Marriage Questionnaire” determines the requirement of substantiation letters and/or spousal notification, they will be mailed to those indicated. It will be necessary for these documents to arrive back in the District Office prior to the District Board meeting or the applicant will be rescheduled to the next District Board meeting.

B. Background Check will be conducted on all applicants meeting the Board.

C. Applicant Appointments.
When an applicant has completed and submitted all documentation in a timely fashion, the District Secretary shall add his name to a list of eligible applicants to be included in the District Board notification letter. The applicant will then be sent a letter notifying him of the date and time of his appointment with the District Board. The applicant must arrive 15 minutes prior to his appointment.

After the applicant has met the District Board, the Board will make a decision concerning the disposition of the application. The District Secretary will then notify the applicant by letter of that decision. If the applicant has been successful, the application will be forwarded to the General Credentials Committee for final resolution. This process may take from 4 to 6 weeks. If that committee ratifies the District Board's decision, the applicant's credential certificate and fellowship card will be sent to the District Office. After being signed by the District Bishop, they will be forwarded to the applicant.

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