

SURVEY RESPONSE FULFILLMENT LIBRARY

Church Governance, Ordination & Accountability

A doctrinal conversation brief on authority, recognition, responsible oversight, and restoration

DOCUMENT	SURVEY PATH	INTENDED AUDIENCE
03-07	Doctrinal topic: governance/ordination/accountability	Pastors, boards, elders, and credentialing leaders

PURPOSE Provide a shared framework for discussing spiritual authority and ministry recognition without inventing or bypassing formal policy.

READY FOR STANDARD RELEASE Send for governance, accountability, ordination, or office questions; legal and employment decisions require applicable professional review.

Foundational order

- Jesus Christ is the head and chief cornerstone of the church; Scripture is authoritative and the Holy Spirit leads and equips.
- Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers serve the equipping and maturity of the body; gifts are ministries of stewardship, not immunity from review.
- Local churches exercise real responsibility while benefiting from fellowship, counsel, translocal gifts, and accountable relationships.
- Spiritual governance and lawful state governance must be distinguished and coordinated with integrity.

AUTHORITY MUST BE TRACEABLE Every consequential decision should be traceable to a defined role, lawful delegation, governing document, approved process, and accountable record. Spiritual language should clarify responsibility, not obscure it.

Terms that should not be confused

Term	Working distinction
Calling	A divine summons discerned over time through Scripture, character, fruit, community, and opportunity
Gift/function	A Spirit-enabled contribution exercised for the body and mission
Appointment	Assignment to a defined role by the authority responsible for that role
Ordination	Public ecclesial recognition and setting apart under an approved doctrine and process
Credential	Documented recognition carrying stated scope, term, standards, and review
Employment	A legal work relationship governed by compensation, supervision, tax, and employment requirements
Covering	Relational prayer, counsel, accountability, and only the authority explicitly granted

Responsible recognition pathway

1. Discern call and need within Scripture, prayer, community, and actual ministry context.
2. Evaluate doctrine, character, relationships, competence, fruit, safety, and readiness.
3. Provide supervised service, feedback, education, and remediation where needed.
4. Secure the approvals required by the governing and credentialing authorities.
5. Define scope, title, role, reporting, term, records, compensation status, and limitations.
6. Commission or ordain through the authorized process without promising what the recognition does not grant.
7. Review conduct, fruit, continuing development, and credential status at stated intervals.

Accountability and restoration

- Use impartial processes, documented allegations, appropriate confidentiality, opportunity to respond, and protection from retaliation.
- Report safety and legal matters to the proper authorities; church processes do not replace mandatory reporting or civil duty.
- Distinguish repentance, forgiveness, restoration to fellowship, restoration to function, and restoration to office; these do not always occur together.
- Plan succession before crisis, clarify founder or senior-leader authority, and preserve records and institutional continuity.

Authority must match recognition and responsibility

CIOA's materials recognize progressive formation from emerging leader through servant leadership and office-bearing responsibility. KAPS can inform the evidence and development conversation, but it does not create ecclesial authority. Appointment, credentialing, licensing, ordination, consecration, employment, and fiduciary office must each follow the process authorized for that specific recognition.

Recognition	What it confirms	What it does not automatically create
Development placement	A supervised opportunity to grow and serve	Credential, office, employment, or permanent assignment
Ministry credential	A defined authorization within an issuing body's policy	Local corporate control or property authority
Ordination or consecration	Ecclesial recognition of calling, formation, and ministry responsibility	Employment rights or unrestricted jurisdiction
Corporate office	Legal or fiduciary authority under governing documents and law	Spiritual gifting or ecclesial rank

Recommended response

NEXT STEP Compare bylaws, credentialing policies, role definitions, discipline procedures, and succession provisions before discussing shared ordination or oversight.

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Key Scripture references (NKJV): Ephesians 2:19–22; Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; 1 Timothy 5:19–22; Galatians 6:1–2; 1 Peter 5:1–4

Source foundation: S01, S04, S05, S07. See 00-01 Source & Public Release Matrix for source titles, controls, and approval requirements. Scripture references are presented for study; verify quotations against the approved Bible text before publication.

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