

My Ordination

While serving as principal at Gethsemane Baptist Schools in Evansville, Indiana, the school was under the auspices of Fairlawn Baptist Church, an independent missionary Baptist church. During this time I felt a strong calling from the Lord to be ordained to the ministry and preach the Word and someday pastor a church.

I went forward after one of the services and spoke with my pastor, Bro. J.B. Ford and revealed to him what the Lord was doing in my life. He told me he had already recognized that call and would set up an ordination council for me. A few weeks later, in the summer of 1981, several pastors whom I had preached for in the Evansville area came to my ordination service on a Sunday night at Fairlawn Baptist Church. Bro. Ford arranged the council and was going to act as my pastor on the council. Dr. Claude Dykes, who pastored Mill Road Baptist Church (GARB) was the Moderator of the Council, along with Dr. Don Criswell, Pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church (Independent) in Newburgh, Indiana, Rev. Ron Pollard, who pastored in Independent Baptist churches in Kentucky and New Harmony, Indiana, along with several other pastors that Bro. Ford knew personally. All of these signed my ordination certificate which I have hanging on my document wall outside my office at my house.

They asked me a barrage of questions about what I believed concerning each doctrinal area of the Bible. I answered with as much Scripture as I could each question. Dr. Dykes, who I later ended up being Associate Pastor in Louisville, Kentucky with for two years, moderated each question asked from the panel. When they were satisfied with my answers, Bro. Dykes gave his recommendation that I be ordained, also giving a personal testimony of the years he had known me and when I had preached at his church. Dr. Criswell also gave a very humbling testimony of his years of knowing me, and my being a teacher of his children at Mill Road Christian School, and also the times I had preached for him at his church. Bro. Ford gave his personal recommendation for ordaining me, and had me kneel at the altar in the front of the church. The pastors came and laid their hands on me as Bro. Ford led in prayer and all the men followed in prayer for me.

It was one of the most humbling and precious times in my life. These were the men I had looked up to for several years, and they were praying for me and ordaining me to the ministry of Jesus Christ. This was an unforgettable service for me, and I will always hold these men to be precious to me.

Dr. Ben Townsend