



Testable, measurable, and verifiable

Genter ordained as Baptist Associations of Southeast Louisiana's newest pastor

AN ORDINATION DISCERNMENT OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH'S INMATE ASSOCIATE pastor, Theodore Genter, was held at Angola's New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) Joan Horner Extension Center in September. Members of the Baptist Associations of Southeast Louisiana (BASL), including Grace pastor Robert Hyde, NOBTS professors Scott Breeland and Joel Williams, and chaplain supervisor and NOBTS Director Ricky Sharky, attended the event to analyze Genter for validation.

Chaplains Van Windsor and Liz McGraw, professor Felicia Robinson, inmate pastor Ron Hicks and NOBTS tutors Michael Vanchiere and Cedric Scott also attended as witnesses. Ordinarily, more BASL members would attend the ordination, but due to COVID-19 restrictions only Louisiana State Penitentiary employees were allowed on the prison grounds.

The session began with Williams asking the candidate to give an account of his conversion. Genter said that at the age of three his parents joined the Mormon church and they raised him "in the covenant." After his father passed away, the family moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where Genter began to dabble with paganism during his teenage years. He practiced it in secret without his mother's knowledge.

Genter felt that he did not belong in the Mormon community and joined the United States Army when he became of age. Upon returning home, he attempted to be a missionary but failed and decided to leave the Mormon church. He moved to the West Coast and practice paganism full-time. Later, after suspecting that his

life was in danger, Genter moved to New Orleans, and practiced paganism until he committed his crime and landed in prison.

His conversion from Mormonism to traditional Christianity took place about a year into his incarceration. A man named Eddie Rose, an ordained minister who had fallen from grace, ministered to him and led him to Christ. Six months later, he received a revelation from God that he would become a pastor. He said that from that point he developed a deeper relationship with God but still deals with human weaknesses.

Sharky asked Genter to explain the church's mission in a prison setting. He responded that the mission of the church is twofold, evangelism and discipleship. Genter said that discipleship is teaching. In society, pastors interact with their members during an emergency or church services but in prison they live together. He described himself as living in a glass house where nothing can be hidden from his neighbors. His lifestyle is an example.

When he fails, everybody sees and trying to cover it up will only make it worst. Genter said that honesty and transparency are important to effective discipleship and evangelizing. He added that being a Christian does not mean that he is perfect; repentance is important when living in error because it shows that Christians are human with weaknesses and they are being developed spiritually each day. People—particularly inmates—respect those who are transparent and do not hide their sins but practice what they preach.

Breeland asked Genter to define the Gospel message and how someone can become a Christian. Genter replied that the Gospel is "The Good News of Jesus Christ," that he died for people to be forgiven of their sins. By accepting his sacrifice as their payment, Genter said people are no longer under God's judgment. He added that it takes more than confessing Jesus as Savior. A Christian should be proactive, living out God's will for their lives.

Genter was questioned about the obligations of a church leader. A pastor's role, he said, is to



Genter received blessings from BASL members (left to right) Hyde and Sharkey, and Williams and Breeland

tend to God's people by correcting them, guiding them, and helping them develop a deeper, more meaningful relationship with God. "Pastors are role models for the church by leading by example. They should have some level of maturity that can handle the role of a leader where they are testable, measurable, and verifiable."

Hyde asked Genter to share with the group about his weaknesses. Genter said that he needed to work on his pride and being more patient when tutoring people. Hyde then encouraged Genter to be faithful to his calling even when tough times come. The discernment committee then voted to accept Genter for ordination.

Grace Baptist administer Vanchiere said that Genter is a person who loves to help others. His assistance sometimes seems aggressive but his heart is in the right place because he really wants people he helps to succeed. "I have known Ted for a long time and his relationship with Jesus is strong. He is very talented in music and singing hymns is what he loves. "

Following the discernment, the group held an ordination service in the classroom. Hyde challenged his members and witnesses to hold Genter accountable when he sins, and show him mercy when they do. The ordained men each laid hands on Genter and blessed him and prayed over him. A presentation of certificates followed, and then a closing prayer that concluded the service.

