

FAQS ABOUT ORDAINED MINISTRY

1. How do I find out about open ministry positions in the ABC?

You can subscribe to Ministry Opportunities Listing (MOL), a service of the American Baptist Personnel Services: www.nationalministries/mol. MOL is a monthly publication of open ministry opportunities within ABC. It lists all known local, regional, national and ecumenical positions. In addition, if you are interested in moving to a particular area of the country, contact the regions in that area and send them your current ABPS Profile. For a list of regional staff people check the ABPS webpage: www.nationalministries/abps.

2. How do I get considered for new ministry positions?

All American Baptist clergy should complete a Profile with American Baptist Personnel Services. The ABPS Profile is a computerized resume that is used by most ABC local churches and regions in the search process. You can contact ABPS by calling 1-800-392-2343. If you are unsure of your clergy standing with American Baptist Churches, please contact your regional office at <http://www.abc-usa.org/regions/regions.html>.

3. Who can I talk to about calling a female clergyperson as well as opportunities for Women in Ministry?

Please contact the Women in Ministry Director at <http://www.abwim.org/>.

4. I am a seminarian. What are some things I can do to be better connected to my denomination?

There are many things that you can do to strengthen your relationship with the ABC. Maintain your membership in an ABC church. Be sure that your Seminary Registrar's Office has you enrolled as an American Baptist student. Contact the Financial Aid Office of National Ministries at www.nationalministries.org/financial-aid for information about seminarian scholarships and grants. Join the American Baptist Ministers Council in your region. Attend association, area, regional, and national meetings to become better acquainted with ABC personnel at all levels of ministry. Know the ordination requirements of the region in which your ordination will take place. Take the American Baptist history/polity course to satisfy one of the ordination requirements of your region. Enroll in the American Baptist Personnel Services (ABPS) before your final year of school. Meet with your regional Executive and/or Area Minister prior to your senior year to discuss placement issues. Last, but certainly not least, join your local Ministers Council.

5. How do I discover the requirements for ordination in the ABC?

Ordination in the ABC is handled at the local and regional level. Local congregations ordain clergy and regional offices recognize or give wider standing to those who request consideration of such recognition. Thus, you must obtain the endorsement of the local church in which you are a member as well as the region in which the church is located. These processes usually happen simultaneously, so it is important to contact the ABC regional office to determine what their regional standards for ordination are before you start the ordination process in your local church. To obtain a copy of the ordination standards for your region, see <http://www.abc-usa.org/regions/regions.html>. Regional offices also handle the recognition of an ordination previously obtained in another denomination.

6. I am not ABC but would like to be considered for placement in the ABC. How do I go about that?

If you would like to find placement in the region in which you now reside, contact the regional executive minister in your immediate area. Their names are listed at this website: <http://www.abc-usa.org/regions/regions.html>. They will instruct you on the process necessary to receive a privilege of call in their region, which does vary by region. If you want to move to another part of the country you should contact the regional executive ministers in the areas to which you desire to move.

Chaplains should refer to the office of chaplaincy & pastoral counseling at <http://www.nationalministries.org/mission/cpcs/>.

7. I need help in estimating my desired income for a new position. Who should I ask for assistance?

Contact your MMBB representative and/or your area minister and ask them for information regarding the compensation for positions comparable to the one you will be seeking. After you get basic information from MMBB or your area minister, you should then take into account your own personal and family needs. What are your fixed expenses? (housing, loans, food, etc.) What are your anticipated expenses? (college tuitions, health related expenses) Are you saving for a rainy day and for your retirement? All of this should be taken into account before you can determine your financial requirements.

8. I have been asked to officiate at a marriage in a different state from where I currently pastor. How can I find requirements for the various states?

Check www.ministerscouncil.com under Links for "marriage laws."

9. Where can I find information on HIPAA confidentiality legislation for church prayer lists?

Again, check www.ministerscouncil.com, under the heading of *Policies*. Basically, general common sense must still dictate care in placing a person on a church prayer list, as different people will react differently to public disclosure of their health information. Use caution with respect to the level of detail provided. Clergy should continue to respect the privacy of confidential information they learn while in a health care facility or from a church member. However, HIPAA was not intended to limit our ability to pray for others, and to date, we know of no lawsuit arising solely out of an earnest prayer by one for another.

10. I just pulled the Covenant and Code of Ethics off the ministers Council website and re-read it, and have a question I would like someone to clarify. Can you help me? Paragraph 11 states 'I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my professional church leadership relations with my former constituents....' Does this mean a former pastor cannot continue to attend a church after he/she has resigned or retired from it? When I asked, the former pastor of the church where I am an interim said that now he/she is attending as a member and as a layperson, so he/she is not violating the Code of Ethics. Is that right?

If you revisit www.ministerscouncil.com you will find a piece on ethics for retiring pastors as well as sample ways to handle the transition with a congregation. This article is designed to assist in implementing paragraph 11 in the code of ethics. Bottom line: pastors are required to sever the pastoral relationships, but not friendships, with former parishioners. Many have done this successfully although the task is not an easy one. Pastors who choose to remain members in their former congregation, should avoid all pastoral calling, services such as weddings and funerals, and interference in church business and decisions.

There is no rule that requires a former pastor to leave the church, although many find it easier to sever pastoral relationships by doing so, at least for several months or even a year following one's transition. The problem is that many former pastors who have purchased homes and

settled in communities do not wish to move away and yet are unable to find another church option that meets their needs.

What this means is that former pastor, interim or new pastor, and congregation are all expected to negotiate the potential problems and live cooperatively together. Communication is the key, as the situation requires a great deal of learning and understanding from all involved. There also is an expectation that all parties will behave with enormous grace.

11. As a pastor, where might I receive information about applying for a scholarship for a particular continuing education conference that I would like to attend?

Please refer to Scholarship Director at www.nationalministries.org/financial-aid. This office can also suggest continuing education opportunities for you.

12. Do you have a sample policy that our local church could adopt for youth worker policy issues?

Yes. Please refer to National Ministries or Ministers Council websites at www.nationalministries.org or www.ministerscouncil.com,

13. My church is experiencing a major conflict. Where do I turn?

Please contact your regional office <http://www.abc-usa.org/regions/regions.html> or the Director of Reconciliation in National Ministries (Dwight Lundgren) www.nationalministries.org

14. I think that God may be calling me to the greater involvement in ministry and I would like to ask someone a few questions about. Can you help?

- a. If you feel that God might be calling you to become a local church pastor, please contact your regional ministries office at <http://www.abc-usa.org/regions/regions.html>.
- b. If you feel that God might be calling you to become an international missionary, please contact Reid Trulson at International Ministries using <http://www.internationalministries.org/staff/stafflist.htm>
- c. If you feel that God might be calling you to become a chaplain, please contact the Director of Chaplaincy & Pastoral Counseling at <http://www.abc-cpcs.org>.