

## **OTABL Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Questions and Answers**

**Question: What is Orientation to American Baptist Life (OTABL)?**

**Answer:** The Orientation to American Baptist Life (OTABL) welcomes and orients seminarians and ministers new to the American Baptist family. New Ministers to ABC are recommended by their regional Executive Minister and Seminarians are self-identified through communications with their seminaries. OTABL participants will be placed with a mentor and a mentoring group during the program. The mentoring component will be hosted by Regional Executive Staff members.

**Question: Is the Biennial Mission Summit different?**

**Answer:** YES. The Biennial Mission Summit is the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) national gathering held every two years. The event offers American Baptists a unique opportunity to come together to share ideas and learn from one another about what is working in the growth and vitality of our churches today and provides a chance to gather together to worship, reconnect, learn together and celebrate God's work among us as an ABCUSA family. It also provides time to do the necessary business of our denomination, electing the denomination's officers (President, Vice President, Budget Review Officer) for the coming Biennium.

OTABL is a program offering that is being held at the Biennial Mission Summit. We have made arrangements for OTABL participants to join those at the event in many of their program offerings. There will be ministers and lay people at the Biennial Mission Summit.

### **WEBINARS**

**Question: Are the biennial webinars cost free?**

**Answer:** YES! The webinars are free.

**Question: Are the webinars mandatory?**

**Answer:** YES! The webinars are replacing a face-to-face meeting with the mission and ministry partners. The mission and ministry partners have invested a lot in this experience and so the webinars are mandatory. We will be noting who is present at the webinars.

**Question: What if I have to miss a webinar because of school or work?**

**Answer:** We hope that everyone will make the webinars a priority in their schedules. We know that there may be some who may miss a webinar. We will be recording the webinars and making them available at a later date. You will need to communicate with Dr. Walden and make arrangements if you have this need.

**Question: Will I need to download software for the webinars?**

**Answer:** We are currently reviewing two choices for software platforms. This answer will update when we make a choice.

**Question: Do the webinars have specific times that we need to log in to the webinars in order to participate? And will we get directions on how to participate in them before then?**

**Answer:** YES! The webinars are scheduled for 7:00-8:30 p.m. EST. We will send out links ahead of time.

**Question: Is there anything that I need to do ahead of the webinars?**

**Answer:** YES! There will be brief videos of the mission and ministry partners available prior to the webinars. These will help you ask questions ahead of time and give our speakers an idea of your most popular questions.

**Question: Do I need to use headphones or earbuds with a microphone on webinars?**

**Answer:** YES! It is always best to use headphones or even earbuds when on virtual meetings. This cuts down on background noise and feedback during the presentations. We also recommend that when not speaking, you self-mute your microphone.

## **REGISTRATION**

**Question: What does my \$100 registration cover?**

**Answer:** Your registration secures your commitment to being a part of the Orientation to American Baptist Life (OTABL). On average, travel, lodging and meals together cost the denominational partners \$1400 per person. A generous gift from the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board has underwritten your travel among other things. The mission program boards have contributed substantially to provide meals. A portion of United Mission, our denominational family offering, is set aside to help fund OTABL. We believe in you so much, that all the mission partners collaborate to invest in this experience.

**Question: What if my church sends me as an official delegate?**

**Answer:** It is possible, especially if you are the solo or senior pastor of your congregation, that they would like to send you as their official delegate. There is a separate delegate registration fee that is noted in the registration process. It is in addition to other fee(s).

Delegates to the Biennial Mission Summit are members in good standing of cooperating congregations of American Baptist Churches USA. Delegates are selected by their church for the purpose of electing the officers for the coming biennium and for voting on any other official business. Delegates may attend all worship experiences and sessions, and visit the Hall of Ministries. Delegates are encouraged to attend the Business Session on Sunday at 2:15 p.m. The number of Delegates from any one church is dictated by a formula based on membership and financial support of ABCUSA. Churches and attendees can contact their [regional offices](#) or send an email to [MissionSummitRegistration@abc-usa.org](mailto:MissionSummitRegistration@abc-usa.org) to learn how many delegates their church can send.

**Question: Why does my Guest need a unique email?**

**Answer:** Our registration system tracks those registered by their emails. Therefore everyone needs a unique email to them. We know that some spouses share emails. However, for our registration process, you both need different emails from each other.

## **MEALS**

**Question: I have noticed that some lunches are already chosen for me, can I change that?**

**Answer:** NO. The mission partners in contributing to the costs of OTABL have requested that all OTABL participants participate in their lunches.

**Question: I noticed that sometimes there are only certain meal choices - what if none are of interest to me?**

**Answer:** There are some times in the program when you have choices of meals. For example, Saturday morning there are several college and seminary choices. If that is the case, of course we hope you will choose one of those ABC ministry options. However, you also have the option of taking that meal (often a breakfast) on your own at your own cost.

## **HOUSING**

**Question: Do we share a hotel room?**

**Answer:** OTABL Housing is double occupancy. In other words, we will work to pair people up to share the rooms – this saves the denomination quite a lot of money. If you know someone else attending OTABL and would like to room with them, there is a place to note that in the registration. It would be helpful if you both note that when you register, otherwise we will assign you a roommate.

**Question: Can I bring a guest?**

**Answer:** YES! There is an option for bringing a guest. The cost is an additional \$460. That cost covers sharing the hotel room and meals at the convention. NOTE: This does not cover the travel costs of your guest.

**Question: Can I pay for a private room?**

**Answer:** YES! There is an option for requesting a single room, which will cost the OTABL individual \$115/night beyond the registration fee(s).

**Question: Can I bring my family? (children)**

**Answer:** YES! You can bring your family. You would pay for a GUEST so that your family can share the room. There are opportunities for all ages. Some of the programs are at an additional cost. There are programs for children and youth. The programs for school-aged children and youth have program fees.