



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE SOUTH
7008 Security Blvd., Suite 120, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-2568, 441-551-3045, FAX 443-551-3565
Website: www.abcots.org E-mail: jmharrison@abcots.org

American Baptist Churches of the South

Ordination Check Off List for Pastors of ABC/USA Churches

This information is based on the fact that the ordained has been licensed by the church, and that the church is listed as a currently financial ABCOTS, ABC/USA church.

1. Prior to ordination or a call for an ordination council, the candidate must have received a call or is currently working in a professional ministry in an American Baptist affiliated church or related institution.
2. The Pastor must call for a vote of the congregation, Ministry of Deacons, or an official board of the candidate's ordaining church to indicate that the church approves of the ordination of the named candidate(s).
3. Notify the Coordinator of Ordination for the Area Ministers' Council, or the Executive Minister of ABCOTS, with the names of the Ordination Candidate(s), and that an Ordination Council is requested for the candidate(s).
 - **Note: for the ordination to be recognized by ABCOTS and ABC/USA, the Ordination Council must consist of at least five (5) ordained American Baptist Ministers listed in the Professional Registry-Directory of the ABC/USA. Other minister/Deacons may be invited to participate on the Ordination Council; they do not have to be "Pastors" to participate.**
4. Candidate(s) should choose at least two (2) months prior to the assembly of the Ordination Council, a Catechist who will assist the candidate in his/her preparation for the Ordination Council.
5. The Pastor and the Diaconate Ministry should set a date for the Ordination Council and the date for Ordination of the ordinate candidate(s).
6. The Pastor will inform the Area Coordinator of Ordination of the dates for the Ordination Council and the Ordination Service of the ordinate candidate(s).
7. The Pastor will design the Ordination Service (a copy of a suggested order can be given by the Council).
8. You may call upon the Executive Minister and/or the Area Ministers' Council President for assistance or participation.
9. A copy of the Ordination Service Program (Bulletin) is to be sent to the President of the Ministers' Council.
10. A Presentation of the Bible and the Church Hymnal should be given to the Candidate(s).
The presentation of a robe is optional.

The Ordination Paper Trail in the American Baptist Churches of the South (ABCOTS)

1. When an ABCOTS congregation is ready to ordain a member and it wants that ordination to be recognized by the American Baptist Churches, the pastor (or the pastor's designee) should be in touch with the appropriate ordination coordinator. This may be the president of the area or regional Ministers Council or a person selected by the cluster, area or regional Ministers Council to coordinate ordination procedures. The ordination coordinator will provide a set of materials, i.e., the **candidate** packet, which spells out the documentation to be submitted.
2. When the pastor has approved the requested documents in the completed candidate packet, two copies of the packet should be prepared – one should be sent to the Regional Office in Baltimore and the original should be sent to the ordination coordinator. It is important to send a copy to the Regional office, in case the original is mislaid or lost. This copy is kept in the Regional office until it is replaced by the recognition packet. The ordination coordinator works with the local church to insure that the submitted documents meet the standards set, and based upon this conclusion, presents the candidate packet to the ordination council.
3. When the candidate has been approved by the ordination council, the ordination coordinator:
 - A. insures that proper signatures are affixed to the ordination certificate, and makes two copies.
 - B. gives the original ordination certificate to the pastor and sends a copy to the Regional office.
 - C. adds the second copy to the ordination packet, which then becomes the **recognition** packet,
 - D. makes and delivers a copy of the recognition packet to the Regional Ministers Council President at least one month before the next Ministers Council Regional Conference. This will enable the Region President to schedule recognition of that ordination at the Regional Conference.
4. The ordination coordinator presents the original recognition packet to the Regional Ministers Council Executive Committee for review.
5. The Regional Ministers Council Executive Committee votes to approve or reject presentation of the ordination to the Council for recognition. Acceptance is accompanied by stipulating Professional Leadership Status (7, 6 or 3). Rejection should be accompanied by explanation.
6. All recognition packets that have been approved by the Regional Ministers Council Executive Committee, along with the ordinand, are presented to the Regional Conference for recognition. At that time the newly recognized ordinand is expected to:
 - A. Sign the Ministers Council Code of Ethics, if the ordinand has not done so earlier;
 - B. Pay their membership dues in the Ministers Council;
 - C. Complete the ABC Professional Leadership Change Form for the Professional Registry.The Code of Ethics form and the Professional Leadership Change Form are then added to the recognition packet and placed in the custody of the Region President (or designee)
7. The completed recognition packet is forwarded to the Regional Office by registered mail.
8. The Regional Office keeps the recognition packet in its files and enters the appropriate information about the person in the Professional Registry.

May 2008 (Revised)



The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches

Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, to deepen my obedience to the Two Great Commandments: to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself.

In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all the public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

- I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our American Baptist Churches; I will not accept a position in the American Baptist family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the denomination. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.
- I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my American Baptist colleagues, and other Christians.
- I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.
- I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.
- I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ministerial status.
- I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayers and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for ministerial and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.
- I will recognize my primary obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called, and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry.
- I will personally and publicly support my colleagues who experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, national origin, physical impairment or disability.
- I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.
- I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my ministerial leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make ministerial contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without his/her request and/or consent.
- I will hold in confidence and treat as confidential communication any information provided to me with the expectation of privacy. I will not disclose such information in private or public except when, in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that life-threatening or substantial harm will be caused.
- I will not use my ministerial status, position or authority knowingly to abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate, or take advantage of anyone, especially children.
- I will report all instances of abuse as required by law to the appropriate agency. In any case involving persons working in ABC ministry, I will also report the circumstances to the appropriate regional and/or national denominational representative.
- I will show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.

Signed _____

Date _____

ABC PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP CHANGE FORM

Please use a separate form for each person. Fill out the top section for each person and then the appropriate box/boxes below. Please print.

Title: _____ Name: _____ NAS ID# _____
 (Rev/Ms/Mr/Mrs/Dr) First M.I. Last

GENDER: M _____ F _____

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STATUS

ORDINATION DATE: _____

ORDIN. RECOGNIZED (year): _____

BIRTH DATE (month/year): _____

- _____ 7. ABC Ordination
- _____ 6. Ordination Recognized by ABC
- _____ 5. Other ABC Ordination (Temporary)
- _____ 4. Ordination Not Recognized by ABC
- _____ 3. Commissioned
- _____ 2. Certified Lay Ministry
- _____ 1. Licensed
- _____ 0. Lay Professional

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

- _____ Add. Graduate Degree beyond BA/Mdiv (yr) _____
- _____ BA/MDiv or Equivalent (yr) _____
- _____ Student working toward BA/MDiv
- _____ Education completed before BA/MDiv

MAILING ADDRESS OF CURRENT POSITION	Starting Date (month/year)
_____ (Name of Employer / Church / Board / Institution / etc.)	_____
_____ (Address of Employer ... Street)	Directory Category for New Position
(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____	
_____ (Work Phone Number) _____ (e-mail)	

HOME (OR ALTERNATE) ADDRESS Check here if you want all mail to go to this address--not the current position.

(Street)

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____ _____
(Home/Alt. phone)

FORMER POSITION AND ADDRESS	Leaving Date (month/year)
_____ Name of Employer / Church / Board / Institution / etc.	_____
_____ Address of Employer	Directory Category of Former Position
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____	

REASON(S) FOR CHANGE

_____ New to National Directory PR _____ ML _____

_____ Ordained

_____ Ordination recognized

_____ Moved to a new position, see above

_____ Moved to _____ ABC Region

_____ Retired

_____ Graduate Study

_____ Unemployed, seeking placement

_____ Serving another denomination _____

_____ Inactive at the present time

_____ Other _____

DELETION FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTORY

Please Note: Deletions from the National Directory of PCLs are by (1) action of the Region's Department of Ministry; (2) request of the person; or (3) death of the person. Persons are not deleted because they are temporarily out of ministry, or have moved to another region.

Reason for Deletion:

_____ Deceased Date: _____

_____ No longer in ABC ministry / left the ABC (Circle one)

_____ Request of person...request on file at _____

_____ Action of Department of Ministry on _____

_____ Changed denominations to _____

_____ Other _____



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE SOUTH

708 Security Blvd., Suite 120, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-2568, 443-551-3045, FAX 443-551-3565

Website: www.abcots.org E-mail: jmharrison@abcots.org

Dr. James M. Harrison, Executive Minister

ABC SEMINARIAN CHECKLIST

The following are items you need to consider carefully in preparation for seeking your place as a Professional Church Leader (PCL) in active ministry within the American Baptist Churches / ABC.

- Candidate: Keep your membership in an American Baptist Church.
- Candidate: Be sure that your Seminary Registrar's office has you enrolled in school as an American Baptist.
- Candidate: Take the American Baptist history / polity course in order to meet the ordination requirements of the American Baptist Churches, USA.
- Candidate: Know the ordination requirements of the region where this ordination will take place.
- Candidate: Enroll in American Baptist Personnel Services (ABPS) before your final year in school.
This requires a Validation Form signed by the Executive Minister where you have your church membership or seminar sponsorship for one year.
- Candidate: Update your ABPS profile the semester prior to graduation.
- Candidate: Meet your Executive Minister *prior to your senior year.*
- Candidate: Join the *American Baptist Ministers Council* in your region.
- Candidate: Discover and utilize the resources of the Seminary for your first placement in professional ministry.
- Candidate: Attend conferences for seminarians to become better acquainted with the ABC / USA.
Contact *American Baptist National staff located at the Mission Center in Valley Forge* who are responsible for ministries in which you have special abilities / interest: Overseas Missions, Chaplaincy, Christian Center Ministries, Ethnic Ministries, etc.

**V. PROCEDURE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF
NON-AMERICAN BAPTIST ORDINATIONS**
(Adopted by the General Board, September 26, 1973)

1. The congregation, agency or organization which desires to call a person who has been previously ordained by another denomination either nationally or internationally initiates the process by communicating with the department of ministry in the region where the ministry is to occur. The person, the agency, or the congregation indicates intention to have the person's previous ordination recognized.
2. The individual upon his/her own request, or the request of the local congregation or agency, appears before the regional department of ministry, standing council of ordination, or other appropriate body. The committee undertakes the following functions at this meeting:
 - A. A review is made of the "letter of ministerial standing" which the individual has secured from his/her present denomination. Under certain circumstances, some documentation may no longer be possible to obtain.
 - B. Discussion focuses on the individual's: 1) personal background, faith, baptism, and ministerial experience; 2) educational background (including transcripts or other forms of certification of graduation); 3) character references; and 4) written request for the recognition of his/her prior ordination.
 - C. The committee determines the adequacy of the person's understanding of Baptist history and polity. If no polity and history course has been completed, the committee should make specific recommendations to the individual in this regard.
 - D. During the discussion the candidate should state his/her reasons for entering the ministry of the American Baptist Churches and his/her intention to participate in its agencies. The committee also should determine whether the candidate understands and subscribes to the Pledge of Ministers of American Baptist Churches and Code of Ethics developed by the Minister's Council.
 - E. The person must meet Track I, II, or III's standards, including the ethics course and candidacy assessment, and have received affirmation by a comparable ordination council process.
3. The committee should vote to (or not to) recognize the person's previous ordination.
4. The person, upon receiving recognition of his/her ordination, completes negotiations with the local church body, agency or organization regarding his/her position within its professional ministry.
5. The committee should communicate to the petitioning local congregation or agency its recommendation that, after the person has been received into an ABC congregation's membership, an appropriate service of installation (or recognition) be held.
6. The committee should forward certified copies of its recommendation to recognize the ordination to the region:
 - A. for its listing of ministers and
 - B. listing in the Professional Registry which is part of the American Baptist Churches Information System (ABCIS)
7. Finally, the Committee should provide for the individual a letter, signed by the chairperson and the executive minister of the administrative area, stating that his/her previous ordination has been recognized by the committee and giving the appropriate date of the action.