

American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast

Manual for Ordination

Pastoral Services Committee

Adopted 2018

American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast
0245 SW Bancroft Street, Suite G • Portland, OR 97239
phone:(503)223-6747 •
Executive Minister: Rev. Steve Bills
Email:sbils@ABC CPC.org

**Pastoral Services Committee
Welcome Letter**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the ordination process of the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast and the American Baptist Churches USA. This manual is your guide to our ordination process. We oversee the standards for the following categories for ordination:

- Standard Ordination
- Equivalency Ordination
- Recognition of Non-ABC USA Ordination

Thoroughly reviewing this document is your first step in seeking ordination. Each appendix has important information for you to consider, including *The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches* and the *Ecclesiastical Process for Review of Ministerial Standing*. The information is useful for the local church and local church leaders, as well as clergy and those seeking ordination.

The Pastoral Services Committee (PSC) wants to encourage and support you through your journey. The Region staff will also be an important resource for you personally as well as providing logistical help that includes certificates for *Ordination*, *License to Preach*, and outlines for ordination services.

Please notify the Region office of any change in your professional status.

These documents are not only available in this manual but are also available in printer-friendly format on the ABC CPC website.

Blessings in the discernment of your call,

The Pastoral Services Committee

Table of Contents

Pastoral Services Committee Welcome Letter	2
Pathways to Ordination	4
Process for Recognized Professional Ordination	
Standard Ordination	5
Equivalency Ordination	7
Recognition of Non-ABC USA Ordination.....	9
Appendices	11
Appendix 1—Process for Candidate Seeking Standard Ordination, Equivalency Ordination, Recognition of Non-ABC USA Ordination.....	12
Appendix 2—Application, Self-Disclosure, and Release Form for All Ordination Candidates	14
Appendix 3—Process Check list for Pastoral Services Committee and ABC CPC Office	19
Appendix 4—The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches	23
Appendix 5—Request for Reference Form.....	25
Appendix 6— Guidelines for Ordination Paper	27
Appendix 7- Mentors	28
Appendix 8—An Ecclesiastical Process for Review of Ministerial Standing	29
Appendix 9-ABC Recommended Procedures for Ordination	

The PSC decided that Appendix 9, a document from ABC USA is redundant, too long, and might confuse ordination candidates. This section will remain in the PSC Chairperson's printed copy of the Ordination Manual but will not be included in the region's online Ordination Manual.

Pathways to Ordination

Historically, Baptists have followed the practice of setting apart certain individuals for special roles as leaders of local churches. This act is called ordination. Circumstances of individuals and of churches are quite different, and because of this, there are varying pathways leading to ordination within the American Baptist Churches USA (ABC USA). The usual path is to attend an accredited seminary, graduate with a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree, be called to minister to a local church or other ministry and be ordained by a local church following the approval process described in this Manual.

Standard Ordination

During the time of preparation, the person is usually licensed to preach as a candidate for ordination. This route is called “Standard Ordination” and the status as an ordained American Baptist minister is recognized nationally throughout the denomination.

Equivalency Ordination

In exceptional cases, relevant ministry experience may be substituted for a portion of the educational requirements. This process is called “Equivalency Ordination.”

Recognition of Ordination from Another Denomination

Ministers who have been ordained in other denominations and who wish to serve in an American Baptist church or ministry may seek to have their ordination from another denomination recognized. In order for the ordination to be recognized as standard, the educational requirements must be met. Those seeking recognition who do not meet the standard educational requirements may be regionally recognized.

Local Ordination

Finally, because ordination is a function of the autonomous local church, a church may recognize the gifts for ministry and the call of an individual within that church and ordain that person without participation by the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast. Because the qualifications and call of the ordained minister have not been validated by the larger American Baptist family, such local ordination is not generally transferable to other churches.

The process leading to each of these ordinations (except local ordination) is described in detail in the sections that follow.

Pastoral Services Committee

The purpose of the Pastoral Services Committee is to facilitate the ordination process for regional churches and to attend to any grievances against clergy, including clergy misconduct.

The PSC is composed of a chairperson who is elected by the regional Board of Ministries for a three-year term. The chairperson will then select committee members from the entire region. The committee should include both clergy and laity. A quorum is achieved when at least half of the committee are present.

Process for Recognized Professional Ordination

Standard Ordination

Standard Ordination is carried out by a local church upon recommendation from the Region's Pastoral Services Committee. The educational standard is an earned Master of Divinity degree (it's equivalent or higher) from a theological seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. To view a list of ATS accredited schools, visit:

<https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/denominational-search>

To become an ordained minister recognized by the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast and listed in the directory, a candidate must:

- **Church Membership**

Be a member in good standing of an American Baptist church or fellowship group related to the American Baptist Churches USA.

- **Education**

Be a graduate of a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and have earned a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent. In addition, an accredited course on American Baptist History and Polity must have been completed during seminary education, or the candidate must have completed a study approved by the Pastoral Services Committee.

- **Assessment at the Center for Ministry**

The Center for Ministry assessment is a process designed to help ordination candidates increase the self-awareness and self-understanding of their strengths, limitations and vulnerabilities. It also initiates a realistic conversation about ministry and ministry contexts, and how they fit with the candidate's interests, aptitudes, and skills. From the region's perspective, it provides the Department of Pastoral Services with a dispassionate professional perspective on the emotional and psychological health of the candidate.

- **License** (*This is an option but it is not a requirement*)

Be licensed by the local church. (For more information, refer to the national guidelines for licensing available at

http://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Ordination_Std.pdf (page 7)

- **Call**

Have a specific call. A ministry as listed under "Types of Service" below has offered a position to the candidate, or the candidate is already serving that position. This requirement may be waived or eliminated by the PSC in the future.

- **Types of Service**

- Local church ministry, including all staff who exercise ministerial functions: preaching, teaching, administering the ordinances, pastoral care, and counseling.
- Mission service on the national or international field in which ministerial functions (as previously described) will be exercised.

- o Chaplaincies: institutional, military or academic where ministerial functions (as previously described) will be exercised. See <http://abhms.org/ministries/developing-leaders/chaplaincy/>
 - o Pastoral counselor. See <http://abhms.org/ministries/developing-leaders/chaplaincy/>
 - o Staff or authorized volunteer service, involving ministerial functions (as previously described) of an American Baptist agency or institution, a council of churches, or some other ecumenical ministry appropriately recognized by the American Baptist Churches USA.
- **Initiation of Standard Ordination Process**

An individual or local church may initiate the process of ordination. See Appendix 1: Process for Candidate Seeking Standard Ordination, Equivalency Ordination, Recognition of Non-ABC USA Ordination, or Regional Ordination.
 - **Proceeding Through Standard Ordination**

Pastoral Services Committee

The candidate may meet with the Pastoral Services Committee once or more times as needed. The candidate will contact the region to schedule a preliminary meeting with the Pastoral Services Committee or a representative. The committee/representative will discuss the process and explore all documents with the candidate. A mentor (liaison) will be assigned to the candidate. A meeting date will be set with the candidate for presentation of their ordination paper.

Ordination Council

After receiving approval from the Pastoral Services Committee, the candidate shall ask the local church to call an ordination council comprised of representatives from churches of the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast region. The purpose of this council is to examine and affirm the candidate’s preparedness for ordination, through our associational life. Pastoral Services Committee shall have freedom to alter this requirement depending upon the context and setting.

Ordination Service

Following approval of the Ordination Council, the candidate shall ask the local church to call an ordination service. ABC CPC shall be invited to attend, but the ordination is carried out by the local church. The candidate shall reaffirm and sign the current edition of “The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches” (Appendix 4) at the ordination service. This serves as a public teaching tool to make the witnesses aware that the candidate has agreed to abide by definite standards of conduct.

Afterward, the church shall notify the Region’s Pastoral Services Committee in writing that the candidate has been ordained. ABC CPC will then recognize the ordination and list the newly ordained person on the American Baptist Churches Information Systems (ABCIS).

Upon request, a minister in good standing, upon moving to another Region, will be given a letter by the Executive Minister verifying his or her ordination status.

Equivalency Ordination

The educational prerequisite for the full recognition of candidates for ordination within the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast is reaffirmed to be graduation with receipt of a Master of Divinity degree or *its equivalent* from a theological seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. “It’s equivalent” may mean an experiential equivalent verified by the Pastoral Services Committee. It may also mean another educational sequence (e.g. Doctor of Philosophy in Religion). If the candidate is from another country, in which the candidate has received an equivalent degree to the Master of Divinity degree in the United States, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territories, this must be verified by the Pastoral Services Committee.

For more information, refer to Track 2 of “Recommended Procedures for Ordination, Commissioning, and Recognition for the Christian Ministry in the American Baptist Churches.” View this document at http://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Ordination_Std.pdf (page 7)

To become an ordained minister recognized by the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast and listed in the directory, a candidate must:

- **Church Membership.**
Be a member in good standing of an American Baptist church or a fellowship group related to the American Baptist Churches USA.
- **Education.**
Candidates must have the equivalent of (3) years of higher education. The maximum experiential equivalency to be granted is six (6) years. In addition, an accredited course on American Baptist History and Polity must have been completed or the candidate must have completed a comparable study approved by the Pastoral Services Committee.
- **Assessment at the Center for Ministry**
The Center for Ministry assessment is a process designed to help ordination candidates increase the self-awareness and self-understanding of their strengths, limitations and vulnerabilities. It also initiates a realistic conversation about ministry and ministry contexts, and how they fit with the candidate’s interests, aptitudes, and skills. From the region’s perspective, it provides the Department of Pastoral Services with a dispassionate professional perspective on the emotional and psychological health of the candidate.
- **License** (*This is an option but it is not a requirement*).
Be licensed by the local church. (For more information, refer to the national guidelines for licensing, available at http://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Ordination_Std.pdf (page 7))
- **Call**
Have a specific call. A ministry as listed under “Types of Service” below has offered a position to the candidate, or the candidate is already serving that position. This requirement may be waived or eliminated by the PSC in the future.

- **Types of Service**
 - Local church ministry, including all staff who exercise ministerial functions: preaching, teaching, administering the ordinances, pastoral care, and counseling.
 - Mission service on the national or international field in which ministerial functions (as previously described) will be exercised.
 - Chaplaincies: institutional, military or academic where ministerial functions (as previously described) will be exercised. See <http://abhms.org/ministries/developing-leaders/chaplaincy/>
 - Pastoral counselor. See <http://abhms.org/ministries/developing-leaders/chaplaincy/>
 - Staff or authorized volunteer service, involving ministerial functions (as previously described) of an American Baptist agency or institution, a council of churches, or some other ecumenical ministry appropriately recognized by the American Baptist Churches USA.
- **Initiation of Equivalency Ordination Process**

An individual or local church may initiate the process of ordination. See Appendix 1: “Process for Candidate Seeking Standard Ordination, Equivalency Ordination, Recognition of Non-ABC USA Ordination, or Regional Ordination.”
- **Proceeding Through Equivalency Ordination**

Ordination Council

After receiving approval from the Pastoral Services Committee, the candidate shall ask the local church to call an ordination council comprised of representatives from churches of the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast region. The purpose of this council is to examine and affirm the candidate’s preparedness for ordination, through our associational life. Pastoral Services Committee shall have freedom to alter this requirement depending upon the context and setting.

Ordination Service

Following approval of the regional ordination council, the candidate shall ask the local church to call an ordination service. ABC CPC shall be invited to attend, but the ordination is carried out by the local church. The candidate shall reaffirm and sign the current edition of “The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches” (Appendix 4) at the ordination service. This serves as a public teaching tool to make the witnesses aware that the candidate has agreed to abide by definite standards of conduct.

Afterward the church shall notify the Region’s Pastoral Services Committee in writing that the candidate has been ordained. ABC CPC will then recognize the ordination and list the newly ordained person on the American Baptist Churches Information Systems (ABCIS).

Upon request, a minister in good standing, upon moving to another Region, will be given a letter by the Executive Minister verifying his or her status.

Recognition of Non-ABC USA Ordination

American Baptist Churches may recognize the ordination of a person by another Christian denomination provided that the ordination is based upon standards essentially equivalent to those of ABC standard ordination.

To become an ordained minister recognized by the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast and listed in the regional and national directory, a candidate must:

- **Church Membership.**
Be a member in good standing of an American Baptist church or fellowship group related to the American Baptist Churches USA.
- **Education.**
Be a graduate of a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and have earned a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent. In addition, an accredited course on American Baptist History and Polity must have been completed during seminary education, or the candidate must have completed a study approved by the Pastoral Services Committee.
- **Assessment at the Center for Ministry (at the discretion of the region)**
The Center for Ministry assessment is a process designed to help ordination candidates increase the self-awareness and self-understanding of their strengths, limitations and vulnerabilities. It also initiates a realistic conversation about ministry and ministry contexts, and how they fit with the candidate's interests, aptitudes, and skills. From the region's perspective, it provides the Department of Pastoral Services with a dispassionate professional perspective on the emotional and psychological health of the candidate
- **License** (*This is an option but it is not a requirement.*)
Be licensed by the local church. (For more information, refer to the national guidelines on licensing, available at
- **Call**
Have a specific call. A ministry as listed under "Types of Service" below has offered a position to the candidate, or the candidate is already serving that position. This requirement may be waived or eliminated by the PSC in the future.

Types of Service

- o Local church ministry, including all staff who exercise ministerial functions: preaching, teaching, administering the ordinances, pastoral care, and counseling.
- o Mission service on the national or international field in which ministerial functions (as previously described) will be exercised.
- o Chaplaincies: institutional, military or academic where ministerial functions (as previously described) will be exercised. See <http://abhms.org/ministries/developing-leaders/chaplaincy/>
- o Pastoral counselor. See <http://abhms.org/ministries/developing-leaders/chaplaincy/>
- o Staff or authorized volunteer service, involving ministerial functions (as previously described) of an American Baptist agency or institution, a council of churches, or some other ecumenical ministry appropriately recognized by the American Baptist Churches USA.

Appendices

**Process for Candidate Seeking Standard Ordination,
Equivalency Ordination,
Recognition of Non-ABC USA Ordination, or
Regional Ordination**

Prerequisite: Be an active member of your local ABC USA congregation.

Prior to your meeting with the Pastoral Services Committee

1. Meet with your pastor and church board to let them know of your interest in the ordination process.
2. Submit a letter to the Region office from your church recommending you for ordination.
3. Obtain a copy of the Manual for Ordination from ABC of the Central Pacific Coast.
4. Contact the Executive Minister and the Chairperson of the Pastoral Services Committee (PSC) of your interest in pursuing ordination.
5. Meet with the Executive Minister, and/or the Pastoral Services Committee representative to review the procedures and process for ordination.
6. Meet with your Mentor/Coach who has been approved by the PSC or Executive Minister.
7. Complete Application Form (Appendix 2) and submit the form (online or by mail) along with \$100 to cover the cost of the background check to the ABC of the Central Pacific Coast office.
8. For candidates seeking recognition from other denominations: submit a copy of ordination certificate.
9. Write and submit a brief (approximately five pages) autobiographical sketch including personal faith history including your current understanding of your ministry call.
10. Submit four (4) references to the ABC CPC office. At least two of these should be professional or educational references. All must be current references (see Appendix 5).
11. Submit official transcripts from all post-secondary schools.
12. Write ordination/position paper. (see Appendix 6)
13. Schedule a meeting with the PSC after completing the above steps.

A candidate may meet with the Pastoral Services Committee one or more times as needed. During the meeting(s) with the PSC the following will happen:

1. Sign “The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches.” (Appendix 4)
2. Discuss documents previously submitted.
3. Discuss the ordination/position paper and other concerns. This should be a prayerful process, affirming the candidate.
4. The committee will decide to recommend that the candidate proceed with ordination, put the process of ordination on hold, or to not recommend the candidate proceed with ordination. Reasons and clear steps to be taken for each decision will be given.

Note: All documents must be submitted 4 weeks prior to meeting.

Next steps for all *chaplains* candidates in addition to previous steps:

1. Contact the Chaplaincy Program at American Baptist Home Mission Societies for endorsement requirements.
2. Follow the procedure needed as dictated by the Chaplaincy Program.

**American Baptist Churches
of the Central Pacific Coast
(ABC CPC)**

Send to: ABC CPC Region Office,
PO Box 30, Mayhurst, OR 97036

**Application, Self-Disclosure, and Release Form
for All Candidates Seeking Ordination**

Date: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone _____

Check for \$100, payable to ABC CPC is enclosed. When it is received, the Region office will contact you to initiate your background check.

Ordination you are seeking:

- _____ Standard Ordination
- _____ Equivalency Ordination
- _____ Non-ABC Ordination Recognition

Are you seeking chaplaincy credentials? _____

1. List college or under-graduate degrees. Give date for each.

2. List seminary or other theological education. Give dates.

3. Have you completed an American Baptist History and Polity Course at a Seminary? ___Yes ___No (*If "yes," give the name of school or the person who taught the equivalency course.*)

4. Have you served as a pastor, interim pastor, associate or assistant pastor, or a staff minister in the American Baptist Churches, USA? ___Yes ___No (*If "yes" state which role and describe when and where*)

5. Have you served as a pastor, interim pastor, associate or assistant pastor , or a staff minister in another denomination? ____Yes__No (If “yes” state which role and give dates).

6. Please provide a brief statement which describes why you are pursuing the category of ordination you indicated at the beginning of this form.

7. Give reasons why you feel you would like to minister in the American Baptist Churches USA.

American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast (ABC CPC)

Self-Disclosure Form

Name: _____

Each person, having received or anticipating a call to a position with ABC CPC, is required to sign this “Self-Disclosure and Release Form” as a part of the process. Others who are already within the Region may be asked to sign this form when moving to a new location. The completed form should be given to the Region Office. ABC CPC has an outstanding record for maintaining the highest moral and ethical standards in the practice of ministry. This record of service reflects our commitment to “preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline, and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.” (The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches) When any professional church leader engages in misconduct, the name of Christ is dishonored, the Church is brought into disrepute, and all involved suffer. In addition, there can be legal repercussions from such acts of misconduct.

Therefore, ABC CPC is committed to taking any reasonable precaution to avoid such disrepute, suffering, and litigation. This Self-Disclosure and Release Form is a part of the Region’s ministry. Your understanding and cooperation are deeply appreciated.

Mark “T” for True; “NT” for Not True

- | | | |
|--|----------|-----------|
| 1. I have never been the subject of official disciplinary proceedings in the ABC USA or any other denomination or independent group that resulted in any of the following: | T | NT |
| a. Censure | _____ | _____ |
| b. Suspension of recognition of ordination | _____ | _____ |
| c. Withdrawal of recognition of ordination | _____ | _____ |
| 2. No official disciplinary proceedings within the ABC USA or any other denomination or independent group are pending against me at this present time. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse; or financial misconduct has ever been successfully prosecuted against me, settled out of court, or dropped because the statute of limitations had expired. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. My driver’s license has never been suspended or revoked due to reckless driving, driving while intoxicated, or driving under the influence of a controlled substance. | _____ | _____ |

- | | T | NT |
|---|-------|-------|
| 5. I have never been found guilty or pleaded guilty or no contest to felony or misdemeanor charges or had felony or misdemeanor charges dropped because the statute of limitations had expired. | _____ | _____ |
| 6. My employment has never been terminated for actual or attempted sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse; discrimination; physical abuse; child abuse; spousal abuse; or financial misconduct by me; nor have I terminated my employment primarily to avoid facing such charges or to avoid <i>being terminated because of such charges</i> . | _____ | _____ |
| 7. I know of no facts or circumstances regarding my background that would warrant further review of my fitness for ministry before my being entrusted with the responsibilities of ministry on behalf of a calling body within in this Region. | _____ | _____ |
| 8. I have completed specific training in clergy ethics (including a review of procedures for handling allegations of pastoral misconduct). | _____ | _____ |
| 9. If I have not completed the recommended training in clergy ethics, I commit myself to completing such training within one year of accepting a position within this Region. | _____ | _____ |
| 10. In addition to the names used on this form, as an adult, I have been known by the following name(s) during the time(s) indicated: | | |

On a separate sheet provide an explanation for each item that caused you to answer "not true." Give enough information for follow-up, including the date, nature, and place of each incident leading to a complaint, proceeding, or action; where and when each was adjudicated; and the disposition of the complaint(s). Indicate steps taken toward rehabilitation, if any. Use additional pages as needed.

Send to: ABC CPC Region Office, PO Box 30, Mayhurst, OR 97036

American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast (ABC CPC)

Release Form

This information I have provided on this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge and may be verified by the Region. I hereby authorize ABC CPC to make any and all contacts necessary to verify my prior employment history, and to inquire concerning any prior arrest or criminal records or any professional, religious, or judicial proceedings involving me as a defendant. By means of this release, I also authorize any previous employer(s), religious judicatory, and any law enforcement agencies or judicial authorities to release any and all requested information to the Pastoral Services Committee of the American Baptist Church of the Central Pacific Coast.

I have read this release and understand fully that the information obtained may be used to deny me acceptance by a calling body within the ABC CPC or the recognition of my ordination by the Region.

I also agree that I will hold harmless ABC CPC, as well as any prior employer, religious judicatory, law enforcement authority, or judicial authority from any and all claims, liabilities, and cause of action for the release of the use or any information.

Signature of Candidate: _____

Date _____

Send to: ABC CPC Region Office, PO Box 30, Mayhurst, OR 97036

CONSENT FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Your signature below authorizes **American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast** and **Criminal Information Services, Inc.** to obtain information about you (if applicable) from various law enforcement agencies, courts, and corrections agencies.

Please complete all information below. Please print.

Full Legal Name: _____	Male _____	Female _____
Current Address: _____		
Other Names Used: _____ (Maiden, alias', legal name change, etc.)		
DOB: _____	DL#: _____	State: _____
SSN: _____		
Previous Addresses in past 7 years: _____ _____		
Have you ever been convicted of any crime? Yes _____ No _____		
If "Yes," explain: _____ _____		

Applicant's signature: I have reviewed and completed this form as applicable to me. I give American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast permission to verify any information I have provided. This authorization shall continue to be effective until revoked by me. A photocopy or facsimile copy of this consent shall be as effective as the original. By my signature, I affirm that all information on this form is true and accurate.

Signature of applicant: _____

Signature of witness: _____

Date: _____

Please return by one of the following methods:

- Scan completed form and email to amlowe@abccpc.org
- Fax completed form to (503) 223-6747
- Mail completed form to: ABC CPC Region Office, PO Box 30, Mayhurst, OR 97036

Name: _____

Member church: _____

Ordination Process Checklist for PSC/ABC CPC Office

Text in italics designates work to be completed by Administrative Assistant in ABC CPC office.

Prior to meeting with the Executive Minister and PSC representative:

Candidate makes initial contact with Sponsoring Church Pastor/Sponsoring church. Sponsoring Church Pastor, or if candidate is the pastor, the moderator of the church, initiates a letter of recommendation of ordination for candidate from the church to the Executive Minister of the ABC CPC.

- Submitted letter from church recommending ordination. *Placed in candidate's file.*

Candidate contacts Region office to get contact information for PSC Chairperson and a copy of the Manual for Ordination. (If the chairperson and executive minister contact info is on introduction page of manual, no need to get the contact info.)

- Region office to send out Manual for Ordination to candidate.*

Candidate contacts PSC Chairperson and Executive Minister. PSC chairperson will assign a mentor/representative to walk candidate through the ordination process.

Candidate will schedule a meeting with the Executive Minister and Mentor.

- Scheduled meeting (date): _____
- Met with Executive Minister mentor/representative of PSC (date): _____
- Mentor reviews Manual for Ordination and "The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches." See Appendix 7.

Prior to meeting with Pastoral Services Committee:

Candidate submits application form and \$100 background check fee.

- Completed application form and submitted \$100.
- File form and inform Executive Minister, Mentor and PSC Chairperson.*
- Forward money to ABC CPC financial manager and place a copy of the check in the applicant's file.*
- Designated staff person will initiate the background check.*
- Receive report of background check and file in applicant's file.*
- Notify the PSC Chairperson immediately upon receipt of report.*
- Executive Minister to review and record in candidates file.

Candidates seeking recognition from other denominations, submit a copy of ordination certificate.

- Submit a copy of ordination certificate. *Place in applicant's file.*

The following must be completed and/or received by the Pastoral Services Committee, four weeks prior to the meeting with the candidate:

- Scheduled a meeting with the Pastoral Services Committee after the completion of the following (date): _____
- Candidates submit autobiographical sketch/personal faith history. *Place in applicant's file. Copies of this made for PSC members and supplied for the PSC meeting with the candidate.*
- Supplied references. *Place in applicant's file. Copies of references are made for PSC members and supplied for the PSC meeting with the candidate.*
 - Reference #1
 - Reference #2
 - Reference #3
 - Reference #4
- Supplied official post-secondary school's transcripts. *Place in applicant's file. A copy is made for the PSC Chairperson and a **copy** is supplied for the PSC meeting with the candidate.*
- Attend Center for Ministry for Assessment (date): _____
- Report from Center for Ministry (date received): _____
- *Reviewed by the Executive minister and recorded in the candidate's file.*

The following may or may not take place with an additional meeting with the candidate and PSC. Items must be completed or submitted to the PSC no later than four weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.

- Submitted ordination/position paper. *Place in candidate's file.*
- *Email ordination/position paper to entire PSC plus Coaches Mentor and Executive Minister no later than four (4) weeks prior to PSC meeting.*
- Completed other recommended work. *Place in candidate's file.*

Next step for all chaplain chaplaincy candidates:

Contact and follow the process for endorsement by the Chaplaincy Program of American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

Chaplains will be in a duo process, one for ordination and one for endorsement as a chaplain. The ordination process will be through the ABC CPC. The endorsement process will be through the American Baptist Home Mission Societies
P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, Pa 19482-0851

At the meeting of the Pastoral Services Committee:

- Discuss ordination/position paper.
- Make one of the following recommendations, to be recorded by the Executive Minister and place in candidate's file
 - PSC makes recommendation to proceed with ordination
 - PSC tables a recommendation for the following reasons:

- PSC recommends to candidate to not proceed with ordination for the following reasons:

- PSC recommends the next steps for the candidate, to be recorded by the Executive Minister and place in candidate's file.
- Signed "The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches." Place in candidate's file.

Following recommendation for proceeding with ordination:

- Send letter to church recommending candidate proceed with ordination/recognition by the PSC Chairperson. *A copy is to be placed in the candidate's file.*
- Candidate will arrange an Ordination Council date with sponsoring church.
Ordination Council (date): _____
- PSC Chairperson will appoint a moderator for the Ordination Council from the Pastoral Services committee to chairperson the Ordination Council.

Ordination Council will comprise of ABC CPC church representatives. The sponsoring church will be responsible for scheduling, place and invitations.

- Invite churches of ABC CPC to send representatives. RSVP kindly requested.
- Make a copy of the ordination paper available upon request.
- Have copies of the paper available at the Ordination Council.
- A clerk is appointed from the sponsoring church.
- Following the review of the ordination paper and examination of the candidate, the candidate is excused and representatives from ABC CPC churches will vote on ordination.
- The candidate will be asked to return, and the recommendation is given to the candidate.

Ordination Ceremony

- Date is arranged at the convenience of the sponsoring church.
- The Moderator of the church or a representative of the Ordination Council will read the recommendation of the candidate for Ordination.
- ABC CPC Region will provide an ordination certificate.
- Copy of certificate will be placed in candidates file. *Record name in the American Baptist Churches Information System (ABCIS).*
- Contact Region's communication coordinator for publicity purposes.

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 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 laypersons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when those constituents are helping pay their salaries.
- I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my professional ministerial status.
- I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, and 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: _____

For printable version of the Covenant and Code of Ethics in multiple languages and an accompanying Learning Guide go to <https://ministerscouncil.com/resources/code-of-ethics-and-guide/>

**Pastoral Services Committee of
the American Baptist Churches
of the Central Pacific Coast (ABC CPC)**

Request for Reference Form

Applicant _____ Date _____

Name of Reference _____ Telephone# _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Please respond to the following areas of concern and return to the address at the end of this form within two weeks of the above date. Thank you.

1. How long have you known the applicant, and in what roles or relationships?

2. Describe the applicant's strengths. _____

3. Describe the applicant's perceived weaknesses. _____

4. Describe the applicant's history of establishing and maintaining effective, healthy relationships.

5. From your observations, describe the ways the applicant responds to conflict. Give examples, if possible.

6. Explain why you would or would not select this person to be the pastor of your home church, if the choice were yours.

7. Describe any concerns about or awareness of ethical misconduct related to this person (financial, sexual, personal, ministerial, etc.).

8. Is there any other information of which the Pastoral Services Committee should be made aware?

Return to:
Pastoral Services Committee
c/o American Baptist Churches of
the Central Pacific Coast
PO Box 30, Mayhurst, OR 97036

American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast
Street Address: 0245 SW Bancroft Street, Suite G, Portland,
OR 97239

Guidelines for Ordination Paper

Purpose of the Paper

The ordination paper is a major reflection on theological and ecclesiastical ideas and how they relate to your life and ministry. This paper is not intended to be an exclusively academic paper, though it definitely requires theological reflection. This paper is a tool that will enable the Ministerial Leadership Committee understand your theological process. It is also intended as a tool to help you integrate theology and doctrine in your life and ministry, including how these inform and shape your own spiritual formation and practices. It is not, however, a restatement of your personal faith history.

Introduction

A brief description of the ways you relate to the identity and diversity of American Baptist Churches USA.

Christian Doctrine and Practice as They Relate to Your Life and Ministry

- The Person of God the Father
- The Person of God the Son: Jesus Christ
- The Person of God the Holy Spirit
- The Trinity
- Humanity and Sin
- Salvation—The Nature of the Gospel View of Scripture
- Kingdom of God
- The Christian Hope—The Meanings of Death and Eternal Life
- Christian Eschatology
- Place of Prayer and/or spiritual formation

The Doctrine of the Church as It Relates to Your Life and Ministry

- The Mission of the Church
- The Role of Preaching the Gospel
- The Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- The Ecumenical Aspects of the Church
- The Place of the Church in History
- The Purpose and Place of the Church in Today's World
- The Role of the Minister
- The Ministry of the Laity
- The Theology and Practice of Worship

Mentors

The role of the mentor is to guide the candidate through the ordination process. It is understood that the mentor knows the ABC CPC process for ordination.

1. A mentor will be assigned by the Pastoral Services Committee. The candidate may request a possible mentor.
2. A mentor should be a colleague in ministry who is acquainted with and supportive of ABC USA and ABC CPC.
3. The mentor should meet face to face or be in contact with the candidate (based on proximity) as often as needed.
4. The mentor and candidate should agree on the time/place criteria.
5. The mentor needs to be available to the candidate for phone/email contact.
6. The mentor should review the process and procedures for ordination, specifically the Manual for Ordination.
7. The mentor may consult with the Executive Minister or PSC chairperson to clarify questions related to the candidate's steps toward ordination.
8. The mentor should provide honest feedback to the candidate and the PSC.
9. The mentor must understand and support The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches.
10. The mentor should pray for and with the candidate.

**American Baptist Churches of
the Central Pacific Coast**
0245 SW Bancroft, Suite G, Portland, Oregon

Withdrawal by ABC CPC of Recognition of Ordination

Recognition by the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast of any ordination can be revoked and the minister's name removed upon the recommendation of the Region's Pastoral Services Committee. Such recommendation shall be made only upon due cause. "Due cause" shall be the violation of the standards outlined in "The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches" (Appendix 4) and following the process outlined in "An Ecclesiastical Process for Review of Ministerial Standing" described in this Manual.

In extreme and unusual situations, circulation of an individual's profile generated by ABPS may be placed on hold by the Executive Minister of ABC CPC. This action is to be taken only upon written notification to the individual and the ABPS, and after consultation with the Region's Pastoral Services Committee.

To preserve the rights and responsibilities of all persons involved in such actions, the ABC USA developed the following process, which has been adopted by the ABC CPC Region Board on October 19, 2018.

An Ecclesiastical Process for Review of Ministerial Standing

Adopted by the National Commission on the Ministry,

January 18, 1991 Revised: January 21, 1993

Revised by the Ministerial Leadership Commission, January 20, 1995

Preamble

In the ongoing care for churches and their ministerial leaders, there are occasions in which allegations may be raised about a ministerial leader. Frequently, these allegations are handled within the ongoing service and care of the Region. In those rare instances in which a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, it may be necessary to have a more formal process for review of the recognition of ordination with ministerial leaders. This review must be seen as part of an ongoing process of care. Its primary goal ought to be a concern for justice, reconciliation, and healing for both the congregation and the individual(s). For this reason all participants must exercise great care to assure that the allegations and the process remain confidential unless some decision is reached which requires notification.

One reason Regions exist is to strengthen the spiritual health and vitality of its constituent churches and their ministerial leaders. Programs, services, and pastoral care are ways in which this central concern is expressed for local churches and their ministerial leadership. Personal, professional, and pastoral care for ministerial leaders is an ongoing process. One aspect of that process is the recognition of ordination by which the whole denominational family gives affirmation and support to clergy.

The Pastoral Services Committee (PSC) of the Region has responsibility for the recognition of ordination as well as responsibility for the church's review of the recognition of ordination. This process is guided by the biblical mandate of Matthew 18:15-17. According to this passage, the goals are: first, to deal directly with the person (verse 15); second, to deal with a small, more informal group (verse 16); third, only when the process has failed, to bring resolution to move before the church represented by the Pastoral Services Committee (verse 17).

It must be stressed that this is an ecclesiastical process conducted within the confines of the church's structure and polity. It is *not* a legal process. Consequently, parties involved are not bound by the dictates of the judicial system within this ecclesiastical process. We are, however, bound by our commitment to justice and fairness for all concerned. Being an ecclesiastical process, there is no official role or place for attorneys in this ecclesiastical review process. If any involved parties wish to seek legal counsel, they must do so outside the official ecclesiastical review process. Attorneys are not permitted to participate in the preliminary exploration, the review hearing, or the appeal process. This ecclesiastical process is recommended to Regions acknowledging the autonomy of the local church and the extremely limited authority of the ABC USA in matters of ordination and recognition of ordination.

Having this ecclesiastical process does not absolve any church body, leader, member, or affiliate from their responsibilities under the law. It is expected that all legal requirements be fulfilled. For example, ministers, chaplains, and pastoral counselors are required to report sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect of children, minors, and elders in most states.

In every sexual misconduct case the Executive Minister and his/her staff will attempt to make pastoral care available to the person making the allegations of misconduct, the family of the person making the allegations, the pastor who allegedly committed the misconduct, the pastor's family, the members of the pastor's congregation, the pastor's colleagues, and others. **However, the Executive Minister and his/her staff cannot themselves function as a pastor, counselor, advocate, attorney, or other "fiduciary" of any of these people. The ultimate responsibility of the Executive Minister and his/her staff is to the Region and not to any individual within the Region. If a conflict arises between what is in the Region's best interests and what is in the interest of someone else, the Executive Minister and his/her staff are obliged to act on the Region's behalf.**

Every report of clergy sexual misconduct involves unique people and unique circumstances. The Process of Review merely describes the general approach that the Region will follow in responding to reports of clergy sexual misconduct. It will not be appropriate, or even possible, for the Region to follow this approach in every case. The Region reserves the right to depart from this Process for Review to assure a fair and just process for all persons involved. Such departures shall be at the discretion of the Region.

1. **Written Allegations:** When allegations about a particular ministerial leader have not been resolved in the ongoing process of service and care of a Region, formal allegations are to be addressed to the Chairperson of the Pastoral Services Committee with a copy to the Executive Minister of the Region. The allegations must be specific in content, made in writing, and signed. These allegations, which may come from Region staff, other ministerial leaders, or from lay persons, are to be related to the following categories:

- Delinquency of a moral, ethical, or financial nature which brings the church into disrepute.
- Violation of expectations the church has about ethical behavior for its ministerial leaders as articulated in the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of the ABC USA.

These allegations do not include issues of compatibility between a ministerial leader and congregation.

2. **Pastoral Intervention:** When the normal processes have failed to bring resolution, and formal charges have been developed, there is an ongoing need for pastoral intervention for the persons making the allegations, the ministerial leader in question, their families, if any, and the congregation being served. These pastoral interventions may be done by members of the Region staff, by members of the PSC, or by members of the Region's Ministers Council who are not directly involved in the process.

3. **Informing the Person about the Allegations:** The Pastoral Services Committee shall inform the person in writing of the allegations. It shall provide him or her with information about the process of review and request a meeting with this person for a preliminary exploration of the allegations.

4. **Preliminary Exploration:** The Pastoral Services Committee, either as a body or through delegated representatives, shall meet with the person making allegations to clarify the allegations or respond to any questions. In a separate meeting, the Pastoral Services Committee, either as a body or through delegated representatives, shall meet with the person in question to explore the allegations and determine what steps to take. (If either person fails to appear, the PSC may proceed.) There are five possible courses of action:

- a. The PSC may discover that there is no warrant for a review hearing and exonerate the person.
- b. The person may acknowledge the truth of the allegations and work with the PSC deciding which of the actions listed under #6c below will be followed.
- c. The PSC may, in the event of an unusually grave or emergency situation, temporarily suspend recognition of ordination for a period of not more than ninety (90) days. During this period the PSC shall convene a review hearing to consider the matter fully. Notice of this decision shall be given to the person in question and to the appropriate denominational bodies.
- d. The person may dispute the allegations in full or in part, and yet work out with the PSC a plan to deal with the situation without utilizing the full process of the review hearing.
- e. The person may dispute the allegations and the PSC may decide to utilize the review hearing process to investigate and make a decision about the allegations.

All persons are allowed to seek whatever counsel is appropriate, including legal counsel, in preparation for the preliminary exploration. However, attorneys are not allowed to act as legal counsel in the preliminary exploration process.

5. **Review Hearing Notice:** When a review hearing is scheduled, all parties involved are to be notified and informed about the process and how to prepare for it. The hearing should be not less than thirty (30) days and not more than ninety (90) days following notification. The ministerial leader in question is to be supplied with a written copy of the allegations, a description of the review hearing procedure, and a notification of his or her rights. These rights include the right to be present, the right to present evidence including witnesses on his or her behalf, and the right to have an advocate present. This advocate may be clergy or lay and is intended to provide support and assistance to the accused person throughout the process.

6. **The Review Hearing:** The hearing is held to thoroughly investigate the allegations.

- a. The hearing shall be fair, impartial, and confidential for the person in question, the person/s making the allegations, and the wider church family. The PSC may specify the amount of time allowed for presentation of the allegations, for the defense, and for summary statements. (If a person fails to appear, the PSC may proceed.)

All persons involved in the review hearing process are allowed to seek whatever counsel is appropriate, including legal counsel, in preparation for the hearing. However, attorneys are not allowed to act as legal counsel in the review hearing process. It is not necessary for the person/s making the allegations to personally confront the person in question. The Review Hearing is an opportunity for the PSC to hear all relevant information in order that it may reach a decision.

- b. The following is a guide for how the hearing may progress:
1. Opening statement.
 2. Introduction.
 3. Statement about how the hearing will be conducted.
 4. Prayer.
 5. Reading of the allegations.
 6. Presentation of information or testimony supporting the allegations.
 7. Presentation of information or testimony refuting the allegations.
 8. An opportunity will be given for those making the allegations to respond to the presentation of refutation.
 9. An opportunity will be given for the person in question, or by his/her representatives, to respond.
 10. Questions by the Ministerial Leadership Committee to any of those offering information, testimony, refutation, or response.
 11. Closing statement by those making the allegations or his/her designated representative.
 12. Closing statement by the person in question or his/her designated representative.
 13. Prayer for continuing guidance and comfort for those involved in this situation and for those who are given the responsibility to come to a decision.
 14. Executive session of the Pastoral Services Committee.

- c. The decision of the Region shall be based upon a predominance of evidence presented at the hearing. Following the hearing the PSC deliberates and makes its decision from the following two options, each with unique plans of action:
 1. *Discern that their findings do not uphold the allegations.*
 - a) Exonerate the person, and if necessary, take steps to stop continued allegations.
 2. *Discern that their findings do uphold the allegations. One of the following will be chosen:*
 - a) Develop a plan for addressing the issues short of censure, suspension of recognition of ordination or withdrawal of recognition of ordination.
 - b) Allow the person to voluntarily relinquish recognition of ordination.
 - c) Censure the person but allow the recognition of ordination to stand.
 - d) Suspend the recognition of the person's ordination.
 - e) Withdraw the recognition of the person's ordination.

7. **Notification of Decision:** The Pastoral Services Committee shall notify all parties of its decision within fifteen (15) days of the review hearing. In the event a person is exonerated, that individual shall receive a letter acknowledging this action, a copy of which shall be sent to those making the allegations. In the event of suspension or withdrawal of his/her recognition of ordination, the American Baptist Churches Information System, the American Baptist Personnel Services, the Regional Executive Ministers Council, the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, the Ministers Council, the originating church, the church (or church organization) being served at the time of the allegations, the church (or church organization) now being served, and any other bodies which have relied on American Baptist recognition for endorsement, approval, or recognition shall also be notified.

8. **Appeal:** A person whose recognition of ordination has been suspended or withdrawn may appeal the decision to the Executive Committee of the Region Board. The Executive Committee must respond within sixty (60) days. In considering the appeal, the Executive Committee will determine the appropriateness of the process used by the PSC to reach its final decision. An appeal is not to determine an individual's fitness for ministry; rather, it is to determine if a fair and just process was used by the PSC. The decision of the Executive Committee of the Region Board shall be final.

9. **Pastoral Follow-up:** There is a need for pastoral care throughout the process, but particularly following a review hearing. Once the hearing is complete, decisions made, and actions taken, there needs to be intentional effort made at reconciliation and healing. The Church needs to offer ongoing support and concern to those who made the allegations or who were wronged and find ways to express forgiveness and grace to those who have been disciplined.

10. **Reinstatement:** A person's ordination may be subsequently recognized again, if there is a desire to be reinstated. The Pastoral Services Committee will meet with the person to review the original action, subsequent history, and present qualifications for ministry. In the event that the Pastoral Services Committee is not the one which withdrew recognition, appropriate documentation will be secured about the prior action so that full information will be available to the PSC considering reinstatement.

11. **Re-Entering the Ordination Process:** If a person whose ordination recognition has been removed desires to have the recognition reinstated, the process is found in Appendix 1. The process will be the same as those initially entering the Ordination Process.

Definitions

Recognition of Ordination: In our tradition ordination is granted by the local congregation working with the partner churches. The denomination does not ordain; it recognizes (or chooses not to recognize) ordinations of a local church, or in other denominations. A person may voluntarily give up the recognition of his or her ordination. The denomination may choose to withdraw recognition of ordination either for cause or after a period of inactivity.

The Region: The process of recognition of ordination in the denomination is decentralized; a Region acts on behalf of the whole denomination in recognizing, failing to recognize, allowing a recognition to lapse or withdrawing a recognition of ordination.

There is reciprocity among ABC bodies with all Regions and National Boards agreeing to accept the process as applied in other partner Regions.

Pastoral Services Committee: In this document Pastoral Services Committee is a generic term for that group of people within a particular Region which is charged with the responsibility for recognition (and withdrawal of recognition) of ordination.

Review Hearing is the process by which allegations against an individual are reviewed and a decision is rendered either for or against the individual. This is not a criminal or civil process; rather, it is a church process by which the churches are seeking to order their life together under the leading of God's Spirit.

Censure is an official written statement of the Ministerial Leadership Committee's disapproval of a behavior as unbecoming one who has been recognized to practice as an ordained minister of the American Baptist Churches USA. It is offered as a warning indicating that further similar conduct is unacceptable and could lead to suspension or withdrawal of his/her recognition of ordination.

Emergency Suspension of Recognition of Ordination is intended to interrupt the ministry and pastoral selection process while the investigative and decision-making process proceeds. The recognition of ordination may be suspended for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days in the event of an unusually grave or emergency situation. Written notice of an Emergency Suspension shall be sent to the American Baptist Churches Information System, the American Baptist Personnel Services, the Regional Executive Ministers Council, the church (or church organization) being served, the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, and any other bodies which have relied on American Baptist recognition for endorsement, approval, or recognition.

Suspension of Recognition of Ordination is a withdrawal of recognition of ordination for a specific period of time in order to implement a program prescribed by the Pastoral Services Committee. The conditions of the suspension must be clearly stated. Notice of a suspension will be given to the American Baptist Churches Information System, the American Baptist Personnel Services, the Regional Executive Ministers Council, the original ordaining church, the church (or church organization) being served at the time of the allegations, the church (or church organization) now being served, the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, and any other bodies which have relied on American Baptist recognition for endorsement, approval, or recognition.

Withdrawal of Recognition of Ordination means that the American Baptist Churches/USA no longer recognized the validity of an ordination. Notice of the withdrawal of recognition shall be given to the American Baptist Churches Information System, the American Baptist Personnel Services, the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, the Regional Executive Ministers Council, the original ordaining church, the church (or church organization) being served at the time of the allegations, the church (or church organization) now being served, and any other bodies which have relied on American Baptist recognition for endorsement, approval, or recognition.

Implications

There are different kinds of implications of a decision by the Ministerial Leadership Committee to suspend or withdraw the recognition of a person's ordination. It will mean:

- that a person's name will be deleted from the Directory of Ministerial Leaders of the ABC USA,
- that the American Baptist Personnel Services will seek to deactivate any use of a person's profile, and
- that all ABC Regions will be notified of the action.

Depending on the requirements of other bodies, this decision may directly affect an endorsement, approval, or recognition which was predicated on ABC action; in some instances, this may mean termination of employment.

Adopted on October 10, 2018 by the Pastoral Services Committee of the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast.

Adopted on October 19, 2018 by the Region Board of the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast

Customizing the Process for Our Region

It is understood that this document needs to be "custom fit" to each Region. There are at least three levels at which this customizing might occur. The first and most obvious is at the point of terminology. The generic terms used in the model will need to be made specific to fit your Region.

The second level relates to the geographic size or number of churches in your Region. The "model document" allows for this customizing. Some Regions will want to make certain points more specific (such as specifying the size of a preliminary exploration or review hearing panel). It is the intent that all Regions will have a process which follows this basic structure while recognizing the need to make adjustments for specific needs of Regions.

The third level is to bring the document into line with applicable state law. At that point, it is very important to make clear what question is being asked of an attorney within your Region. For instance, if you ask most attorneys "How should we do this process?" or "Is this process the way you think we should do it?" most attorneys will begin to reconstruct the process around the civil or criminal proceedings with which they are most familiar. While this is a natural response, it is not what we are recommending as the most helpful. On the other hand, show the document to an attorney and say, "This is the process we would like to follow because we think it is fair and more in keeping with our church's values. Is there anything in this that would not be allowed by the laws of this state"? This gets at the real issue—which is whether or not what we seek to do will be allowed by the state law. (We have been told that states will not intrude into "interchurch" matters unless (1) that process is clearly unfair, or (2) that process is made a public issue by the church body such as defaming a person.)

Implementing Guidelines for Those Making Allegations For the Ecclesiastical Review Process

(Note: The steps below are the steps of "An Ecclesiastical Process for Review of Ministerial Standing" found on the previous pages.)

Step One of the Process—Written Allegations: The Pastoral Services Committee in a Region has the task of governance over the process of recognition of ordination and any review of such recognition as well as the ordination process itself, including the periodic revisions and updating of this Manual of Ordination.

- a) Any person making an allegation about the conduct of a ministerial leader which may call for a review hearing shall address those concerns to the Chairperson of the Pastoral Services Committee (in care of the Region office) with a courtesy copy to the Executive Minister of the Region.
- b) The process of exploration of allegations and, potentially, a review hearing shall be guided by two principles:
 - Concerns for the spiritual health and vitality of the church are at the heart of the process. This means that the pastoral concern for both the minister in question and the church body may call for times in which such care may be given for either the individual and the group or both.
 - The hearing shall be fair, impartial, and confidential for the person in question, the person/s making the allegations, and the wider church family. While this is a church process and not a civil or criminal proceeding, it is to be fair, impartial, and confidential. This means that the nature of the allegations must be clearly understood, that the minister in question is given adequate opportunity for response, that all persons are aware of the process that will be followed, and that **all people involved will maintain confidentiality**.
- c) In order to be fair, any allegations about a ministerial leader must be made in writing (whether they are made by staff, other ministerial leaders, or lay persons). These allegations must be based on observable behavior and/or speech and not based on feelings about the minister. The allegations must be written in a clear and concise manner, and signed. Every effort must be made to cite date/s, time/s, locations, and context of the alleged behavior and/or speech. They must fall into one or both of the following categories so that the nature of the allegations are clearly understood by all:
 - Delinquency of a moral, ethical, or financial nature which brings the church into disrepute.
 - Violation of expectations the church has about ethical behavior for its ministerial leaders as articulated in the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of the ABC USA.

- d) While these allegations need to be concise, they must also contain sufficient data for the Pastoral Services Committee in the process of preliminary exploration. In this stage the person in question will be given an opportunity to respond to the written allegations. Those making the allegations will not be invited to make a presentation at this time, so the written allegations should contain enough detail for the PSC to rule whether or not there is sufficient reason for calling a review hearing as well as to work for reconciliation. At the time a person makes allegations about a particular ministerial leader, that person should receive a copy of these Implementing Guidelines and a copy of the Region's Process of Review for Ministerial Standing.

Step Six of the Process—The Review Hearing: The individuals bringing the allegations have several responsibilities at the time of the Review Hearing. With all the persons involved in the review process, they must keep in mind that the **spiritual health and vitality of the church and all of its people is the central concern**. One of the hopes and goals of this process is reconciliation and healing. For this reason, the hearing is to be conducted:

- in a spirit of prayer and godly discernment, seeking God's guidance,
- in a fair and impartial manner, consistent with the Golden Rule, and
- with a nonnegotiable commitment to confidentiality (that is: all persons involved agree to hold in confidence all that is said and done).

Those making allegations about the minister in question shall have three opportunities during the review hearing to address the issues. The first will include the presentation of evidence and calling of witnesses to support the allegations. The second will be in the rebuttal time following the presentation of the person in question. The third will be the closing summary statement on behalf of those bringing the allegations. Because there are limitations of time, these presentations will need to be limited to the allegations made and the relevant evidence. Those who offer evidence or testimony may be asked questions by the Pastoral Services Committee.

Before the hearing, the Pastoral Services Committee will notify all participants as to the particular time limits for each part of the hearing and any other ground rules that may be needed. The time limits are intended to be fair and yet move the process forward.

Step Seven of the Process—Notification of Decision: Those making the allegations, or their representative, shall be notified of the decision by the Pastoral Services Committee within fifteen (15) days of the review hearing.

Guidelines for the Minister in Question For the Ecclesiastical Review Process

(Note: The steps below are the steps of "A Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing" found on the previous pages.)

The intention of the review process is to build up the whole church. The process is guided by two principles:

- *Concerns for the spiritual health and vitality of the church are at the heart of the process. This means that the pastoral concern for both the minister in question and the church body may call for times in which such care may be given for either or both, the individual and the group.*
- *The hearing shall be fair, impartial, and confidential for the person in question, the persons making the allegations, and the wider church family. While this is a church process and not a civil or criminal proceeding, it is to be fair, impartial, and confidential. This means that the nature of allegations must be clearly understood, that the minister in question is given adequate opportunity for response, that all persons are aware of the process that will be followed, and that all people involved will maintain confidentiality.*

One of the intentions of "A Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing" is to assure that the ministerial leader is not subject to unfair allegations or a process which may be unfair to him or her. While a structured process may seem at first to be threatening, some parts are specifically intended to provide fairness for the ministerial leader in question.

The insistence that allegations be written may seem to draw the lines between the involved parties very sharply. The intent of written allegations is that some extraneous issues are eliminated and the real issues are, hopefully, brought into focus.

At all points, the process is intended to be fair to the person about whom allegations are made. It is also hoped that this process is surrounded by pastoral care for all persons.

Step Four of the Process—Preliminary Exploration: The preliminary exploration is intended to be an informal process in which the Pastoral Services Committee and the minister in question can explore the allegations made. In light of the guidelines above, the goal of the exploration is to seek a resolution to the issues raised. This is helpful to both the ministerial leader as well as to the church community. It is important to note that the Pastoral Services Committee has five (5) possible courses of action:

- a) The PSC may discover that there is no warrant for a review hearing and exonerate the person.
- b) The person may acknowledge the truth of the allegations and work with the PSC in deciding which of the actions (listed under #6c in the Review Process) will be followed.

- c) The PSC may, in the event of an unusually serious or an emergency situation, temporarily suspend recognition of ordination for a period of not more than ninety (90) days. During this period the PSC shall convene a review hearing to consider the matter fully. Notice of this decision shall be given to the person in question and the appropriated denominational bodies.
- d) The person in question may dispute the allegations in full or in part and yet work out with the PSC a plan to deal with the situation without utilizing the full process of the review hearing.
- e) The person in question may dispute the allegations and the PSC may decide to utilize the review hearing process to investigate and make a decision about the allegations.

It is important to note that the process has intentionally deferred the direct consideration of any action on the recognition of ordination for a more formal hearing. Having called for the preliminary exploration, **the PSC cannot go beyond these five options**. It is hoped that this process will help to create a climate in which resolution and reconciliation are not only possible but likely. To this end, the PSC will not be meeting with those making the allegations, but only with the minister in question. The PSC will have the same written allegations which are to be sent to the minister in question. By the time the process has come to this point, the minister in question should have received:

- (1) "A Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing"
- (2) All of the written statements of allegations.

Once the individual receives notice of the allegations, it is their responsibility to inform the Pastoral Services Committee as to their response to the allegations and whether or not they will be at the preliminary exploration meeting. The response to the allegations may be in writing or by meeting in person with the Pastoral Services Committee or both. It should be noted that the Pastoral Services Committee may proceed whether or not the individual chooses to respond to the allegations or appear at the meeting.

Step Six of the Process—Review Hearing: If the Pastoral Services Committee decides to proceed with a review hearing, there are several things which should be noted. The review hearing is not a court setting. The suggested process for a review hearing outlines a process which seeks to be fair and is not adversarial. Those making the allegations will have an opportunity to present their side, without the interruption associated with American courtrooms. They will present the allegations within a specified time limit. Then the minister in question will have the same opportunity, within the specified time limits allowed, to present whatever evidence he or she may have regarding the allegations. In this format, with presentations by both sides, they may raise questions during their specified time. They will be in the form of a presentation to the Pastoral Services Committee, rather than addressed directly to one of the persons making the allegations. The minister in question will have three times during the hearing to present materials to the Pastoral Services Committee. S/he may

bring a person to be an advocate, friend, and/or support. This person may be clergy or lay. If there is no person to fill this role, the accused may request the Executive Minister or the Ministers Council to appoint one. As it has been emphasized in this paper, "A Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing," this is a church matter and not a civil or criminal procedure.

Step Seven of the Process—Notification of Decision: The minister in question shall be notified of the decision by the Pastoral Services Committee within fifteen (15) days of the review hearing.

Step Eight of the Process—Appeal: A person whose recognition of ordination has been suspended or withdrawn may appeal the decision to the Executive Committee of the Region Board. The Executive Committee must respond within sixty (60) days. In considering the appeal, the Executive Committee will determine the appropriateness of the process used by the PSC to reach its final decision. **An appeal is not to determine an individual's fitness for ministry; rather, it is to determine if a fair and just process was used by the PSC. The decision of the Executive Committee of the Region Board shall be final.**

Step Nine of the Process—Pastoral Follow-up: Once the hearing is complete (all of the decisions made and the appropriate actions taken), the Region staff will pursue reconciliation and healing. Staff will also encourage the Church to offer ongoing support and concern to those who made the allegations or who were wronged, and to find ways to express forgiveness and grace to those who have been disciplined.

Step Ten of the Process—Reinstatement: A person's ordination may be subsequently recognized again, if there is a desire to be reinstated. The Pastoral Services Committee will meet with the person to review the original action, subsequent history, and present qualifications for ministry. In the event that the Pastoral Services Committee is not the one which withdrew recognition, appropriate documentation will be secured about the prior action so that full information will be available to the PSC considering reinstatement.

Step Eleven of the Process—Re-Entering the Ordination Process: If a person whose ordination recognition has been removed desires to have the recognition reinstated, the process is found in Appendix 1. The process will be the same as those initially entering the Ordination Process. If you have any questions, please contact the Executive Minister or the Chairperson of the Pastoral Services Committee.

Implementing Guidelines for the Region Staff For the Ecclesiastical Review Process

(Note: The steps below are the steps of "A Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing" found on the previous pages.)

The role of Region staff in the review process is complicated by the various roles which may need to be fulfilled. Region staff are appropriately charged with the responsibility to facilitate the process, working with the Pastoral Services Committee to insure that the process is followed, with proper notice being given and records being kept. Region staff are appropriately concerned about the spiritual health and vitality of the person in question and the pastoral care of that person (and his or her spouse and family, if any), as well as concerned about insuring that the process is fair to the person. Region staff are also appropriately concerned about the spiritual health and vitality of the church in which the person has been serving, as well as about the wider church family. At some point these roles may be in conflict and great care must be taken to insure that each of these needs is being met. This may necessitate the delegation of some specific tasks or roles to keep appropriate and necessary boundaries. Sometimes this may mean that Region staff may have to excuse themselves from the decision-making process of the PSC.

Step One of the Process—Written Allegations: Making sure that the written allegations are precise, clear, and related to the given categories is vital to the whole process. When allegations are vague or imprecise it is unfair to the person in question, and is far more difficult for the Pastoral Services Committee to come to appropriate decisions. Therefore, Region staff will need to work with the Chairperson of the PSC in this process. It should be remembered that the allegations need to be specific enough for action as well as informative enough for the PSC to act at the time of the preliminary exploration. At the preliminary exploration, the allegations themselves will have to stand alone as the persons making the allegations will not be present.

This step of the process may necessitate working with Region staff, other professional church leaders, or people from the church. Sometimes a member of the Pastoral Services Committee or a member of the Region staff will need to be among those making the allegations. When this occurs, there must be a clear delineation of responsibilities and roles so that it is clear who is working with the PSC, who is working with those making allegations, and who is seeking to provide pastoral care to the person in question. When it is necessary for a Region staff person or a member of the Pastoral Services Committee to be among those making the allegation/s, then he or she should not be a part of the deliberating or decision-making process of the Pastoral Services Committee.

The Region Staff may need to assure that the persons making the allegations and the person about whom allegations are made receive copies of the region's process for review of ministerial standing and the appropriate guidelines and protocol.

Step Two of the Process—Pastoral Intervention: Although it is hoped that other parts of the church may take this concern seriously, Region staff are to be sure that someone other than themselves are providing pastoral care.

Step Three of the Process—Informing the Person of the Allegations: Working with the PSC Chairperson, Region staff must insure that proper notice is given to the person in question. This shall include a copy of "A Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing," a copy of all of the written allegations, a copy of the "Guidelines for the Minister in Question," and an invitation to meet with the Pastoral Services Committee for the preliminary exploration.

There should be both a formal and a personal element to this notice which contains an official and a pastoral dimension. **The formal notice should be sent by certified mail and the receipts preserved for the record.**

Because of the litigious nature of our society, careful records must be kept of the process. This includes official minutes of all meetings, copies of all correspondence, receipts for mailings, etc. Care must be taken to assure that these records are confidentially maintained and preserved. Because of the provisions for documentation being provided in the event of a request for reinstatement, the records need to be preserved for an extended period of time (as long as that request is possible).

Step Four of the Process—Preliminary Exploration: As staff to the PSC, the Region staff may be in the best position to insure that the various elements of the preliminary exploration are present. As staff to the PSC, it may be helpful to remind them that this is an informal process in which they are not being asked to "decide about recognition of ordination." As pastoral support for the person in question, it is important to insure that the person receives fair treatment. If this preliminary exploration becomes adversarial, the potential for some of the possible courses of actions may be reduced.

Step Five of the Process—Review Hearing Notice: It is important that the Region staff assure that proper and full notice of the hearing is given and that adequate records are kept.

Step Six of the Process—the Review Hearing: The review hearing is an ecclesiastical matter and not a criminal or civil proceeding. The goal is to seek reconciliation and healing, as well as justice. This may be a difficult concept for all persons to grasp.

The underlying principle of the civil and criminal court system is that truth is best found in the adversarial arena. This means that both sides work very hard to defeat the other side on the assumption that truth is stronger. Within the church, we seek to uphold the "spiritual health and vitality of the church:" the whole church, the person in question, his or her accusers, and the wider church. Thus, the beginning assumption is not "truth-through-adversarial-interrogation;" rather, we begin with the assumption of a process which is fair to all sides and seeks reconciliation. Beginning with assumptions about relationships (rather than abstract "truth"), the church process outline resembles more closely a debate process than a courtroom setting.

One of the important tasks of Region staff is to make sure that the nature of the review hearing is understood by all. This may mean that the Region staff will make sure that the person in question has a friend or advocate at the hearing. The role of the advocate is to insure that the process is fair, and that the possibility of reconciliation and healing is kept alive and promoted. If the person in question does not have an advocate, Region staff may work to assure that such a person is available. (The Ministers Council might be an appropriate body from which to appoint an advocate.)

In working with the PSC as it deliberates on its decision, it may be helpful to take note of the suggested statements listed in the Implementing Guidelines for the Pastoral Services Committee (For example, "No, the charge is unfounded, etc."). These are intended to suggest some possible ways of wording an eventual decision that is in accord with this process. There are some careful distinctions which need to be studied to be understood. You may need to help the people serving on the PSC to understand those distinctions.

Step Seven of the Process—Notification of Decision: The Region staff will ensure that the Pastoral Services Committee notifies all interested parties, including those making the allegation and the minister in question of the decision by the within fifteen (15) days of the review hearing.

Step Eight of the Process—Appeal: In the event of an appeal to the Executive Committee of the Region Board, the Region staff shall assure that the appellate body has all the appropriate documentation. It is important to note that the process allows for one appeal which shall be final.

Step Nine of the Process—Pastoral Follow-up: The Region staff needs to assure that the person against whom allegations were made and the local congregation receive pastoral care.

Step Ten of the Process—Reinstatement: In the event of a person seeking to have the recognition of his or her ordination reinstated, the Region staff shall supply the Pastoral Services Committee, in that Region or any other, with all of the appropriate documentation. This means that appropriate records must be kept for an extended period of time (as long as that request is possible).

Implementing Guidelines for the Pastoral Services Committee For the Ecclesiastical Review Process

(Note: The steps below are the steps of "A Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing" found on pages 30-34.)

Step One of the Process—Written Allegations: The Pastoral Services Committee, through the Chairperson, shall insure that the person making allegations about a particular professional church leader receives a copy of the "Implementing Guidelines for those Making Allegations" and a copy of the "Region's Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing." In the event that written allegations are made, the Pastoral Services Committee, through the Chairperson, shall insure that the written allegations are:

- clearly stated, specific, and signed,
- clearly related to one or both of the grounds for action.

When allegations are made about a particular professional church leader, the Pastoral Services Committee through the Chairperson, shall insure that the person is informed and that he or she receives a copy of the "Guidelines for the Minister in Question," as well as a copy of the "Region's Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing."

At every step of this process, the Pastoral Services Committee shall seek to work in close cooperation with the Executive Minister of the Region or another staff person who may be designated to work with the Pastoral Services Committee.

There are two principles which ought to guide the process:

- *Concerns for the spiritual health and vitality of the church are at the heart of the process. This means that the pastoral concern for both the minister in question and the church body may call for times in which such care may be given for either or both, the individual and the group*
- *The hearing shall be fair, impartial, and confidential for the person in question, the persons making the allegations, and the wider church family. While this is a church process and not a civil or criminal proceeding, it is to be fair, impartial, and confidential. This means that the nature of allegations must be clearly understood, that the minister in question is given adequate opportunity for response, that all persons are aware of the process that will be followed, and that all people involved will maintain confidentiality.*

When these kinds of allegations are made, the Pastoral Service Committee, through the Chairperson, shall inform those making the allegations about the process which shall be followed, calling particular attention to the meaning of the Preamble and the second step, which calls for pastoral intervention. The nature of the Preliminary Exploration needs to be clarified, since those making the allegations will not be present.

The Preliminary Exploration allows for several possibilities. There is a pastoral role which may be played with the person in question. There is the danger that this full process may be used inappropriately to accuse professional church leaders, when the issues may have more to do with style of ministry and theological position than is apparent in the allegations. If the goal is to work for reconciliation and healing for both the professional church leader and the church, the Preliminary Exploration may provide a more informal process for finding a way to accomplish this.

It is important, even at this early stage, to uphold the value of confidentiality. There are several reasons for this. From the perspective of the church, the possibility of healing and reconciliation may be thwarted (if not damaged) if the allegations become the subject of gossip. From the perspective of legal problems, there are those who believe that the church is most vulnerable to lawsuits if the issue is made public and not kept within the church and all appropriate parameters. Therefore, at all stages, the Region staff should help all participants in the process to understand the need for confidentiality in this matter.

Step Three of the Process—Informing the Person of the Allegations: The Pastoral Services Committee, through the Chairperson, shall insure that proper written notice is given to the person in question. This shall include a copy of “A Process for Ecclesiastical Review of Ministerial Standing,” a copy of the written allegations, a copy of the "guidelines for the minister in question," and an invitation to meet with the Pastoral Services Committee for the Preliminary Exploration. There should be both a formal and a personal element to this notice. The formal notice should be sent by certified mail and the receipts preserved for the record.

Step Four of the Process—Preliminary Exploration: The Preliminary Exploration, as noted above, is a more informal process that seeks to pursue reconciliation and healing in the process of exploring whether or not there is sufficient cause to proceed with a full review hearing. That is a difficult balance to achieve. The PSC should remember that they are not being asked to “decide about recognition of ordination” at this stage, but only whether or not there is a need for a full hearing.

Two things should be noted. First, the PSC will be dealing with the written materials of those who are making the allegations, while having either written or personal presentations from the person in question. Second, the PSC may choose to delegate the responsibility to a smaller, representative group in order to facilitate the process.

When a member of the PSC, or a member of the Region staff is involved in making the allegations (as will be appropriate, at times), the role of that person needs to be clarified. That person may need to be a part of those making the allegations, and therefore not participate with the PSC in its questioning of persons or its deliberation. If the church of the person in question has not been involved in the process up to this point, and there is to be a review hearing, appropriate church officers should be informed of the review hearing.

Step Five of the Process—Review Hearing Notice: The Pastoral Services Committee, through the Chairperson, shall insure that proper notice is given (as described above) to all parties.

Step Six of the Process—the Review Hearing: The Pastoral Services Committee will need to prepare for the review hearing by going over the process and assigning responsibilities for the various parts. The nature of this hearing and its importance in the lives of both the church and the individuals calls for sensitive and prayerful preparation.

The underlying principle of the civil and criminal court system is that truth is best found in an adversarial arena. This means that both sides work very hard to defeat the other side on the assumption that truth is stronger.

Within the church, we seek to hold to the "spiritual health and vitality of the church" (the whole church, the person in question, his or her accusers, and the wider church).

Thus, the beginning assumption is not "truth-through-adversarial-interrogation;" rather, we begin with the assumption of a process which is fair to all sides and seeks reconciliation and healing. Beginning with assumptions about relationships (rather than abstract "truth"), the church process outlined resembles more closely a debate process than a courtroom setting.

A critical part of the planning for the hearing involves the assigning of time limits to the various parts. This will undoubtedly require a balancing of the needs to give the participants adequate time to make their presentations with the time constraints with which the Pastoral Services Committee must deal. However much time is allowed, it must be seen as essentially fair for both sides. When the time limits have been determined, they should be communicated to all the participants with sufficient lead time so they may prepare for the hearing. As the PSC prepares for its deliberation, the following options may help illustrate the range of decisions which are possible:

- *"No, the charge is unfounded."* The outcome could be that the allegations brought about the person are found to be unwarranted and that no disciplinary action is called for. When this is the outcome, recognizing the harm that the accusation may have caused, public notice shall be given, as well as pastoral support provided to the person accused. In some instances, there may be some necessity of taking steps to stop the person/s from making continued allegations.
- *"No, the charge about the person's fitness for ministry has not been proven, but some action is prescribed."* The outcome could be that the allegations brought about the person result in a plan for the growth and development of the person in his or her ministry. The person may or may not continue in his or her present position while undertaking the prescribed developmental work.
- *"The Pastoral Services Committee makes no finding about the allegations and allows the person to voluntarily relinquish the recognition of his or her ordination."* In this case, the person is allowed to request that recognition be withdrawn.

- *"Yes, the charge is sustained and the person is censured."* Censure may be an official statement by the PSC of the church's disapproval of a behavior as unbefitting a professional church leader. Censure may be offered as a warning, indicating that further similar conduct is unacceptable and could lead to suspension or withdrawal of recognition of ordination.
- *"Yes, the charge is sustained and the person is suspended."* Suspension for a period of time in order to implement a program prescribed by the PSC or to underscore the seriousness of the offense. For example, a person could be suspended while undergoing a program of psychological testing and counseling. The suspension should clearly state the period of time and conditions of the suspension.
- *"Yes, the charge is sustained and the recognition of the person's ordination is withdrawn."* In this case the PSC votes to withdraw recognition of the person's ordination. (Note: there may be times in which the PSC will choose this last option, even though the person is asking the Pastoral Services Committee to allow him or her to voluntarily relinquish the recognition of ordination.)

Step Seven of the Process—Notification of Decision: The Pastoral Services Committee, through the Chairperson, shall insure that proper notice of the decision shall be given to all parties, or their representatives, within fifteen (15) days of the hearing. When the decision involves the status of recognition, the PSC, through the Chairperson, shall insure that proper notice is given to all appropriate bodies.

Step Eleven of the Process—Re-Entering the Ordination Process: If a person whose ordination recognition has been removed desires to have the recognition reinstated, the process is found in Appendix 1. The process will be the same as those initially entering the Ordination Process