

Few people in our churches are acquainted with the long and challenging journey which Candidates for Ordained Pastoral Ministry in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches are required to make. The journey begins, of course, with conversion and a deep commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Fundamental to preparation for ordination is a sense of call to ministry. This is usually affirmed by the congregation of which they are a member. The local church expresses its affirmation by granting a *License to Minister*.

Theological Education

Then the years of preparation for ministry begin. They complete a baccalaureate degree at a recognized university or an accredited Bible college. Upon the completion of the baccalaureate program, they enroll in a theological seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia is the seminary of this Convention.

Those who anticipate serving as ordained clergy in the church setting should register for the three-year Master of Divinity program. Those in the age group from 35-54 may opt for the Bachelor of Theology program which consists of two years of Arts and two years of Theology. Those 55 years or older may be eligible for a two year internal Certificate of Ministerial Studies upon approval by the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education. If planning to attend a seminary other than Acadia they should ensure that it is properly accredited before beginning studies.

Board of Ministerial Standards and Education

The Board of Ministerial Standards and Education of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches interviews non-ordained individuals who are experiencing a call to ordained Christian ministry, normally near the end of their first year of theological studies. Non-ordained individuals appearing for the first time must hold a Church License to Minister. The Board will determine if the individual is to be accepted as a Candidate for Ordained Pastoral Ministry based upon their conversion, call to ministry, life experiences since

conversion and overall suitability for ministry in this Convention. The Board prescribes the appropriate standard of academic training applicable to the Candidate. The exit interview with the Board normally takes place in the final year of academic preparation. The Candidate must hold a current Association License to Minister at the time of their exit interview. Extra interviews may be required at the Board's discretion.

When the Board is satisfied that the student has completed the academic requirements and is deemed to possess the necessary spiritual gifts, it will recommend that the Candidate serve a year of Internship and then appear before the Examining Council for Ordination.

Year of Internship

Upon graduation from a theological seminary, a year of Internship must be served before ordination takes place. To qualify for Internship the person must be in a pastoral ministry setting for at least twenty-five hours per week.

The request to proceed with Internship is made by the Candidate to the office of the Executive Minister of the Convention. The Executive Minister will appoint an experienced CABC pastor as an Internship Supervisor/Mentor to work closely with the Candidate for a period of one year. The Candidate is asked to suggest up to three names for their Supervisor/Mentor. The final choice rests with the Executive Minister.

The role of the Supervisor/Mentor is to meet with the Candidate on a regular basis to discuss ministry situations, assist the Candidate with growth as a pastor and give feedback as the Statement of Faith is prepared. An Internship Manual is available to the Supervisor/Mentor to assist in this process. It is strongly recommended that an Internship Committee be formed at the church or ministry where the Candidate is serving to meet periodically with the Supervisor/ Mentor to inform him/her of the Intern's ministry.

At the beginning of the Internship the Candidate is eligible to be registered for permission to perform marriages in their home province through the office of the Executive Minister. (see these guidelines at www.baptist-atlantic.ca/departments/executiveminister/permissiontomarry).

Candidates are responsible for acquainting themselves with the policies and programs of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. They are invited to visit the Convention headquarters in Saint John, New Brunswick during New Pastors' and Spouses' Orientation in the spring to be introduced to the programs and personnel of Convention work.

Participation in the pension and insurance programs is open to qualified persons during the Internship period. Information can be obtained from the Secretary to the Pension and Insurance Board at the Convention office.

Examining Council

When the year of Internship is near completion, the Candidate may arrange to appear before the Examining Council for Ordination of the Convention.

A written request to appear must come from the congregation of which the Candidate is pastor, pastor-elect or a member. This request, authorized by a vote of the church body, must be forwarded to the Executive Minister of the Convention early in the year in which the Candidate plans to appear before the Examining Council. Normally, the request would be for ordination to Pastoral Ministry, although occasionally Candidates are ordained to Church Music Ministry.

At least three months prior to appearing before the Examining Council for Ordination, the Candidate must submit to the Executive Minister's office a statement of 2,000-2,500 words including their conversion, call to ministry, concept of ministry, Statement of Faith (including Baptist beliefs) supported by Scripture references, and their relationship to Convention. The Executive Minister

will distribute this statement to the members of the Examining Council.

The church requesting the appearance is encouraged to appoint a member to attend the Candidate's examination and to bring a letter of recommendation for the Candidate on behalf of the church.

The Examining Council for Ordination consists of representatives appointed by the Associations of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. The Examining Council meets each year normally the two days prior to the August Convention Assembly. The Past President of the Convention acts as Chair of the Council. The Council elects one of its number to be Chief Examiner. It has been the practice for many years that the Principal of Acadia Divinity College serves as Chief Examiner.

A two-thirds majority vote is necessary for a Candidate to be passed by the Examining Council for Ordination.

Service of Ordination

The ordinand is eligible for ordination to the Christian ministry upon completion of the year of Internship and the approval of the Examining Council for Ordination. In the Baptist tradition, it is the local church which ordains. The moderator of the association to which the ordinand's church belongs usually conducts the service. The ordinand is free, of course, to select the participants. During the ordination service a letter from the Executive Minister is read concerning the ordinand's acceptance by the Examining Council for Ordination.

It is the responsibility of the pastor's church to notify the Executive Minister that the ordination service has taken place. The Executive Minister will then forward a certificate of ordination and place the pastor's name in the list of accredited ordained ministers.

Placement of Graduates

Neither Acadia Divinity College nor the Convention

of Atlantic Baptist Churches act as a placement agency. It is the local church which extends the call. However, the administration of Acadia Divinity College and the Convention staff will seek to be as helpful as possible. Convention staff can present an individual's name for placement only after they have been accepted by the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education as a Candidate for Ministry.

Graduates should complete the Convention's *Pastor's Resume Form*, which is available on the Convention website, for distribution by the appropriate Convention staff to churches seeking pastors.

Continuing Education

It is important that all who are ordained to Christian ministry continue their education through the years. Acadia Divinity College offers a continuing education program. Ordained pastors are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for continuing education in order to upgrade their effectiveness as ministers of Jesus Christ.

Further Information

Information in this pamphlet is online at www.baptist-atlantic.ca/documents/ProceduresForOrdination.pdf. More complete information on this and other pastoral accreditation processes are in the Regulations Concerning the Ministry, the Ministerial Professional Standards, and the Protocol for Cases of Alleged Professional Misconduct at www.baptist-atlantic.ca/departments/executiveminister/accreditation.

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Procedures for Ordination



**Convention of
Atlantic Baptist Churches**