

Recommendations for Ministerial Development

By Barrington Brennen, December 22, 2008

Stages of Ministerial Development

(Staged for post-college training leading to ordination/commissioning)

- 1. ORIENTATION:** A ministerial intern is not assigned to a church, pastor, or district for first the two months of employment. He or she is under the direct responsibility of the ministerial director of the conference upon authorization or guidance of the president. The first two months is called ministerial orientation. The intern learns about the church system, policies, cultures, traditions, practices, and the districts in the conference. *Note that when an intern is assigned to a pastor or a responsibility during this early period it tends to cause confusion because the intern is in a pastoral role and members tend to honor roles with titles.* He or she can be given preaching assignments but not assigned to a district. The intern will be required to attend meetings, etc. The intern is not referred to as “pastor” during this period. The intern is not allowed to baptize, conduct communions, or lead in church boards. **When the intern is first introduced to the membership he or she should be introduced as a “ministerial intern with two-month of orientation”**
- 2. FORMATION:** After the first two months, the intern is assigned to a senior pastor. This first assignment is crucial. This is the first hands-on exposure to ministerial administration and pastoral leadership. **It is at this time he should or should be referred to as pastor.** This title is important because the most members think of him as a pastor and most will call him/her pastor. Thus, formalizing it reduces confusion and tension. It simplifies the process and adds credibility. During this period which can last up to 12 months or more, the ministerial intern, who is referred to as pastor, can be assigned to at least two districts or pastors. However, it's suggested that too many changes may not make a better formation period. An intern needs to practice and practice with sameness. Changing may bring variety but not quality formation. **During FORMATION the intern can be authorized to baptize and conduct communion services only after four months after being assigned to a pastor.** The ministerial intern should be in the FORMATION stage for at least one year.
- 3. ACTUALIZATION:** After “formation” there is ACTUALIZATION. This is when intern is assigned to an actual district to serve as a pastor. This is when he or she becomes a licentiate. The intern will be given authorization to serve the district with all rights as a pastor including baptizing. This is the period for preparation for ordination. (Like engagement for courting couples). This period should last no longer than two years and no less than one year.
- 4. ORDINATION/COMMISSIONING:** This is the final step of pastoral preparation. After the ministerial intern would have successfully completed the first three stages or periods, he or she will be recommended for ordination (men) or commissioning (women). This final step has no time limit. It is a life-long commitment to the gospel ministry. Note that the key difference between an ordained minister of the gospel and a commissioned minister of the gospel is the ordained minister has universal authorization to serve in all ecclesiastical duties. On the other hand, the commission minister can only perform ecclesiastical duties in the area she is commissioned or her commissioning has been accepted.