

## **CHAPLAINCY AND PASTORAL COUNSELING SERVICES DESCRIPTION**

The Office of Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Services is cognizant and responsible for all specialized ministries of the American Baptist Churches, USA.

### Introduction

The chaplain is an extension of the local church or religious organization reaching into the community helping people to be ready to serve, live, and to die. The chaplain is employed by and is accountable to the particular organization or institution. S/he has a unique function and responsibility. Chaplains provide for the spiritual welfare and morale of people within the organization or institution and their families. They address religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical problems of the organization's constituents. Each chaplain provides all aspects of pastoral ministry, guidance, and religious instruction to individuals and groups; arrange for and conduct weekly religious worship services, and as needed, visit those who are unable to participate fully. This work is carried out in a pluralistic environment; and each chaplain must be sensitive to the religious needs of many separate religious denominations and faith groups.

The chaplain must have high relational skills. S/he must be able to interact with people from all walks, training, backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, and age groups. The chaplain must be able to quickly establish rapport and set the person at ease. This also requires listening skills. The chaplain must be able to hear what's being said and its' underlying symptoms or causes. The skill requires a "good" ear and most of all spiritual maturity. These skills and abilities are developed mostly in service. Therefore, a chaplain must have a call to and experience in ministry, preferably as a senior pastor.

The key role of all ministers is to share God's love, concern, forgiveness, and salvation with persons outside of faith communities and provide ministry to members of faith communities who are away from their homes, families, churches and pastoral support. Chaplains and pastoral counselors touch the untouchable, love the unlovable, and reach the unreachable. They perform a variety of functions depending on their ministry location. They minister to the lost and hurting in hospitals, prisons, military barracks, corporations, and even at places such as bike rallies, rodeos, racetracks, and disaster sites. However, there are functions common to all. Opportunities for evangelism, discipleship, pastoral counseling, as well as administrative duties are part of the ministry. In addition, preaching and Bible studies provide chaplains and pastoral counselors the freedom and opportunity to expound God's word in a variety of settings.

## **Levels of Endorsement/Association**

### **Endorsement**

The endorsement by American Baptist Churches in USA (ABCUSA) to serve in specialized settings requires a strong sense of call, the highest ethical standards, demonstrated and continued involvement in denominational life, adequate academic and clinical preparation, and a pastoral identity well-tempered by experience in ministry. Endorsement is issued for chaplains and/or pastoral counselors who need it for employment. Endorsement provides professional association at the highest level. It is the denomination's verification of the professional preparation and approval of the chaplain or pastoral counselor's ministry. The applicant must meet the criteria listed below.

Requirements:

1. Two years of experience in ministry.
2. Ordination recognized by American Baptist Churches, USA.
3. Five (5) references from (1) pastor, (2) seminary or graduate school educator, (3) Regional executive or area minister, (4) two persons chosen by the applicant.
4. Membership in an American Baptist Church.
5. Self Disclosure statement (typewritten biographical sketch, to include description of family dynamics, faith journey, strengths and weaknesses, attitudes toward women in ministry, ministry to and with racial/ethnic persons, ministry in a pluralistic environment, and ministry to systems).
6. Signed Code of Ethics.
7. Recent photo.
8. Signed Release form.
9. Four (4) units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for Institutional Chaplains.
10. Personal interview.
11. Education as required by employing agency (Minimum requirements of denomination is (1) Baccalaureate degree from a fully accredited college or university that is listed in a Higher Education Directory; (2) graduation at the Master of Divinity level (minimum of three years of graduate education) from a fully accredited seminary or graduate school that is listed by the Association of Theological Schools).

Continuing endorsement:

1. Annual reports to Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Services.
2. Timely updates on change of address and status information.
3. Regular attendance at annual Chaplaincy Training Conferences and continuing education events.
4. Annual review by Committee on Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors.

Benefits of endorsement:

1. Fellowship and group identification.
2. Ministry materials purchased for ministry by the Office of Chaplaincy.
3. Eligibility for scholarship support to attend annual training events and conferences.
4. Accountability to American Baptist Churches, USA.

### **Associate Endorsement**

**Associate endorsement** with Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Services of National Ministries is offered to chaplains employed or volunteering in ministries where endorsement is not required and where standards for endorsement are not in place. Associate endorsement provides a means for these persons to make contact with others in similar positions for fellowship, training and group identification. Associate endorsement does not imply endorsement or any attempt by Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Services to set or enforce standards for the chaplaincy programs in which associated persons minister.

Requirements:

1. Licensed, ordained or certified lay minister.
2. Ministry experience of at least two years.
3. Validation form signed by Region Executive or area minister.
4. Recent photo.

Continued Associate endorsement:

1. Annual reports to Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Services.
2. Timely updates on change of address and status information.

Benefits of Associate endorsement:

1. Fellowship.
2. Group identification.
3. Ministries materials purchased by chaplaincy.
4. Eligibility for scholarship aid for training and continuing education.