

THE JOURNEY NEVER ENDS

Ministry is a life-long pilgrimage. It is a shared journey, with many other pilgrims. Those who have been placed have not arrived in a promised land; rather they are at a different place on their journey. Persons who guided and helped you along the way will become colleagues with whom you share the pilgrimage.

You have experienced the value of people walking with you on your path in ministry. Remember to walk with others as they "journey to a place of ministry."

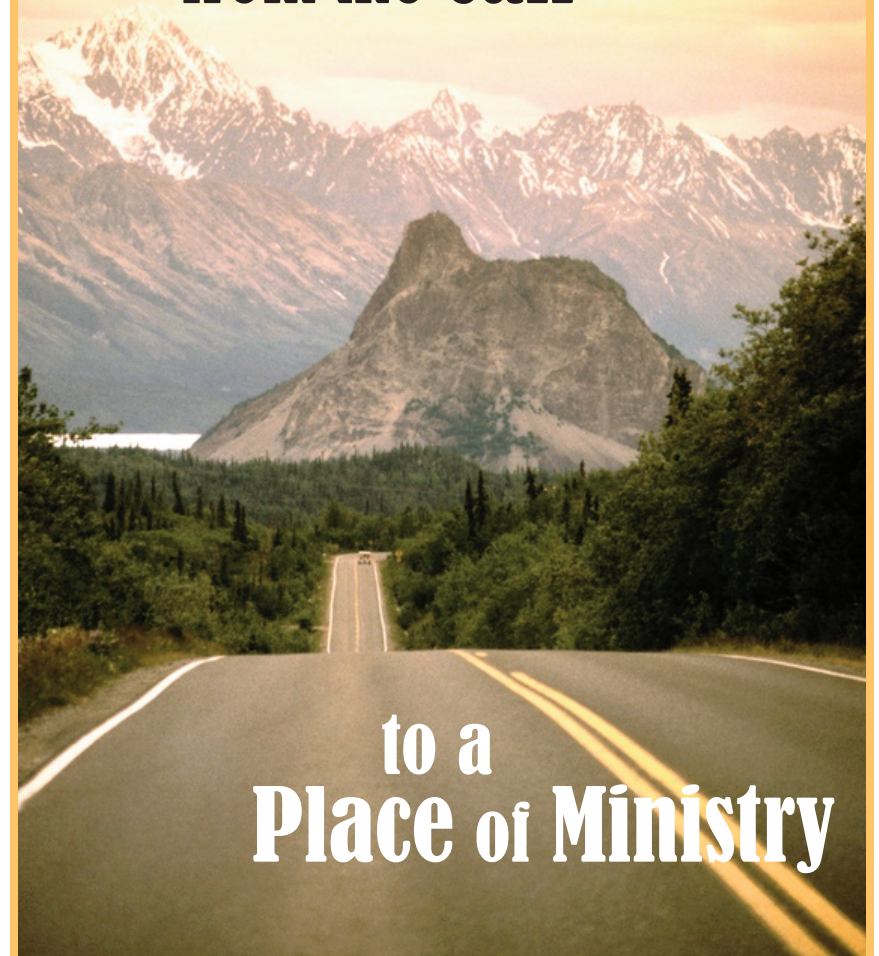
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The Journey from the Call



to a
Place of Ministry



GOD CALLED AND YOU ANSWERED

Your response to God's call has led you to seminary, and in time you will be seeking a place of service. Sometimes the placement process will seem like a mystery or an adventure. At times you may feel discouraged and think you will never successfully complete the process. Don't forget you answered "YES" to God's calling and those whom God calls, God will put to work.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS IN SEMINARY

In Ephesians 4:11 we read that some will be called to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, others pastors and teachers. Each place of ministry requires unique skills and gifts.

Use your time in seminary to learn more about American Baptists. Get involved in the life of the denomination by attending regional meetings, conferences, and the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) Biennial Meetings. Become acquainted with your executive minister. Use your field education experience as a time to explore various ministry areas.

Become familiar with the requirements for ordination. In the Baptist tradition ordination is normally in and through the local church. If you are not already ordained, you should begin the process now.

Recognition of ordination is very important in ABCUSA. National standards have been developed and are described in the booklet, *Recommended Procedures for Ordination, Commissioning, and Recognition for the Christian Ministry in the American Baptist Churches* (available from Judson Press). These standards are interpreted and applied by each region. Speak with your executive minister about the standards in your region.

AS THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

There are several steps in the process of finding a place to serve. It is helpful to have a mentor to encourage and support you during this process. Your mentor will challenge you to grow, will advocate for you, and help you identify your skills and gifts. Your mentor will continue to walk with you through your journey but also throughout your ministry.

Join a support group of fellow students and professors where you can seek advice and share your goals for ministry. Participate in the Ministers Council of ABC and in local clergy clusters.

Register with the American Baptist Personnel Services (ABPS). This is the information and consulting service for American Baptist ministerial leaders and organizations. ABPS provides personnel Profiles and resources used in the search process for leadership positions.

Region staff uses the ABPS system when working with local churches that are searching to fill a position. The computer will match a person's skills, work experience, education, etc., with the requirements of the church search committee.

Seminarians may enter ABPS free of charge. Representatives from the ABPS office regularly visit seminaries. Be sure to consult with them while they are on your campus.

WHEN THERE ARE BUMPS ON THE JOURNEY

Sometimes you can do all the "right" things and still not find a place in which to minister. Now is the time to draw on strength and encouragement of your mentor and your network of colleagues.

Finding a position does not happen quickly. Don't rush into the first offer you receive, just to say you have a position.