

# Ordination Paper

In fulfillment of Ordination

Submitted by

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Scripture references are from the New King James (NKJ) translation

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## **Faith Journey and Call to Ministry**

*Muhammad Ali said, "A man who views the world the same at fifty as he did at twenty has wasted thirty years of his life."*

### **Faith Journey**

My faith journey continues to be transformational. I am not, yet, all God has created me to be, nor have I completed all the assigned work I am called to do in life. It is a blessing to be the Lord's work in progress. Growing up in a Christian home is the foundation of my spiritual development which is the starting point in defining my spirituality. My faith journey began at an early age and continues to evolve at various stages of my life.

### **Childhood Spirituality**

I grew up in a small close-knit community in Arkansas where most families either knew of one another or knew each other personally and socially interacted on a regular basis. I sensed the idea that people looked out for the well-being of other families, even though they did not know them personally. I recall my parents often coming to the aid of families when they heard the news that disaster or hardship had befallen on a family. My parents were generous in sharing the blessings that we had received from God. Admittedly, I was young and selfish, and did not like the idea of giving away so much of what we had. I thought at one time we were wealthy because of my parents' generosity. At an early age, I was informed by my mother that because of the blessings upon the household, we did not have to want for anything, but we were far from wealthy. I was disappointed to find out that we were considered poor by America's standard of living. This was also the time my mother taught me the meaning of generosity: giving and sharing with others. Momma said, "God blesses, so that we can be a blessing."

To the best of my knowledge, I was in fifth grade when I began to have thoughts about the unseen God that my parents worshipped. By the age of ten, I was growing spiritually and yearned for a deeper understanding and knowledge of the Spirit that my parents talked to on bending knees mornings, evenings, and sometimes mid-day. My parents served, worshipped, and exuded trust and belief in the power of prayer by the power of God. I was nurtured by people who shared testimonies of great faith. Besides my parents, there were elders and friends of the family who through powerful witnessing demonstrated their gratitude for God's blessings upon the lives of families, friends, and neighbors.

## 40 **Adolescent Spirituality**

41           Although I was baptized at the age of thirteen, most of my teenage years were spent discerning  
42 and affirming truth of the Living God. I began meaningful conversations with my parents, teachers,  
43 and the servant leaders of the church regarding their belief and their hope and faith in Christ. I was  
44 influenced by their expressions of praise, their worship, and their prayers of faith. I recall questioning  
45 my mother about times when she shouted with joy and praised God for being God in her life, and for  
46 answering her prayers. My mother's expression of trust and devotion to God was beyond my  
47 comprehension: intriguing and disconcerting for me.

48           Every Sunday Worship Service and mid-week Church Services I witnessed faithful spiritual  
49 leaders who praised and gave thanks to God without appearing to be anxious about anything.  
50 Scripture teaches us not to worry, but to be grateful and content, like the apostle Paul, with whatever  
51 state or circumstances, trials, and tribulation we experience (Philippians 4:11). In my observation,  
52 these spiritual leaders obeyed and trusted in God's plan to give them a future. Their expression of  
53 hope did not seem logical, and it was troubling to me considering the poverty in the nation's many  
54 depressed communities, including the community in which I lived and the poor neighborhoods I  
55 visited in Illinois and Massachusetts. Yet, the countenances of the men and women of faith God put  
56 before me, who emanated a joy-filled life, were reflections of joy and contentment.

57           I wanted so much to feel contentment, and to believe in the Invisible Spirit and the word  
58 preached, taught, and lived out in people's lives, but my finite intellect had not developed a form of  
59 spirituality at that time in my life. I struggled with the concept of being grateful with so little  
60 compared to the well-to-do. I grappled with understanding the reasons for health and economic  
61 disparities, racial and social injustices, gender biases, abusive power, and male dominance. The Bible  
62 speaks to me saying, "count it all joy when trouble comes" (James 1:2). The lesson I have learned in  
63 life's spiritual formation is that there will be difficult times in life. Scriptures teach that at times, life  
64 for God's people may be hard-pressed, yet not crushed; perplexed, "but not in despair; persecuted,  
65 but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). I have learned to be  
66 somewhat content knowing that I can overcome through Christ. From the steadfast perseverance of  
67 faithful women and men who influenced my faith journey, I have learned to overcome adversities  
68 through the empowerment of Christ Jesus.

69           My father was not always a servant of the Lord. Daddy came to faith late in life. I have only  
70 known my father as a man of God. When I was born, my father was fifty-six years old, and my

71 mother was thirty-seven. Except for the summers that I spent in Chicago and Boston during my  
72 teenage years, I lived in Arkansas for nineteen years. There were thirteen siblings. Because of our  
73 age differences, all of us never lived at home at the same time. I have only known my parents to be  
74 spiritual and faithful leaders of the church serving as deacon and as a member of the Mother Board  
75 (a deaconess). I experienced the presence of God each time I happened to get a glimpse of my parents  
76 praying at home. I felt that my parents had a sacred relationship with God, a special relationship that  
77 not everyone had, but it was a relationship that I was bound to have with God one day. I wanted the  
78 intimacy my parents shared with God.

79         Each year the community would get worked up over the Annual Revival. For two weeks, the  
80 church was blessed with an influx of unchurched folks – folks without a church home, folks who  
81 came to church occasionally, and folks who lack church etiquette. I could see that the regular church  
82 goers and other members were elated to see all who came out to the Revival. I recall asking my  
83 mother why is everyone making such a big deal over the Revival? Paraphrasing what my mom said,  
84 the Revival is an open opportunity for anyone to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior...to allow  
85 Jesus to come into their hearts, to come to faith in Christ. Momma said, “first you must pray and  
86 accept God in your heart.” At the age of thirteen, during a Revival, I prayed and professed that Jesus  
87 is Lord, and Savior of my life. At that time, I knew that serving God had to be much more than just  
88 speaking with my mouth my profession of faith. My goal was to fully understand the meaning of  
89 service in ways that engage the holistic life and vitality of the church and giving myself to Christ. I  
90 recall my response to Pastor Rev. Jones’s question to me at the time of my profession, “How long  
91 are you willing to serve the Lord?” I replied, “I promised to serve the Lord all the days of my life.”  
92 I was baptized that summer and began participating in a greater capacity in youth leadership of the  
93 church, serving God and fellow brothers and sisters by participating in mission and ministries of the  
94 church and serving the community.

95         Despite institutionalized separate and unequal policies, life was good growing up in Arkansas.  
96 I looked forward to returning home after working in Boston during the summers. I especially loved  
97 buying all my clothes, and saving my money to purchase textbooks and other extravagant  
98 expenditures that I did not need. In my community, like much of the country, including Boston, White  
99 America and Black America were segregated: separate schools, separate entertainment, separate  
100 medical facilities, and separate Sunday Morning Worship. I never witnessed any lynching or police  
101 brutality. I heard of and read about the racial divide and violence in the country up north, down south,

102 and literally, all over the country. Unlike most people, it has never been my perception that  
103 demographics or geographical locations held a monopoly on ethnic hostility, social and racial  
104 injustices.

105         The only significant personal account of racism happened towards the end of my junior year  
106 in high school when the Nation's school systems were forced to integrate. I was deeply disturbed by  
107 the authorities' manufactured accusation that charged me of holding a sit-in demonstration on a  
108 school bus that I was not even on. The school superintendent argued that I had learned the behavior  
109 from Martin Luther King Jr. up north during my summer vacations. Like Louise Day Hicks, who  
110 fought long and hard to prevent forced busing in the school system in South Boston MA, the  
111 superintendent of the School System in my hometown was adamant about maintaining segregation.  
112 I cannot recall the time in my life when I began to spiritually discern the detriment of social and racial  
113 injustices to a race of people. It was difficult to understand Romans 12:21, "Do not be overcome by  
114 evil, but overcome evil with good." This was a hard text for me, but momma said, "God moves in  
115 mysterious ways" passing generational faith on to me.

116         From actively serving in the church, in the work of its mission and ministries since I was a  
117 little girl, since professing my faith in Christ, my relationship with God has deepened. I have come  
118 to depend on the Lord, I have learned to trust in the word of God. God loves all that He created, and  
119 there is not any partiality in His love and judgement of His people. It is transformational for me to  
120 be in a position that allows for serving and loving God and ministering to people who seek to live  
121 their life in Christ.

## 122 **Odyssey of Faith**

123         I re-located to Roxbury, MA permanently in 1969 where I met my husband, Jimmy Thomas  
124 Jr. God has blessed our union with two sons, two lovely daughters-in-law, a smart and handsome  
125 grandson, a beautiful, intelligent, talented granddaughter, and a rambunctious five-year old grandson.  
126 I have earned a Master of Management (MM) degree from Cambridge College, a Master of Ministry  
127 Leadership (MML) degree from Rockbridge Seminary, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from  
128 Cambridge College, an Associate in Business from Massasoit Community College, and several  
129 certificates in business and ministry. Primarily, my adult work life consisted of the private and public  
130 sectors in the banking industry and government. I worked in the banking industry for a total of  
131 fourteen years and twenty-seven years in government.

132 Following the example of my parents as servants of God, and inspired by my mentor Sister  
133 Doris L. Evans, a faithful servant/leader for many years at my home church, I have served in several  
134 areas of ministry at Messiah Baptist Church in Brockton MA for forty-two years. My role as a  
135 minister has allowed me to preach, teach, organize, implement, and revamp ministries, and serve in  
136 various areas of ministry: Messiah Baptist-Jubilee Federal Credit Union (MBJFCU), the church  
137 Treasurer, Missionary Program Coordinator, an usher, member of the Finance Committee and  
138 Advisory Council. I implemented our Greeters Ministry, Intercessory Prayer Ministry, Messiah  
139 Baptist Arts and Crafts Workshop (MBA&CW), Financial Stewardship Ministry (FMS) and  
140 generated missional budgets.

### 141 **Good Stewardship**

142 I acknowledge that Creator/Redeemer/Sustainer God is the owner of the resources that He has  
143 entrusted to me as caretaker. As a believer, in my role as an associate minister, and steward in the  
144 household of God, I have gained new insights of what demonstrates a lifestyle of good stewardship.  
145 Christian stewardship is a responsible lifestyle built on a relationship with God. Stewardship is not  
146 limited to money or possessions. Praying, witnessing, giving, good relationships, serving, managing,  
147 caring for the earth, and helping others to be good stewards are the essential tasks of good stewards.

148 Jesus modeled stewardship by showing concerns and compassion for others and living a  
149 lifestyle of mercy and grace. Jesus' parable clarifies how Christians are to live until He returns. The  
150 Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) teaches me, as a servant of the Lord, to use well what God  
151 has entrusted to my care. As a steward, I am responsible for managing well God-given gifts of  
152 time/talent/treasure, resources, and relationships. I believe that stewardship engages the holistic life  
153 of the church which means each member prayerfully, spiritually, physically, and financially shares  
154 in the missional work of the church.

155 Every spiritual, physical, economical needs of people in the community are opportunities for  
156 the church to be missional. The Reverend John Bent states, "The reason we exist as a church is for  
157 the sake of those who aren't here."<sup>1</sup> Bent's statement resonates with me, for I believe that the church  
158 is commissioned to encourage individuals' spiritual growth through intimate relationships with God  
159 and with people through discipling and evangelizing within and outside the walls of the local church.

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<sup>1</sup> Linda-Marie Delloff, *Public Offerings: Stories from the Front Lines of Community Ministry* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc. 2002) 69.

**160 Call to Ministry**

161 Having lived a few years with a persistent yearning from deep within for something more and  
162 discerning what exactly was I being called to, I decided to seek spiritual guidance from pastor Rev.  
163 Dr. Michael W. Walker. Pastor Walker encouraged me to attend TABCOM School of Ministry  
164 (SoM) Program. After much discernment, and graduating in December 2014 from SoM and  
165 completing a Master of Ministry Leadership degree from Rockbridge Seminary where I was awarded  
166 the Eldridge Leadership award, I am convinced of God's calling on my life.

**167 Ordination**

168 I am seeking ordination in obedience to the calling on my life, for I am Christ's servant  
169 seeking His will for God's glory. I am a Baptist because I believe in Baptist Distinctives and the  
170 values upheld by the ABCUSA and TABCOM denomination. I am passionate about making a  
171 difference in people's lives and in the on-going vitality of the church. I have always believed that I  
172 am gifted in the areas of service, exhortation, administration, leadership, ministry, hospitality (not  
173 the kitchen, but welcoming and assimilation). I believe that every member is a minister, not  
174 necessarily ordained, but as a servant of God sharing in the responsibility to minister to humanity  
175 whenever the opportunity arises. Jesus came to serve. He ministered to all people, and he did not  
176 see any difference in race, ethnicity, financial or social status. Blessings come when we take the  
177 blinders off which allow us to give voice to the voiceless, to reach out to the marginalized, including  
178 the socially outcasts, the socially isolated, the underserved and low-income demographics, as well as  
179 the economically and academically deprived. Additionally, by the grace of God, to courageously  
180 reach out to individuals who are spiritually deprived of the gospel ministry of Jesus.

**181 Trinity (The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)**

182 *"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy*  
183 *Spirit be with us all" (2 Corinthians 13:14)*

184 The word Trinity or the Triune God does not appear in Scripture, but it is implied in the Bible  
185 from the beginning. The implication is reflected in this verse, "Then God said, Let Us make man in  
186 Our image, according to Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were  
187 present, and at work in the Creation of the universe. I believe that the unity, community, and loving  
188 relationships inspired by the Triune God is a model for humanity to embrace.

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**191 God – The Father, Creator**

192 “Hold unto God’s Unchanging Hand” are the lyrics of a familiar hymn my parents and the  
193 church sang fervently and frequently during my childhood and adolescent years. This hymn still  
194 reminds me that I serve a God whose promises, provision, and purposes are immutable. God is the  
195 same today as yesterday. I believe that the same God who delivered King David, Esther, Elijah, and  
196 the Israelites is at work within and through humanity in the world today, according to his divine will,  
197 love, generosity, mercy, and grace. God is all encompassing and Creator of all things according to  
198 His perfect design for us, as we live in a fallen world.

199 I must acknowledge that I am a product of generational faith passed down from my mother. I  
200 believe that the only wise eternal living God, who is self-existent and transcendent, moves in  
201 mysterious ways. God’s thoughts and ways are nothing like our thoughts and ways. God’s thoughts  
202 and ways are high above and far beyond our comprehension and imagination (Isaiah 55:8-9). God is  
203 just, compassionate, merciful, loving, infinite, sovereign, and longsuffering. Still, these descriptive  
204 observations point to limitation. Any definitive observation of God without the prefix omni is finite.  
205 Omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent is the all-in-all language that describes how great and mighty  
206 the ever-living, ever-lasting, ever-loving, eternal God is. God is not a spirit for God is Spirit, and God  
207 must be worshiped in spirit. God is not a physical being limited to one location. The invisible God is  
208 everywhere and God is privy to our innermost thoughts.

209 Love is the most important virtue that I attribute to God, the Father, and Creator of the  
210 universe. God is love. There is no greater love than God’s love. God’s love is absolute. When my  
211 siblings and I were very young, my mother strongly emphasized God’s love for us through Scriptures.  
212 Before pre-school, we were learning Bible verses, saying our prayers, and singing “Jesus Loves Me.”  
213 At home, I learned about God’s love for me. But more than that, through my mother’s teaching, I  
214 learned to love God and people, and myself. “If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another”  
215 (1 John 4:11-12). If we love one another, the Bible tells us that God’s love is made perfect in us  
216 because God has given us His Spirit.

**217 Jesus Christ – The Son, Savior, and Intercessor**

218 Grace and truth come through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Through Lord Jesus, believers  
219 have been born into a living hope, having been saved through the resurrection of Christ. The Bible  
220 records Jesus as the bread of life, the true vine, the light of the world, the resurrection, the Good  
221 Shepherd, the door, the way of truth and life.



222 Jesus is our intercessor who interprets every unarticulated moan and every groan in our  
223 prayers. Jesus mediates, looks after our interest, and makes intercession for us with God (Heb 7:25).  
224 The confidence that I have in Christ Jesus is this, if I ask anything according to the will of God, He  
225 hears me, and I believe He will do what is good for me (1 John 5:14-15). Jesus is the only way to the  
226 Father. No one comes to the Father, except through Christ (1 Corinthians 12:3).

227 God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son, so that anyone who believes  
228 in Him shall not perish, but may have eternal life. Jesus entered human history as both the Son of  
229 God and Son of Man, fully divine and fully human. Being equal to God, Jesus did not make a  
230 reputation for Himself. In the form of a servant of God and in the likeness of men, He humbled  
231 Himself and became obedient, even to death on the cross (Philippians 2:6-8). For our sake, Jesus laid  
232 down His life, went to the cross and suffered the humiliation of an unjust crucifixion.

233 In obedient to the Father, Jesus spoke truth to power, and lived a life of fearless love. Jesus  
234 showed the world how to love God, how to love one another, and how to live a Christian life. Our  
235 Savior, Christ Jesus, modeled forgiveness, compassion, longsuffering, humility, mercy, and grace.  
236 But above all these things, as believers, we are called to “put on love, which is the bond of perfection”  
237 (Colossians 3:14).

### 238 **Holy Spirit – The Helper, Intercessor, Counselor (Paraclete)**

239 The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit “will not speak on his own  
240 authority, but whatever He hears He will speak” (John 16:13). The indwelling Holy Spirit is given to  
241 believers as their Helper so that the Spirit of God may dwell with the believer forever (John 14:16,  
242 26). When Jesus ascended into heaven, his physical presence left earth, but Jesus promised the  
243 disciples that the Father would send them another helper. In the same way, this ensures us that the  
244 promised Holy Spirit would teach us all things and would help us bring to remembrance the precepts  
245 that God intends for us to obey. The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth about Christ and will  
246 make known to us all things to come. God’s written Word convinces me that the counsel of the  
247 indwelling Holy Spirit makes known to me God’s will, and intercedes on my behalf. When I do not  
248 know what to pray for, the Spirit intercedes for me with words that cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26-  
249 28).

250 The Holy Spirit is the giver of gifts. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit,  
251 and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8). The Holy  
252 Spirit gives gifts according to our faith, for the purpose of edifying the church’s body. The conviction

253 of the Holy Spirit changes people’s lives when they hear the gospel and believe. The Holy Spirit not  
 254 only convicts a person of sin, but also convinces him/her of their need for salvation and truth of the  
 255 gospel.

## 256 **Humanity**

257 “In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male  
 258 and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created” (Genesis 5:1-  
 259 3). In making human beings in His own image, God raised humanity above all His creation.  
 260 Therefore, humanity is endowed with spiritual and moral likeness of Christ for the purpose of ruling  
 261 over creatures of the earth (Genesis 1:26-27). God has given humanity a soul for reasoning: a  
 262 conscience, a mind, and will. God created in human beings a spirit of rationality and morality  
 263 enabling human beings free-will in decision making.<sup>2</sup>

264 God’s word is clear to me, in in my interpretation that mankind is created equally in the eyes  
 265 of God. There isn’t any partiality in God’s love and judgement of His people (Romans 10:10-11). In  
 266 the creation of mankind, supremacy of race, gender or power was not included in God’s plan of  
 267 godliness. In the process of spiritual formation, we deepen our relationship with God and come to  
 268 know the Lord. As we transform in Christ likeness, we discover our true selves, and come to know  
 269 who we are in Christ. The words of David G. Benner states that “Christian spirituality involves a  
 270 transformation of the self that occurs only when God and self are both deeply known...There is no  
 271 deep knowing of God without a deep knowing of self, and there is no deep knowing of self without  
 272 a deep knowing of God.”<sup>3</sup> To know God is to know yourself.

## 273 **Scripture**

274 The Bible is not just a collection of short stories conveying moral standards or human ideas  
 275 about God. Moreover, the Bible is composed of sixty-six Books written to make known to all people  
 276 the inerrant Word inspired by God. The infallibility of God’s word is given to all generations.  
 277 Because Jesus said, in John 10:35, that the Scripture cannot be broken, I trust the “Supremacy of  
 278 Scripture” which is one of Baptist’s Distinctives. Additionally, I believe that the word of God  
 279 strengthens believers in faith, equips, and leads us to do good works for the kingdom. Further, I

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, revised and expanded (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 319

<sup>3</sup> David G. Benner, “The Gift of Being Yourself; the Sacred Call to Self-Discovery (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015) 22

280 believe that God reveals himself to me through holy Scriptures where the divine nature of God is  
281 unveiled.

282 By the inspiration of God, Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and  
283 instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible clearly teaches that God cannot lie or speak  
284 falsely.<sup>4</sup> Scripture reading enlightens me with divine revelation. God wants us to be transformed  
285 people by the renewal of our minds by daily reading of the Word. My practice of daily devotional  
286 Scripture reading keeps me mindful of the person and works of Christ Jesus and it reminds me of  
287 Jesus' redemptive work on the cross. When reading God's word, it comes to my mind that faith,  
288 hope, love, forgiveness, and salvation come through Christ. The Bible is necessary for knowing the  
289 gospel and for knowing God's will for my life. For this reason, Scripture is sufficient to know the  
290 life God intends for me because great revelation is given through the reading of His word.

### 291 **Salvation**

292 Sin separates humanity from God. Through Adam's sin, death entered the world. Death came  
293 through Adam, but when we profess our faith in Christ, we shall experience eternal life. "The wages  
294 of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). For our  
295 sake, salvation reached its fulfilment in the risen Christ as a gift from God giving believers living  
296 hope for an eternal life.

297 I proclaim that salvation belongs to anyone who confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord,  
298 and believes in their heart that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9). We receive salvation  
299 by faith through God's grace. God sacrificed His Son as the only source to salvation, but we have a  
300 choice to accept the greatest gift God offers humanity. Scripture convinces me that, by faith, Jesus  
301 alone can save me. There is no other name than Jesus to call on for salvation (Acts 4:12), for there is  
302 not any other source or god that has the power to produce the redemptive work that Jesus did on the  
303 cross for the world. By the grace of God, we have been saved through faith, but not by our own work,  
304 for it is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8).

### 305 **Two Ordinances: Believers' Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

#### 306 **Believers' Baptism**

307 Believers' Baptism serves as a public testimony of an individual's faith in Christ. Immersion  
308 under water symbolizes that the believer has been united with Christ by faith – born again through

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<sup>4</sup> Wayne Grudem, "Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 90

309 the washing and the purification from sin (2 Corinthians 5:17). Baptism is an outward sign of an  
 310 inward change. The believer's confession of faith in Christ Jesus precedes baptism. After repentance,  
 311 Apostle Peter calls for Christ's followers to be baptized Acts 2:38.

312 The generational faith passed down to me from my mother instilled in me the importance of  
 313 baptism. What is prominent for me is that Jesus commanded the disciples, in Matthew 28:19, to  
 314 baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus was baptized  
 315 and He instructed the disciples to baptize believers, Believer's Baptism by immersion under water is  
 316 the practice of Baptists. This practice symbolizes that the believer has died to sin, and raised with  
 317 Christ in a newness of life. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The  
 318 old life has passed away, and the new life has come.

### 319 **The Lord's Supper**

320 Scripture reveals the significance of the Lord's Supper as a memorial of the death of Christ.  
 321 On the night Jesus was handed over to be crucified, Jesus shared a meal with His disciples, and  
 322 instituted the Lord's Supper. Jesus said, "This do, as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this  
 323 cup, remember Me" (1 Corinthians 11:23-25). In partaking the bread and cup as symbols of Jesus'  
 324 broken body and shed blood, we remember what Christ did for us in His life, death, burial, and  
 325 resurrection. The observance of communion commemorates a memorial to our Lord for the  
 326 redemptive work He did for all of us by laying down His life to free us from the bondage of sin.  
 327 Communion reminds me that Jesus gave His life for my salvation and for the world. Once a month  
 328 and in special observances (Christmas, Easter, Retreats, and special events), my home church practice  
 329 Communion. We do this to commemorate the risen Christ and the shared victory in our Savior.

330 Communion is a time set aside for believers to partake of the bread and cup in remembrance  
 331 of the Lord's sacrificial death. Just as food that nourishes the physical body, partaking the elements  
 332 of the Lord's Supper gives spiritual nourishment to the soul. Communion is a time for thanksgiving  
 333 to God for sacrificing his son to save the world from sin. It is also a time for believers to examine  
 334 themselves that they do not partake of the bread and cup in an unworthy manner. Through prayer,  
 335 self-examination, and confession, we prepare our hearts to receive holy Communion in unity,  
 336 humility, and hope.

### 337 **The Church: Its Role in Society and the World**

338 The church is called to minister the gospel to both believers and nonbelievers. As a community  
 339 of faith, the church gathers as a body of believers where believers minister to one another sharing in

340 the belief that “Every Member a Minister.” Every member in their service to God, share in the  
341 church’s call to minister to the spiritual and emotional needs of others. Using God-given gifts in  
342 fellowship to stir up love and good works in one another, to share in faith, and to strengthen each  
343 other in the Lord (Hebrews 10:24-25) which empowers the body of Christ to do kingdom work.

344 The gathered church assembles to worship, praise, and honor God, and to fellowship with  
345 other believers and seekers. In accordance with God’s Great Commission, the church exists to make  
346 disciples. A believer’s call to discipleship is to teach, as well as to learn about God which equips the  
347 believer to spread the Good News so that seekers may hear the gospel and be embraced by it. As a  
348 disciple of Christ, I am reminded that discipleship is paramount in a local church. Discipleship  
349 teaches believers and seekers the importance of incorporating the “Word” of God in the totality of  
350 their lives at home, at work, and at play. “The work of the church in the world is to make disciples  
351 (learners), baptize them, and bring them into the fellowship of believers.”<sup>5</sup>

352 Both the local and universal church are built on the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy  
353 Spirit, baptizing believers into the one body of Christ. While the local church is viewed as a group of  
354 believers gathered together in a given location, the universal church includes all who have been born  
355 of the Spirit of God baptized in the Body of Christ.<sup>6</sup> Christ nourishes the church by giving gifted  
356 leaders to the church that it might grow to maturity and be edified as one body in Christ (Ephesians  
357 4:12). Christ, as head of the church, has authority over it. The role of the church body is to keep the  
358 unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in the House of God. “There is one body and one Spirit, just  
359 as we were called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father  
360 of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all” (Ephesians 4:3-6).

361 Jesus is the chief cornerstone for the construction and building of the church. Just as a building  
362 grows when under construction, the church is a living organism that grows when new believers are  
363 added to the fellowship (Acts 2:42-47). The church ministers, edifies, and cultivates spiritual and  
364 numerical growth of the body for the purpose of the church to come to maturity in Christlikeness.  
365 Like the New Testament gathered church, churches today gather to have fellowship in suffering,  
366 fellowship in unity, fellowship in ministry, fellowship in prayer, and fellowship in the Lord’s  
367 Supper.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, revised and expanded (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 382

<sup>6</sup> Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, revised and expanded (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 364

<sup>7</sup> Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, revised and expanded (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 381

368           What is necessary to influence the culture today is a “Missional Church” that consists of  
369 disciples who love Jesus, love people, and diligently strive to fulfill the Great Commission by making  
370 disciples. A Missional Church demands a holistic approach in the life and purpose of the church,  
371 engaging in educational, social, and health ministries: seeking justice for all people, and providing  
372 prayer, physical, and financial support to sustain an intentional missional outreach ministry. In my  
373 view, a Missional Church seeks ways to make a difference in people’s lives, engages and contributes  
374 to the surrounding communities. To be missional, a church offers prophetic preaching, teaching, and  
375 healing ministries to achieve total fulfillment of its mission within and outside its walls.

### 376 **Attitude Toward the American Baptist Church USA (ABCUSA), its ecumenical witness, and** 377 **Code of Ethics**

#### 378 379 **ABCUSA**

380           I completely affirm the fundamental tenets held by the American Baptist Church USA  
381 (ABCUSA). I applaud the ABCUSA for its historical missional work that rebuked unjust social and  
382 racial conditions, and for current efforts in reimaging and addressing the epidemics of injustices,  
383 human rights, and gun violence. The Baptist tradition continues to be influential in today’s culture. I  
384 am fully invested in the ABCUSA initiatives that enable the local churches to be self-sufficient.  
385 Having the autonomy to make inroads in social innovations, local churches independently seek to  
386 make a positive impact in the lives of the people the church serves.

#### 387 **Ecumenical Witness**

388           The church is composed of many types of people, with various backgrounds and a variety of  
389 gifts and competencies. It is my belief that God created the “Universal Church” to represent numerous  
390 Christian churches for the purpose of ecumenical witnessing. For by one Spirit, we were all baptized  
391 into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13). Greg Ogden says, “We don’t have it all together, but together  
392 we have it all.”<sup>8</sup> Within a congregation, all believers possess God-given spiritual gifts. I believe the  
393 combination of different gifts in God’s churches used together would make a powerful impact in the  
394 spread of the gospel. Despite the differences in the body, the one commonality that is shared is faith  
395 in Christ.

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<sup>8</sup> Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 2003 p42

398 **Code of Ethics**

399 In His human form, Jesus was a living example of God’s love, as we are to be living examples  
400 of Jesus’ love. The new commandment that Jesus gives to us is that we love one another, as He loves  
401 us (John13:34). And this commandment that we have from Jesus, is that he who loves God must love  
402 his brother (1 John 4:21). By this love we have in Christ, the world would know we are His disciples.  
403 In my commitment to be an example of Christ’s love, I covenant with ABCUSA Code of Ethics. I  
404 affirm my commitment to maintain discipline in ministry areas of a daily devotional intercessory  
405 prayer life, self-care, care for the spiritual needs of others, fiscal accountability, and good  
406 stewardship. In affirmation of my commitment, I will hold in confidence the upmost confidentiality  
407 of communication of information conveyed to me. In addition, I will continue to strive to live out the  
408 two Greatest Commandments which charge me to love God, my neighbor and myself as I serve the  
409 local churches, the denomination, and its Association in the full capacity of the call.

410 **Other Issues**

411 *“Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for*  
412 *many” (Mark 10:45)*

413 The greatest leadership role model of all generations is Jesus Christ. In essence, Christ is core  
414 in servant leadership. How effective church leadership would be, if servant leaders continually  
415 inspire, challenge, and equip people to love, live, serve, and lead like Jesus. What is needed are  
416 ministries that intentionally engage church membership in serving God and serving one another for  
417 the glory of God.

418 To help local churches in the development of members’ competence, I envision the  
419 implementation of a Mentor/Mentee Leadership Ministry (MMLM). A MMLM embodies the  
420 doctrine of the “Priesthood of All Believers” proclaiming that every member is a minister in the Body  
421 of Christ as each member cares and ministers to the needs of one another. A MMLM will be a  
422 reciprocal learning center where mentors are sometimes mentors and sometimes mentees. The  
423 Ministry creates a trusted, relational environment where potential leaders are taught by caring people  
424 who are being equipped, taught, encouraged, and led themselves by others. The anticipated  
425 fulfillment of the Ministry’s goal is leadership development of future servant leaders and  
426 congregational spiritual growth.

427 The MMLM imparts learning to individuals on a one-on-one basis. One can expect to gain  
428 insightful information from a meaningful mentor/mentee relationship. Discipleship is crucial for

429 individuals' spiritual formation: Prayer Ministries, Sunday School, Bible Study, and sermon/lessons  
430 are essential to a congregation's spiritual growth. MMLM enhances the church's discipleship  
431 ministries by having a mentor to come alongside a mentee, who is a new believer or a potential church  
432 leader, to impart knowledge, experience, and expertise in ministry, education, and living life as active  
433 servants/leaders of their call.

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