

MINISTRY STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Purpose: The purpose of the Ministry Staff Development Program is to provide long-term mentored opportunities in Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) churches for the development of pastoral leaders and assist churches in developing their ministry opportunities and potential.

Discussion: This program is intended to result in some permanent change, either by establishing a new or substantially reorganized ministry that will continue in the church, or by training the ministry assistant in skills that will prepare him or her for continuing service as a pastor, assistant pastor or youth pastor. A successful application for assistance under this program will include a clear identification of such goals and indicate the intention of the church and/or ministry assistant to pursue them according to a workable plan. The mentoring of the ministry assistant is an important component of the program, and must be accomplished according to a plan that will further the goals that have been identified. The Director of Pastoral Services is available to assist churches and potential ministry assistants in thinking through the implementation of a plan that will fulfill the purposes of this program.

Individuals will be seeking ways and places to develop their ministry skills and professional abilities as an assistant to an accredited senior Pastor of an SDB Church. Churches will be seeking to enhance their ministry program for growth and improvement.

Qualifications of the Ministry Assistant:

- 1) Must be a member in good standing of an SDB church for at least four years.
- 2) Must be or become a member of the employing SDB church.
- 3) Must be at least 22 years old.
- 4) Must have the experience or qualifications to carry out the proposed ministry and have the affirmation of a SDB church.
- 5) Must have positive recommendations from at least two SDB sources (such as service in SCSC, Dedicated Service, or other experience working in the denomination or at least one SDB church).
- 6) Will not be a son or daughter of the supervising or mentoring pastor.
- 7) Must possess at least a high school diploma.
- 8) Must have a plan for supplementing his/her church income, or prove that such a plan is not necessary.

Process: The senior pastor will normally serve as mentor for the ministry assistant, though another accredited minister in the congregation may also serve in this capacity, but under the supervision of the senior pastor. (That may be the case when there is already an experienced, ordained youth pastor

on the staff of the calling church, and the senior pastor decides that an assistant youth pastor should be mentored by that minister).

Basic components include:

- 1) **Mentoring.** The mentor will help the ministry assistant learn about pastoral ministry and will give opportunities for developing skills in ministry.
- 2) **Theological Education.** The theological education of the ministry assistant will be as follows, with the Director of Pastoral Services having discretion to vary from this plan, on an individual basis:
 - a) A ministry assistant with a Master of Divinity degree does not need further education for this program and can devote more hours to ministry responsibilities.
 - b) A ministry assistant whose highest level of education is a bachelor's degree will enroll in a distance-learning program of a seminary approved by the Council on Ministry. The ministry assistant will need to enroll in a Master of Divinity program, if they are seeking to become senior pastors, and a certificate program, if they are seeking to become assistant, church-planting or youth pastors. Assistance is available under the Council on Ministry's Seminary Education or Certificate Education programs.
 - c) A ministry assistant whose highest level of education is a High School diploma will enroll in the Assistant Pastor or Youth Pastor track of the Council on Ministry's TIME Program.
 - d) A ministry assistant who completes courses under one of the plans above before finishing the project (basic or extended) may be permitted (or required) to take additional courses, at the discretion of the Director of Pastoral Services.

It is desirable for both the ministry assistant and the church, that the ministry assistant gain as much theological education as possible.

- 3) **Bi-vocational Training.** The ministry assistant is encouraged to receive training for an outside job to supplement his/her income now or in the future. (Financial support for the training may be available through the Council on Ministry's Bi-vocational Training Support Program.)

Requirements for the assistant pastor position:

- 1) Must be a year-round ministry position as an assistant pastor or youth pastor.
- 2) Must include a commitment to employment for three years, with a work load of at least ten hours per week (Administrative or accounting functions may take up no more than 25% of this time, and the job description must be commensurate with the proposed hours of weekly work.)

- 3) Must be for fulfillment of specific ministry tasks that constitute an important and developing ministry of the church
- 4) Must include a plan for supervision and periodic evaluation of the assistant pastor by the supervising pastor. The supervising pastor shall report on the progress of the individual to the Director of Pastoral Services who will report to the Memorial Fund Trustees.
- 5) Must include a requirement that the assistant pastor be accountable to the church and report to them at each regular business meeting

Special Requirements for a Church-Planting position: When a ministry position under this program is established for the development of a church-planting pastor, there are special requirements:

- 1) The supervising pastor, or the mentoring minister must be recognized by the Council on Ministry as qualified to assist in the development of a church-planter.
- 2) The position must include the goal of planting a new Seventh Day Baptist church that is related to the calling church as a branch. The calling church must be prepared to assist the process with volunteers or other resources, as they are able.
- 3) The ministry assistant must spend a reasonable amount of time developing as a church-planter and undertaking church-planting efforts.
- 4) In light of the time needed to plant a new, self-sustaining, Seventh Day Baptist church, the calling church must plan on seeking an extension to the Ministry Staff Development Program to participate for more than just the initial three-year period.

Extension of the Program for Up to Three More Years on a Diminishing Support Basis: Three years is an adequate period of time for developing pastoral leaders through a mentoring relationship; however, the Council on Ministry recognizes the value of two secondary goals that extension of support may help achieve. Support on a diminishing basis may be granted when the calling church commits to one of the following additional goals: development of an on-going multi-staff ministry in the calling church, or the planting of a new Seventh Day Baptist branch church. For approval of an extension, the calling church must commit to, and plan for achieving, one of these goals (as outlined below).

Extension of the Program for Development of a Multi-staff Ministry: The assistant pastor under this program is a “pastor in training” and will need to focus on developing the basic pastoral skills. By the close of the three-year assistantship, the ministry assistant will have developed enough ministry skills to be ready to accept a call to another Seventh Day Baptist church (as a

senior or youth pastor) or to remain as an assistant or youth pastor in the church where he/she has been serving. (If not yet seminary-trained, the individual may also choose to attend seminary before accepting a call to either church.) When the individual is willing to accept a renewed call of the church to remain as an assistant or youth pastor, the church has a unique opportunity, with the help of the Council on Ministry and the Seventh Day Baptist Memorial Fund, to develop an on-going multi-staff ministry. This has been recognized as a key element in the growth of churches. Not only does a multi-staff church have greater potential for meeting the needs of both members and new contacts, but it also permits the introduction of new ministries (as either the second pastoral staff member is given responsibility for them, or the senior pastor is freed to pursue them, as the new staff member takes over some of the senior pastor's previous responsibilities). The Ministry Staff Development Program may be extended for up to three years, on a diminishing support basis, when the following requirements have been met:

- 1) By the end of the second year of the ministry assistant, the church must commit to, and begin planning for, the creation of a new on-going staff position
- 2) The church must call the ministry assistant to fill that position for the period of the program extension.
- 3) The ministry assistant must receive a positive recommendation from the supervising pastor and the church.

The church should plan to assume responsibility for funding this position at the end of the program extension period, at least at the level of the total monthly compensation being paid to the assistant.

Extension of the Program for the Planting of a New Seventh Day Baptist Branch Church: The Ministry Staff Development Program may be extended for up to three years, on a diminishing support basis, when the following requirements have been met:

- 1) By the end of the third year of the assistantship, the church must affirm the viability of the church-planting project and reaffirm their commitment to the goal of planting a new Seventh Day Baptist church that will be related to them as a branch church.
- 2) The church must call the ministry assistant to continue as a church-planting pastor for the period of the project extension.
- 3) The ministry assistant must receive a positive recommendation from the supervising pastor and the church.

Benefits to the Calling Church: This program provides a number of benefits to the calling church. Most immediately, the ministry of the church is greatly benefited through the service of a gifted individual for a three-year period. A further benefit to the church is in the stimulus the ministry assistant will

provide to the senior pastor, who will be challenged and inspired in ministry through supervision and mentoring of a fellow pastor. As the ministry assistant matures in ministry skills, the senior pastor may also be freed from certain regular duties, to pursue new aspects of ministry. An intangible benefit for the church is in the expansion of their ministry to benefit countless other Seventh Day Baptist churches through the future ministry of the ministry assistant.

Benefits to the Seventh Day Baptist Denomination: A pastor prepared under this program will receive at least three years of pastoral/theological education and mentoring by another experienced pastor before beginning to serve as the senior pastor (or youth pastor) in a church. Rather than answering a call to a single-pastor church with no pastoral training, and then beginning the TIME program, individuals will receive significant training up front. The opportunity for this kind of mentoring and apprenticeship before a first-time pastorate may even appeal to those who have just graduated from seminary with an MDiv degree. The benefit to the denomination of having better-prepared pastors for Seventh Day Baptist churches is obvious.

Assistance from the Memorial Fund:

- 1) With approval of the project by the Council on Ministry, the Seventh Day Baptist Memorial Fund will provide a matching fund grant to the calling church for the salary support of the ministry assistant at the following levels:
 - a) Up to \$10,000 per year for a period of three years
 - b) Up to \$10,000, \$7,500 and \$5,000 for the additional three years respectively, if a subsequent three-year extension of the project is granted.
- 2) Funds will be sent to the calling church on a quarterly basis, with the church providing quarterly reports to the Council on Ministry who will provide a progress report on the ministry assistant and his/her ministry to the Memorial Fund Trustees.
- 3) Continuation of support for the project is dependent upon the continuing approval of the Council on Ministry and the Memorial Fund Trustees.
- 5) After the end of a project (with or without its possible extension), it cannot be renewed for the same ministry assistant in any church.
- 6) A stipend of up to \$500 per year will be paid to the supervising pastor and up to \$500 per year to the minister who serves as mentor for the ministry assistant. (If the supervising pastor serves in both capacities he/she will receive both stipends for a total of \$1,000.)