

THE COVENANT AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERS OF AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES

The national Ministers Council has proposed the following changes in the Code of Ethics. At our meeting on April 13, 2004, the Ministers Council of the Greater Bay Area voted to approve the changes. Suggested amendments are in **red**; proposed deletions in ~~strikeout~~.

Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church with ~~God's help~~ **the help of the Holy Spirit**, to deepen my obedience to the Two Great Commandments; to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself.

In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all the public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

- I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our American Baptist Churches; I will not accept a position in the American Baptist family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the denomination. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.
- I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my American Baptist colleagues, and other Christians.
- I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.
- I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.
- I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ~~professional~~ **ministerial** status.
- I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayers and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for ~~professional~~ **ministerial** and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.
- I will recognize my primary obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called, and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry.

- I will personally and publicly support my colleagues who experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race, **ethnicity**, age, marital status, national origin, physical impairment or disability.
- **I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.**
- I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my ministerial leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make ~~professional~~ **ministerial** contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without his/her request and/or consent.
- ~~I will hold in confidence any privileged communication received by me during the conduct of my ministry. I will not disclose confidential communications in private or public except when in my practice of ministry I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that the parishioner/client will cause imminent, life-threatening or substantial harm to self or others, or unless the privilege is waived by those giving the information.~~
- **I will hold in confidence and treat as confidential communication any information provided to me with the expectation of privacy. I will not disclose such information in private or public except when, in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that life-threatening or substantial harm will be caused.**
- **I will not use my ministerial status, position or authority knowingly to abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate or take advantage of anyone, especially children.**
- **I will report all instances of abuse as required by law to the appropriate agency. In any case involving persons working in ABC ministry, I will also report the circumstances to the appropriate regional and/or national denominational representative.**
- ~~I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.~~
- I will show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.

Signed:

Date: