

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MASSACHCHUSETTS

The Ordination Paper of Kathleen M. O'Goley

Submitted to the

Committee on Ministerial Preparation

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of

Ordination into American Baptist Churches

by

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January 25, 2019

## **Journey of Faith**

1           When I reflect on my life, I see my two favorite Scriptures come to the forefront in what  
2 truly has been a journey of faith. It is not easy to give an account of one’s life especially when I  
3 have grown into a different person through my belief in Christ. Therefore, I will begin in the  
4 present. I am a fifty-three-year-old Christian woman who is a wife, mother, grandmother, sister,  
5 teacher, and friend. I am blessed to have my health, a loving family, beautiful home and a  
6 wonderful church. I have a great life because I have a resounding trust in God and the call He has  
7 placed upon my life.

8           My first Scripture is Romans 5:1-5, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we  
9 have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup>Through him we have also obtained access  
10 by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>Not only  
11 that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and  
12 endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not put us to shame,  
13 because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given  
14 to us” (ESV). When I recount the struggles of my life I see a list of benefits that have helped me  
15 become the person God wanted me to be and continues to mold me now.

16           My childhood was a loving one. I was raised as an Irish Catholic. My mother was  
17 Episcopalian and converted to Catholicism to marry my father. My father died when I was  
18 three. It was very traumatic witnessing his death from asthma. My heart from that moment was  
19 instilled with fear. My mother, sister and I moved in with my grandmother. Yet from the earliest  
20 time of remembrance, there were men of faith in my home. My grandmother’s dearest friend was  
21 a priest and he and others graced our home often. To fulfill my father's wishes, my sister and I  
22 were raised in the Catholic faith. I am grateful for that upbringing because it taught me reverence

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1 but it was not for me. I left the Catholic Church after my confirmation and began a journey to  
2 find safety in my life.

3 My mother met my step-father when I was five years old. He showed unconditional love,  
4 unwavering faith, and became the greatest influence on my life. My mother dated him for  
5 eighteen years. He was the funniest man I have ever known and the laughter he brought remains  
6 with me today. Unfortunately, they were only married for three years when he was diagnosed  
7 with terminal cancer. It shook our world. We had hospice care at home. It was a drastic  
8 difference from losing my birth father suddenly. What a gift to say words of love and  
9 compassion and express how much he meant to me before he passed. He was a faithful Christian  
10 man, a true gift from God, and I miss him terribly. He was the first to hint about my calling,  
11 always saying God had something important for me in life and how I was an old soul. It was at  
12 his funeral where I first spoke before a congregation, an emotional outpouring, yet I felt a peace  
13 in my heart (Romans 5:1).

14 My mother often gauged my happiness on whether I was singing or not. I was blessed to  
15 sing in the school chorus growing up but stopped when I entered middle school, the awkward  
16 years of growth and insecurity. I endured the horrible years of high school with the death of  
17 innocence and my best friend, John Melican. Music, however, was always there as an  
18 expression and emotional outlet. Still, I was blessed to sing at my high school graduation to the  
19 surprise of all including my family.

20 After High School, I attended a community college and began a singing career which I let  
21 consume me. My band and I were on our way to a recording contract when doctors discovered  
22 polyps on my vocal cords. After surgery and the inability to talk or sing for months, my band  
23 moved on without me. I was devastated and so angry at the direction of my life that I tried to

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1 find purpose in other faiths. While researching many religions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, New  
2 Age and Wiccan, God showed me that He exists and that He never leaves us. Soon after, I  
3 attended an Episcopal church, The Church of the Nativity in Northborough, Massachusetts and  
4 my relationship with Christ grew. It is here where Romans 5:2 began to take hold in my life. The  
5 grace God bestowed upon my life even after I strayed, has never left me. It was at this church  
6 where the first tickle of my call began inside me. I was very active in volunteering, church work,  
7 typing the newsletter and bible studies. The comfortable feeling being and working at the church  
8 kept pulling at me.

9         While attending college in 1991, I was hit head on by a drunk driver and miraculously  
10 survived a fractured neck. My life has physical pain, yet God's mercy allows me to deal with it.  
11 During this trying time, I was also the caretaker of my grandmother who had Alzheimer’s  
12 disease. Through this God taught me thankfulness. It is rare to be able to repay someone for their  
13 kindness in your life. My grandmother helped raise and care for my sister and me, and God  
14 allowed me to do the same for her. One of my greatest life gifts was to be the last person she  
15 knew, a blessing that has no match. Throughout this time, I had a dear friend named Paula St.  
16 Pierre, who continued to influence my faith. She gave me my first Bible and often prayed for and  
17 with me.

18         I then married and had my son. This was difficult. My husband was agnostic and  
19 struggled with my faith in God. I was a stay-at-home mom and worked at a church part time until  
20 my son was school age. This was an interesting position at the Unitarian Universalist Church in  
21 Grafton, Massachusetts. Being hired even though I was a Christian was unusual. Reverend  
22 LeFevre was not only kind but God used him to instill an ecumenical view towards others and  
23 their faith. One more nudge towards my call.

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1           My son attended a Christian school for Kindergarten and I worked for a Biological  
2 Laboratory, called Omega Pharmaceuticals, part-time. This facility was owned by a Christian  
3 man and it was amazing to pray together at work and learn the joy of fellowship in a vocation.  
4 My family then moved to the country. In retrospect, I believe my husband wanted to remove my  
5 son and me from our faith. However, we still attended church and I found a job teaching  
6 Biology.

7           As time went on, my marital relationship deteriorated. My pastor, Lisa Hildebrant, was  
8 instrumental in providing the courage to leave the abuse. She would pray and talk with me and I  
9 am forever grateful for her non-judgmental advice. My single motherhood years were financially  
10 tough yet I grew stronger in my faith. Teaching and church took up most of my time. I was on  
11 the church vestry, participated in Scouts, PTA and church bible studies. The Episcopal church  
12 provided me with a wonderful church life, but I did not understand what a relationship with God  
13 could be until I was with my second husband.

14           Years after my car accident, the Lord helped me through a life-threatening surgery related  
15 to my original injury. I had a wonderful Christian surgeon, Dr. Lipinski, who saved my life. I  
16 experienced an amazing healing and a new perspective on my faith and life. God then blessed me  
17 with a second chance at love. When I met my husband Garry, the new “me” through Christ came  
18 to light. With him, I am blessed to have music and love. God has allowed us to perform on  
19 worship teams and at coffee houses. I know what it is to squander your gifts and have them taken  
20 away. I now use my voice for His glory not mine. I was baptized at Second Baptist Church in  
21 South Hadley in 2009 by Pastor Don Bradley. This was the beginning of a relationship with God  
22 for me and life has not been the same since. After my baptism, family issues and grief steered us  
23 to another church.

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1           My world was once again turned upside down with the death of my mother. She died in  
2 2012 on Mother’s Day. God gave me the strength to sing to her and to be by her side when she  
3 passed and witnessed her recommitment to Christ the day before she died, a miracle. I have no  
4 words to express my feelings regarding this event. It is a difficult walk through life without one’s  
5 parents. She was a loving, kind mother and grandmother.

6           After my mother’s death, I began taking leadership classes at First Baptist Church in  
7 Amherst. Here I felt God’s prompting to go deeper and enter ministry. In one of the courses we  
8 were instructed to share our testimonies with each other. Upon hearing mine, Pastor Greg Mozel  
9 asked me to share it with the congregation. It is here, where I had my “Aha moment”! Standing  
10 in front of my brothers and sisters in Christ while telling my story felt like I was home and that  
11 God wanted me to do more for Him through ministry. With the support of my husband and the  
12 encouragement of the pastor, Greg Mozel, I applied to Liberty University Baptist Theological  
13 Seminary.

14           This was truly a call from God. Liberty may seem like an unusual seminary for a female  
15 seeking to become a pastor or chaplain, yet God provided the path for me. When I was  
16 researching seminaries to attend while working full time, Liberty kept falling on my lap. God  
17 provided the confirmation through chance encounters and friends. Attending Liberty was an  
18 incredible privilege. As an educator, I was pleased with the curricula, academic rigor and the  
19 support from my advisors and professors. God gave me the opportunity to experience people  
20 from all around the world and from many denominations to strengthen my personal relationship  
21 with Him. The courses were rigorous, enlightening and Christ-centered.

22           I recall when I told my son about my new vocational endeavor. He said, “It’s about time  
23 Mom! You have wanted to do this for a while now!” Really? Wow, he knew when I did not. So

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1 here I am obeying God’s call and beginning a new career in ministry. If you asked me thirty plus  
2 years ago if there would be any benefit that could come from the trials in my life, I would not  
3 have answered with a hearty yes! I have learned that I was not defeated by my struggles but  
4 developed by God into the person He wanted me to be. I graduated from Liberty University with  
5 a Masters of Art in Christian Ministry with a cognate in Pastoral Counseling in March of 2018  
6 and a G.P.A. of 3.97.

7 My husband and I returned to our home church, Second Baptist in South Hadley as I was  
8 beginning seminary. Pastor Ryan Bradley was instrumental in my sponsorship and license to  
9 preach for the ordination process through American Baptist Church and I am grateful for his  
10 assistance. He has since left Second Baptist as has the Associate Pastor, Kenneth Hebert.  
11 Throughout the transition, I have felt strongly that God wanted my husband and me to return to  
12 help Second Baptist in this difficult time.

13 I am also working on certification through International Critical Incident Stress  
14 Foundation, Inc. in Spiritual Care in Crisis Intervention. I am currently CISM (Critical Incident  
15 Stress Management) certified. I believe God wants me to be able to help those in grief stricken or  
16 traumatic situations.

17 My first CPE unit was completed at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield in August of  
18 2017 under the supervision of Rev. Ute Schmidt. This experience has rooted my faith deeper and  
19 confirmed the calling in ministry God has placed in my life. So much suffering, yet God is there.  
20 I have learned He is present in each situation no matter what it is or what they may believe.  
21 Throughout my hardships, God has been there as well. He has wanted me to make this journey  
22 and I took a step out in faith. I am excited to embark upon a new career ministering to others.

1           Most of the people I encountered during my Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) had  
2 religious differences from me. Whether Catholic, atheist, Jewish or any other world view, all  
3 encounters were not about their theology. It was about keeping true to mine. As a Baptist, the  
4 Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture were some of the principles I utilized to help  
5 people get through the moment. At the same time, I was living out my Christian theology by  
6 loving the patients as the chaplain. This was a way to practice respecting religious freedom and  
7 human rights which are central ideas to American Baptists. The belief that a person has the right  
8 to choose their religion is the basis of interfaith chaplaincy. This mode of thinking also applies to  
9 the work of a pastor. Meeting people where they are and sharing the love of Christ should be first  
10 and foremost in sharing the Good News to make disciples.

11           Since October of 2017, I have put in 10 hours a week at my church. This time included  
12 leading worship, bible studies and membership classes, working on the Christian Education and  
13 stewardship committees, pulpit supply, presiding over communion, a funeral and a wedding. I  
14 am grateful to the preparation committee for recommending the hours. Throughout this time, I  
15 realized how much I love to research and prepare a sermon. I am learning about the managing of  
16 a church due to the transition of our pastors having left. All of which has led me to considering  
17 pastoral work in addition to chaplaincy or in place of it. With the pastoral time, Watchcare and  
18 the wonderful time at The Center for Career Development and Ministry with Dr. McConnaughy,  
19 I feel God’s prompting towards pastoral ministry even more. Dr. McConnaughy shared with me  
20 how she felt God facilitated our meeting and how she felt my role in ministry should be a  
21 pastorate. It was there at the CCDM with her, where I felt a confirmation of how my teaching  
22 skills and life experience could offer much in the pastoral arena.



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1           During my time in seminary, God came through with a joy unimaginable, a  
2 granddaughter. My son has become an amazing man and a wonderful father even though he was  
3 facing a life-threatening health issue. Enduring this as a mother was frightening. This was a true  
4 test, was I ready for ministry? Do I trust God no matter what? The answer is a resounding YES!  
5 As I embark upon this new journey, I realize He has equipped me with the acceptance of the  
6 good and bad parts of my life to find peace, comfort and hope through Jesus Christ no matter  
7 what life may throw at me. To heed the calling He has placed upon my heart and make disciples  
8 of others for His glory is the least I can do for the grace He has given me in my life.

9           As an avid reader God has placed many books in my hand for introspection, learning and  
10 spiritual growth throughout my life. I have been blessed to have some authors who have  
11 provided spiritual guidance through good times and bad. Some of my favorites are N.T. Wright,  
12 John Stott, Max Lucado, C. S. Lewis and Henri Nouwen. I recall reading T.D. Jakes *Woman*  
13 *Thou Art Loosed* in my early twenties and it changing my life, as did *Beauty For Ashes* by Joyce  
14 Meyers after my divorce.

15           When I recount the difficulties of my life I see the list of benefits and the joy in them as  
16 seen in Romans 5:3-5, “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that  
17 suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces  
18 hope, <sup>5</sup> and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts  
19 through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (ESV). Dare I say, some may even be what I  
20 needed to become closer to Him and learn important lessons to fulfil my calling. I will introduce  
21 my second Scripture here, John 16:33, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have  
22 peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” Praise  
23 God! Jesus has overcome the world and He has been my peace and strength throughout all of my

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1 tribulations. For as Jesus stated in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do  
2 not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” The  
3 peace of Christ has replaced the fear in my life. For there is no fear in Love (1 John 4:19) and  
4 God is Love. (1 John 4:8). I am humbled by what God has done for me and cannot wait to see  
5 where He leads me in the near future. I go forward without fear and full of love in my heart.

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1 **Theological Understanding**

2 **God**

3 My theological view of God can be found in my belief in the Trinity. If one is asking if I  
4 believe in God, yes and I believe in the triune God. We see the love of God (Father), who gave  
5 us His Son (Jesus) as a sacrifice for our sins, in the life and news of Christ and in the gift of the  
6 (Holy)Spirit. If one, in turn, is referring to God as God the Father then He has shown Himself to  
7 be omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient and sovereign in history, Scripture and in my life. He is  
8 holy, full of Grace and wants us to fellowship with Him through obedience. He lovingly  
9 provided a Savior and Spirit to reconcile us to Him. I know this due to the personal encounters  
10 and Scriptural studies I have undertaken. As a biologist, I have seen the wonder and power of  
11 God through His marvelous creations.

12 **Jesus Christ**

13 Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and Lord. The belief in Jesus Christ is the assurance of  
14 salvation and the spending of eternity with God. Jesus is the eternal Word which came to life. He  
15 suffered and died, taking on the sins of humanity on the cross and rose again in victory over sin  
16 and death. Salvation is found by believing and confessing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and  
17 our Lord and Savior (Romans 10:8-10). To me following Jesus is about committing to a  
18 relationship with Him, being in community, learning and understanding His Word, and doing His  
19 will through ministry. This is where I find myself now, on the cusp of God’s new plan for me to  
20 live out the Great Commission for my good and His glory.

21 **Holy Spirit**

22 The Holy Spirit is The Helper who teaches us God’s way and truth. (John 14: 26) He  
23 bears witness to us (Hebrews 10:15) and dwells inside us, guarding and revealing the goodness

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1 of God within our hearts and convicting us of our sins. The Holy Spirit works in the lives of  
2 believers, guiding us to bear good fruit, gifts and advocating for us. (John 15:26) The power of  
3 the Holy Spirit changes lives through prayer and relationships. We are sanctified through the  
4 Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11) and are being transformed to be more like Christ through His work (2  
5 Corinthians 3:18).

#### 6 Humanity

7 Although made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6), mankind or humanity is  
8 fallen. Sin and death entered the world through the fall of Adam (Romans 5:12), yet it is through  
9 Jesus Christ that we are reconciled and made into a new creation (Colossians 1:21-23). We  
10 (humanity) have been justified and saved by Christ. For while we are all sinners, He still died for  
11 us (Romans 5: 8-9). Jesus died as a ransom for all people, wanting each to come to know God  
12 and is the mediator between God and mankind (1 Timothy 2:3-5). Looking at the sin of the world  
13 makes it difficult sometimes to find our purpose, yet Jesus has reconciled us to God through His  
14 sacrifice (Romans 3:23-24). God created us for His glory (Isaiah 43:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31), to  
15 be stewards to all His creation (Genesis 1:26) and be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). To be  
16 fruitful could mean increasing in numbers, but I think it also meant to be spiritually fruitful  
17 (Galatians 5:22-23). When we bear the fruits of the Spirit we glorify Him.

#### 18 Salvation

19 As stated above, salvation comes through the belief and personal confession that Jesus  
20 Christ is the Son of God and is our Savior (Romans 10:8-10). Salvation is life; both eternal due  
21 to faith (the belief in our hearts) and now here on earth. This life of salvation is brought about by  
22 God’s grace and is available to all (Titus 2:11). Salvation is by grace through faith in God and  
23 not by any works of man (Ephesians 2:8-9).

1 Scripture

2 Scripture is the authority of Baptist ethical decisions, ministry and spiritual and relational  
3 growth. It is necessary for an individual to study Scripture to grow in maturity as a Christian.  
4 The unique aspect of this statement for American Baptists is the belief that everyone has the right  
5 to interpret Scripture. Scriptures are God-breathed and should be applied to personal and  
6 community faith living.

7 Ordinance: Believer’s Baptism

8 Baptists built their faith around the idea of religious freedom for all to worship according  
9 to their conscience without government or religious organizations dictating their means. In  
10 practice, baptism is full immersion and a proclamation. Jesus was baptized by John to fulfill  
11 righteousness (Matthew 3:13–15), yet the best description of what baptism means to me is found  
12 in Galatians 3: 27, clothing myself with Christ. Professing faith in Christ through baptism shows  
13 devotion and declaration to become His servant and disciple. It is the first practice of admission  
14 into the Christian church. Baptists stress believer’s baptism as an obedient act of repentance  
15 toward God, trusting His mercy and surrendering to His will in response to His love and grace.  
16 For me, it represented a new life in Christ.

17 Ordinance: The Lord’s Supper

18 The Baptist ordinance of the Lord’s Supper is a remembrance of the foundations of the  
19 church and our relationship with Christ. American Baptists acknowledge the Scripture found in  
20 Luke 22:19, “do this in remembrance of me” as a mandate from Christ. The usage of tangible  
21 symbols of bread and wine for this memorial meal is designed to have the believer reflect upon  
22 the Gospel and Jesus as Lord. It is a time of reflection and examination, a moving moment. Each  
23 time, it brings a feeling of awe and humble reverence to my soul and brings me closer to my

1 brothers and sisters in Christ. Therefore, it is more than a memorial, it is a communion with  
2 Christ and the community of believers. By communion I mean a sharing of God’s presence and  
3 the fellowship of His believers.

4 The Church

5 The purpose of the church is a dual one: to gather believers and spread the message of  
6 Jesus. Gathering can be anywhere as long as there are two or more (Matthew 18:20) followers of  
7 Christ. The fullness of church is found in the fellowship of its members, the body of Christ. This  
8 membership, I liken to nesting dolls. The larger outer doll is representative of the universal  
9 church. As each doll is opened to reveal a smaller one, we can apply the analogy of them being  
10 “churches” seen as national, regional, associations, local and finally individuals. At each level,  
11 the fellowship is found among believers. This is seen more naturally between believers in the  
12 same church. At the state, regional or national level, the fellowship is found between churches;  
13 where the word may be referring to a building of God.

14 I believe one must look at the fellowship of an individual in the same manner. Each  
15 Baptist believer can fellowship with someone from a different church from a different part of the  
16 country or world. This interconnectedness or fellowship is necessary and important in the  
17 spiritual health and practice for believers or the universal church for the nature of the Baptist  
18 faith is relational. The gathering creates a relationship first with Jesus Christ and then with other  
19 believers. The importance of communal prayer, correction and bible study will not only  
20 strengthen the bond with Jesus but with the larger church community to the glory of God.

21 Spreading the Good News is the second purpose for the church. Jesus provided a  
22 commission for His church to make disciples in all nations, baptizing and teaching them about  
23 His redemptive love and peace (Matthew 28:16-20). Each member of the church is charged with

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1 this purpose. For God chose to gather His people to Him, the lost and lonely and through our  
2 trusting in Jesus as the Son of God we became children of God; or the church (Psalm 68:6, John  
3 1:12).

#### 4 Worship

5 During seminary, I read a book by Wheeler and Whalen entitled, *The Great Commission*  
6 *to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism*. I learned as part of living a life  
7 of obedience to God, it is essential to see the connection between worship, evangelism and the  
8 Great Commission. When it comes to worship, I am all in. As a worship leader, singer and lover  
9 of God, music is a natural way for me to feel close to God and to bring others closer to Him.  
10 Many times, God's Word and will has connected to song for me. Worship does not only include  
11 music; but times of prayer, dance, art, quiet times admiring nature and Biblical reading can all be  
12 modes of worship. These varied forms of worship can reach people who may be drawn to each  
13 venue. The vision for worship should be to glorify God by living biblically to work towards  
14 fostering Christ centered disciples. One should worship with the possible knowledge that  
15 someone may be drawn to want to know God because of the action of worship. That is part of  
16 evangelizing, sharing the Good News, whether by dance, song or art. I am grateful God put  
17 music in my life as an encouragement and active method of personal worship.

#### 18 American Baptist Church (ABC)

19 American Baptists also hold the tradition of personal experience as being important in the  
20 believer’s relationship with Jesus Christ. In his book *The Baptist Identity*, Walter Shurden  
21 defines this as soul freedom and the sacredness of personal choice and I agree. Soul freedom  
22 entails the presence of God in one’s life and the opportunity to strengthen our relationship with  
23 Him. One way we can strengthen the relationship is by reading Scripture. Bible freedom is

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1 another identifiable distinctive as a Baptist, where the affirmation of the Bible being the core of  
2 individual and church life under the Lordship of Christ. It proclaims the privilege of being able  
3 to read, interpret and study God’s Word as Christian.

4         The American Baptist view on “church” shares values with other denominations, yet its  
5 autonomy, voluntary nature and congregational control under the Lordship of Jesus Christ set it  
6 apart under Church freedom according to Shurden. This concept of church also entails the  
7 fellowship of believers no matter where they are located. The autonomy of the local church  
8 allows each church to select its own pastor, form of worship, financial responsibility and affairs  
9 with no outside control. Independence from government, known as separation of church and  
10 state, leaves the church governing up to the members of the church. All the above-mentioned  
11 aspects are what attracted me to the Baptist faith. The final freedom, Religion, speaks to affirm  
12 freedom of, for and from religion for its church members. This states the ultimate allegiance is to  
13 Jesus Christ, no matter what. All of these freedoms provide a wide berth of views, yet the  
14 differences are found only in the individuals, not in the authority of Jesus.

15         American Baptists value volunteerism. Historically, the act of volunteerism functioned as  
16 working in missions and education, which is still found today for both individuals and  
17 congregations. The act of volunteering is a form of service for humankind and the Lord. This  
18 brings us outside of our church walls and into the world. The inherent belief in religious liberty,  
19 human dignity and separation of church and state also play vital roles in volunteering in the form  
20 of public witnessing for American Baptists. I see witnessing in action, in the practices of praying  
21 for our leaders and world issues, voting our conscience and most of all modeling Baptist values  
22 in our daily lives.



1 Missions are often associated with doing good deeds for the less fortunate (Matthew  
2 25:31-46), yet that is only part of the enterprise. Evangelism is proclaiming the gospel and  
3 bringing it to those who do not have Jesus Christ in their life. These two can be seen separately  
4 or in tandem. If Christ's teachings are followed, then men will work towards completing God's  
5 directive of spreading the gospel and saving souls (Matthew 28:18-20). This may require  
6 providing physical necessities as well as Scriptural education. It is often asked whether we  
7 should we be worried about salvation of the body or soul? In this fallen world, there is much  
8 human suffering found physically, emotionally and spiritually. As Baptists under the Lordship of  
9 Christ, we have the responsibility to be the light and love to those in the dark. This love can be  
10 seen through the nourishment of body, mind and spirit through missionary actions. Baptist  
11 missions are Christ-centered, relational actions which take place individually, locally and  
12 globally through churches to accomplish helping others and spreading the Good News.

13 Not all denominations recognize women in ministry, yet American Baptists embrace the  
14 ordination of women. I stand firm on accepting the Scriptural words found in Galatians 3:28,  
15 “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you  
16 are all one in Christ Jesus”; for my salvation and calling. For me to be acknowledge as a Baptist  
17 woman of faith, ordination is imperative. Not only have I worked hard at my education and  
18 sacrificed much for ministry, I have been called by God to do so. It is not only an honor that my  
19 church and pastors have supported my call to ordination, it is also an obligatory act of the church  
20 to raise up leaders in the name of God. Churches practice this role through the process of  
21 ordination. My call began as an internal prompt to ministry by the Holy Spirit and became an  
22 external encouragement from God to my church. The process of ordination is where the local  
23 church can contribute to the Kingdom respecting the Great Commission through raising leaders.