**­­COMMISSIONED MINISTERS**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**October 2015**

**Question 1: Who are commissioned ministers?**

Answer: Commission ministers are individuals who have demonstrated a divine call to the ministry. They are appointed or elected to leadership positions. They have been ordained as local elders for at least three years and have received commissioned licenses or credentials.

**Question 2: There are a number of credentials and licenses. How are categories of credentials voted?**

Answer: They are voted by the General Conference Executive Committee.

**Question 3: Can an individual receive more than one category of credential?**

Answer: No

**Question 4: Can a division create new credentials?**

Answer: Yes. New credentials can be created by a division, but they must first be approved by the General Conference Executive Committee at Annual Council.

**Question 5: To whom are ministerial credentials issued?**

Answer: They are issued to “ministerial employees who have demonstrated a divine call to ministry and have been ordained to the gospel ministry”.

**Question 6: To whom are commissioned credentials issued?**

Answer: They are issued to the following unless they hold ministerial credentials, administrative ministries credentials, or commissioned ministry of Teaching credentials: Associates in pastoral care; Bible instructors; General Conference, division, union, and local conference/mission treasurers/chief financial officers and departmental directors including associate and assistant directors; institutional chaplains; presidents and vice presidents of major institutions; auditors, and field directors of the Christian Record Services.

**Question 7: What’s the similarity between a ministerial credential and commissioned credential?**

Answer: Both are ministerial credentials which allow a minister to perform ministerial functions.

**Question 8: What are the differences between a ministerial credential and commissioned credential?**

Answer: A commissioned pastor may perform all ministerial functions except the following:

1. Organizing a church;

2. Uniting churches; and

3. Ordaining local elders.

**Question 9: Should a commissioned pastor first serve as an elder in the local church?**

Answer: Most certainly.

**Question 10: Can a person with commissioned credential officiate wedding ceremony?**

Answer: “In a marriage ceremony the charge, vows, and declaration of marriage are given only by an ordained pastor except in those areas where division committees have approved that selected licensed or commissioned pastors who have been ordained as local elders may perform the ceremony…An ordained pastor, a licensed or commissioned pastor, or an elder may deliver the sermonette, offer the prayer, and give the blessing.

**Question 11: Can a commissioned pastor serve as president of a local conference, union, division, or the General Conference?**

Answer: No.

**Question 12: When ordaining local elders, can a commissioned pastor participate in the ordination service by the laying on hands?**

Answer: No. Church manual indicates that only an ordained pastor may participate in ordaining local elders. The same is true for ordaining pastors.

**Question 13: Can a commissioned pastor be paid at the same level as ordained pastor?**

Answer: It depends on the wage scale percentages given for commissioned ministers.

**Question 14: Could credentials be transferred in the event of a change of employment?**

Answer: No. In the event of a transfer, the new employing organization will issue new credentials with the following exception:

“When an ordained/ licensed minister changes his denominational employment to work other than that for which a ministerial credential/license is ordinarily issued, his credential/license shall cease to be valid except in those cases where the employing organization recommends, and the next higher organization approves, the continuing of the ministerial credential/license. When an individual is extended a call under the above circumstances, he shall be informed as to his relationship in this matter.”

**Question 15: When a commissioned pastor, having been ordained as a local elder, is transferred to another church, would the minister need to be ordained as local elder again?**

Answer: No. The Church Manual indicates that once a person is ordained as a local elder, he or she does not have to be ordained again in another church. But the minister would need to be elected as a local elder in the next church in order to function as a local elder.

**Question 16: Can a commissioned minister conduct wedding or baptism outside his or her pastoral district?**

Answer: A commissioned pastor may conduct wedding or baptism outside the designated pastoral district if authorized to do so by the conference/mission president.

**Question 17: Can a commissioned minister conduct wedding or baptism in another conference/mission?**

Answer: A commissioned minister may not be permitted to baptize and officiate wedding in another conference/mission unless permission is given by both conference/mission presidents.

**Question 18: Could credentials be withdrawn?**

Answer: Yes. “Any organization with authority to issue credentials and licenses has the power to withdraw the papers it has granted, in harmony with the constitutional provisions of the organization concerned”.