Minister Ordination and Licensing Policy and Procedures

Policy: The Assembly shall have a policy that addresses the process for ordaining and licensing Awakening Together (AT) ministers, as well as for maintaining minister ordination or license. Moreover, this policy shall also address the procedural criteria that underlie the Minister Preparation Program (MPP).

Procedure I: All Awakening Together ministers other than the initial Chairman-Minister, President-Minister and Vice-President Minister must complete MPP. The requirements for being admitted into MPP are:

A. One must be an AT member to apply for MPP.
B. In order to be accepted into MPP, one must profess a calling from within to be a servant of the one true Self through Awakening Together and must be dedicated to support members and friends on the path of awakening to one true Self. (Note: A friend is defined as anyone and everyone who is not a member.)
C. In order to be accepted into MPP one must have a demonstrated commitment to spirituality by meeting at least one of the following criteria:
    a. Prior completion of at least one program of relevant and substantial spiritual/religious education. Self-study is accepted. Examples include, but are not limited to:
        i. Significant structured time at an ashram, monastery or other communal setting rooted in spiritual study and/or practice.
        ii. Completion of self-study courses such as, but not limited to, A Course in Miracles, The Holy Spirit's Interpretation of the New Testament or The Way of Mastery.
        iii. Completion of another minister ordination program with a significant education component.
        iv. Formal education with a spiritually focused major, such as but not limited to Religious Studies.
    b. Perform at least two years of consistent volunteer service with Awakening Together.
    c. Pass an interview with the President-Minister in which it was determined that the applicant has the calling, motivation and commitment to enter MPP.
D. The applicant must agree to adhere to the expectations of an MPP participant prior to being admitted into the program.
E. Applicant who claims financial hardship status may apply for partial scholarship to help offset the financial cost of the program.

Procedure II: Prior to being ordained, one must meet the following criteria:

A. One must be a founding member (a member who signed the constitution) or a member of good standing for at least two years.
B. One must be at least 18 years of age.
C. One must successfully complete both Phase I and Phase II of MPP according to the requirements for successful completion in Procedure III.

D. One must attend an Awakening Together ordination ceremony and take the Awakening Together Ordained Minister's Oath.
E. Although the Ordained Minster's Oath may be updated from time-to-time with the approval of the Member Board of Trustees, the oath shall include the following components:
    a. Indication that the AT ordained minister feels called from within to be a servant of the one true Self through Awakening Together, dedicated to support members and friends on the path of awakening to one true Self.
    b. Commitment to uphold, demonstrate and maintain AT purpose and core values.
    c. Pledge to remain in communal relationship with Awakening Together through service to the assembly or the broader community on behalf of the assembly.
    d. Agreement to join the AT Minister's Association and adhere to the procedures of that assembly.
    e. Promise to be a living ethical demonstration becoming of an Awakening Together minister.

Procedure III: Although the MPP curriculum may be updated from time-to-time by the President-Minister or under the supervision of the President-Minister, the program shall include the following components:

A. One introductory class prior to application to the program to explain the commitment one is making as a participant in the program and as an Awakening Together ordained minister.
B. An application, which must be approved by the President-Minister.
C. Two phases of curriculum. Phase One shall be a program teaching true discernment. Phase Two shall be a program introducing a broad spectrum of spiritual teachings.
D. Two exams, one after each phase of the program, both of which must be passed with at least 75%. If a participant does not pass an exam the first time it is taken, the participant shall be afforded a second opportunity to pass that exam. If an exam is not passed after two attempts, the participant must complete a program of self-study designed for the participant by the President-Minister before taking the exam for the third time. If the exam is not passed after the program of study, the participant must retake the applicable phase before being permitted to take the exam again.
E. Total length of MPP curriculum is approximately 18 months (70 – 85 weeks) based on weekly attendance without interruption.
F. Although it is not mandated, it is recommended that one complete the entire MPP curriculum within three years or less. The maximum time one may take to complete the MPP is five years from the date of application unless the President-Minister approves an extension application due to special circumstances.

Procedure IV: Upon being ordained as an AT minister, one must maintain that ordination. Criteria for maintaining an ordination are:

A. One must maintain a meaningful communal relationship with the assembly. Examples of "meaningful communal relationship" include, but are not limited to:
    a. Teaching in the Sanctuary.
    b. Writing and submitting articles for publishing on AT blog or in the AT newsletter
    c. Leading or assisting in AT gatherings
    d. Offering coaching/counseling to members without cost
    e. Teaching AT course offerings
    f. Serving on the Board of Directors, as a Member Board Trustee or on an AT Member Board subcommittee
    g. Serving in any AT volunteer position
    h. Serving in the broader community as a representative of AT while also attending AT gatherings on a regular basis
B. If a minister does not remain in meaningful communal relationship with the assembly for a period of 12 months, that minister shall be restricted from leading gatherings. If a minister is not in communal relationship with the assembly for a period of 18 months, the Member Board of Trustees may suspend his/her ordination. Once an ordination is suspended for failure to remain in communal relationship, it can only be reinstated by the Member Board of Trustees or the Board of Directors.
C. One must adhere to the AT Ordained Minister's Oath. If one does not adhere to the oath in ways other than that which is already stated in B, ordination can be suspended by the Board of Directors. Only the Board of Directors can reinstate an ordination that has been suspended by the Board of Directors. Conduct unbecoming an AT minister is one cause for suspension by the Board of Directors.
D. One must maintain membership in Awakening Together. If a minister does not renew his/her membership, ordination is automatically suspended. When a minister renews his/her membership, ordination will be reinstated by the Member Board of Trustees unless there is just cause for not reinstating ordination based on failure to adhere to the AT Ordained Minister's Oath either before or during the time away from the assembly. If it is suspected there is cause not to reinstate ordination due to failure to maintain the oath, the case shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors for decision.

Procedure V: Members currently serving on the Board of Directors or Member Board of Trustees may become a Licensed AT Minister. The criteria for becoming and maintaining Licensed Minister status are:

A. Member must currently serve on the Board of Directors or the Member Board of Trustees to become licensed and to maintain that license.

B. Member must meet the requirements of Procedure I, apply for MPP and successfully complete Phase I of MPP according to Procedure III D. A licensed minister is not required to take Phase 2 of MPP.

Procedure VI: It is beneficial to the assembly when members of the Board of Directors and Member Board of Trustees choose to become licensed ministers because it ensures consistent discernment according to the Phase I curriculum. The following criteria outline the limits on the licensed minister:

A. A licensed minister can function in the following capacities:
    a. Lead an Awakening Together gathering when requested to lead a gathering
    b. Officiate an Awakening Together special meeting, retreat or pilgrimage. (A special meeting is defined as a meeting initiated by the President-Minister to benefit the entire assembly and open to all members and friends.)
    c. Teach the MPP Introduction and Phase I.
B. A licensed minister cannot administer sacraments.

Procedure VII: Participants of MPP who are taking the program for credit toward licensing or ordination must adhere to the following expectations:

A. Commit to attending classes. If a student is unable to attend a particular class, he/she must notify the facilitating minister at least two hours prior to class start.
B. Complete homework and participate in classes. Homework and class participation is the performance aspect of the program. A student cannot pass a phase without consistently meeting this requirement within the phase.
C. Get prior permission from the President-Minister to be excused if he/she will miss more than two classes in a row due to special circumstances. The homework requirement stated in the applicable MPP facilitator's guide applies.
D. When a class is missed, the student must provide the for-class-credit homework to the facilitating minister no later than 7 days after the missed class unless alternate arrangements have been agreed to in advance by the facilitating minister.

Procedure VIII: Once a minister is ordained, he/she shall join the Minister's Association. The purpose and procedures for this association are:

A. Association of AT ministers shall serve as an integral component of our commitment to the purpose and core values of Awakening Together. The primary purpose for the Association is to mentor new ministers and to oversee all ministers to ensure they are abiding by the AT Minister Ordination Oath.
B. Upon ordination, the newly ordained minister shall be admitted to the Minister's Association and paired with an experienced AT ordained minister for the purposes of association and mentorship. The function of the mentorship program is to assist the newly ordained minister as he/she

adapts what has been learned from the MPP into practical application as a functioning ordained minister.

C. The President-Minister shall exercise sole discretion on the matter of pairing a newly ordained minister with a qualified mentor.
D. A mentor shall be considered qualified when he/she has:
    a. Been an AT ordained minister for not less than 2 years, serves on the Board of Directors or the Member Board of Trustees or became an ordained minister as a founding member.
    b. Demonstrated clear discernment as observed by both the Member Board and the President-Minister in all matters , both public and private.
    c. Been observed by the Member Board and President-Minister to be an exemplary demonstration of AT purpose and core values.
    d. Consistently abided by the Awakening Together Minister's Oath.
    e. Demonstrated willingness for responsibility beyond his/her own affairs.
E. A mentor shall be responsible for not more than five ministers.
F. The President -Minister shall be the final authority regarding any points of contention that may arise within the mentoring process or relationship.
G. The President-Minister, taking all things into account, shall be responsible to make determination of the efficacy of each mentorship pairing and if and when the relationship has been maximized.
H. All ministers shall have a mentor regardless of their experience or seniority. Senior ministers shall be mentored by the President-Minister. Although the original need for a mentor may be dissolved with more experienced ministers, it remains the mentor's responsibility to oversee the experienced minister and ensure he/she continues to abide by the AT Ordained Minister's Oath including remaining in communal relationship with the assembly.
I. A mentor shall be responsible for presenting areas of concern regarding a mentored minister to the Member Board of Trustees or the Board of Directors, as applicable, via the President-Minister.
J. The Board of Directors shall serve as mentor for the President-Minister and Vice President-Minister.

Procedure IX: A minister who is ordained with another church or ordaining authority may apply to be ordained with Awakening Together through a reduced MPP curriculum. The following criteria apply:

A. The applying minister must provide documentation showing that he/she is an ordained minister in good standing with the ordaining authority.
B. The applying minister must provide documentation of the curriculum he/she completed as part of the prior ordination program.
C. The applying minister must meet with the President-Minister to review his/her reasons for wanting to be ordained as an Awakening Together minister.
D. If the President-Minister accepts the applying minister's application for a reduced program, the President-Minister will develop an individual MPP plan for the

applying minister based on his/her prior learning and experience. The reduced program will include:

a. The introductory class
b. The standard application
c. Phase I and the Phase I test
d. Selected classes from Phase II that were not taken as part of the applying minister's prior curriculum.
e. The Phase II test