

The Path to Ordination: A Look at the West African Methodist Church's Ministerial Training Process

The West African Methodist Church (WAMC) has established a comprehensive and structured training process for its ministers, known as Reverends. This journey of spiritual growth and academic rigor ensures that those called to serve are well-prepared for their vital roles within the church. Here's an overview of the steps involved in becoming a Reverend in the West African Methodist Church.

Step 1: Ministerial Candidate

The first step on this sacred journey begins with the nomination to become a minister. Upon receiving this nomination, the individual is designated as a "Ministerial Candidate." This title signifies the start of a period of discernment, learning, and service. During this phase, which lasts for one year, the candidate engages actively in church activities, participating in services, and gaining practical experience in ministry. It is a time for personal reflection, spiritual growth, and a deeper understanding of the responsibilities that come with pastoral leadership.

Being a Ministerial Candidate is a pivotal stage that allows the individual to confirm their calling to ministry. It is an opportunity for both the candidate and the church community to evaluate the candidate's commitment, faith, and suitability for this sacred vocation. Only after successfully completing this initial year of service can the candidate advance to the next stage of the training process.

Step 2: Received into the Sacred Ministry

After the completion of the one-year candidacy period, the individual is ready to be "Received into the Sacred Ministry." This marks a significant milestone in their journey, as they are now officially recognized as a Reverend. With this designation, they are granted the privilege to wear the dog collar, a symbol of their new role and responsibility within the church.

During this stage, the Reverend is permitted to wear their stole crossed to the side, a distinctive emblem of their position as a minister. This symbolic attire not only represents their commitment to serving the church but also their readiness to take on the spiritual and pastoral duties entrusted to them. This step is both an honor and a calling, signifying a deeper level of dedication to the ministry and the congregation.

Step 3: Probation Minister

Following their reception into the Sacred Ministry, the Reverend enters a crucial period known as the "Probation Minister" stage, which lasts for three years. This probationary period is marked by rigorous academic and practical training. Probation Ministers attend classes and undertake a series of examinations designed to deepen their theological understanding and pastoral skills.

The probationary phase is a time of intense preparation. It challenges the Reverend to grow intellectually and spiritually while honing the practical skills necessary for effective ministry. During this period, the Reverend is also expected to engage actively in church services, counseling, and community outreach, all while balancing their studies. This stage is designed to be transformative, equipping the Reverend with the knowledge and experience required to serve the church faithfully and effectively.

Ordination: The Culmination of the Journey

The final step in the training process is ordination, a momentous occasion for any Probation Minister. To reach this stage, the Probation Minister must have successfully passed all their exams, with no outstanding subjects. Additionally, they are required to complete a 10,000-word dissertation, a trial sermon, and an oral examination.

Ordination is more than a ceremonial rite; it is the culmination of years of dedication, study, and spiritual formation. It signifies the Probation Minister's readiness to fully embrace the responsibilities and challenges of ordained ministry. During the ordination ceremony, the Reverend is officially ordained, receiving the blessings and endorsement of the church community.

A Journey of Commitment and Faith

The West African Methodist Church's ministerial training process is a testament to the church's commitment to nurturing well-equipped and spiritually grounded leaders. Each step of the journey, from being a Ministerial Candidate to becoming an ordained Reverend, is designed to ensure that those called to serve are prepared to lead with wisdom, compassion, and faith.

This structured path not only emphasizes the importance of academic rigor and practical experience but also highlights the spiritual growth and personal transformation required to serve effectively in ministry. Through this process, the West African Methodist Church continues to uphold its tradition of nurturing dedicated and capable ministers who are ready to serve their congregations and communities with grace and humility.

The journey to becoming a Reverend in the West African Methodist Church is a profound one, marked by dedication, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to the call of ministry. It is a journey that transforms individuals, preparing them to lead, inspire, and serve in the name of faith and love.