



Apostolic Faith Church

World Headquarters, Portland OR

Questions from Around the World & Responses from the Board

March 7, 2025 Ministers' Meeting

Questions and Answers

Question 1: *We are hearing a few pastors call their spouses “first lady” during services. Is this now a trend in the Apostolic Faith Church?*

Response 1: It has never been the Apostolic Faith practice to refer to our pastors’ wives as “first lady,” nor is there a Scriptural basis for doing so. That designation may be appropriate in the political world, but not in our church work. The strength of a pastor’s wife is demonstrated by her “ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Peter 3:4). **When a person is appointed pastor, his spouse is not appointed as his assistant.** This is true even when the spouse is also a minister or in a position of other leadership within the church (Sunday school superintendent, music leader, etc.). It is usually not helpful for the pastor, his wife, or the congregation to put the pastor’s wife in the spotlight or a position of vulnerability. Rather, there is wisdom in protecting one’s wife from the public eye at least to some extent, though it is not necessary or even possible to do so entirely. **The works of a virtuous pastor’s wife or any church leader stand on their own merit (see Proverbs 31:10-31) without her expecting or needing a title of “first lady.”** The love, appreciation, and honor we show our wives in private and in public speaks volumes to our wives and to our congregations.

Question 2: *Is it true that the Apostolic Faith formally appoints assistant pastors for branch churches, and makes such an announcement publicly?*

Response 2: This question is addressed in the Minister’s Manual under the topic “Associate Pastors and Other Ministers” (p. 352). In the early days of the Apostolic Faith Church, there were such formal appointments as Assistant or Associate Pastor, but they proved to be mostly counterproductive to the health and unity of the church. **For about four decades now, we have not had a policy of appointing assistant pastors. It has served the church well to have one leader in a church—the Pastor, who is humble, serves the needs of the saints, and submits to his/her leader and the headquarters.** We have a large contingent of ministers in the Apostolic Faith organization who labor in supportive roles but are not actively pastoring. Most of our congregations in the Apostolic

Faith work have a ministerial staff of one or more ministers who assist the pastor in leadership duties at that location. We typically refer to these individuals simply as “ministers.” When a title is **needed** (such as for business cards), we use “associate pastor” (a minister who is active and ordained), “associate minister” (a minister who is active and not ordained), or “youth minister.” We suggest that branch churches follow the same pattern.

The title a minister bears does not dictate who leads the meetings on the rare occasions in which a pastor must be absent. We do not operate by seniority, so it is acceptable for a minister who is not ordained to run meetings in the pastor’s absence, even when an ordained minister is on staff. We operate by doing our best to discern whom God has appointed to a certain role at any given time, rather than by a system of tenure. At the Portland headquarters, there are a number of active, ordained pastors but no one bears the title of “assistant pastor.” **If there currently is no official assistant pastor in a branch church, we recommend against appointing one.**

Question 3: *Can a pastor use a minister from another church, or someone who used to be an Apostolic Faith minister but left our fellowship, to officiate (e.g., lead in prayer or preach)?*

Response 3: This question is addressed in the Minister’s Manual under the topic “Denominational Characteristics” (p. 327). The Apostolic Faith organization has a number of denominational characteristics that set us apart from the majority of religious organizations in the world today. We are not ecumenical in our practice because we choose not to identify ourselves with those who hold differing positions on what we consider to be key aspects of our walk with God. **The policy to not invite non-Apostolic Faith Church pastors or ministers to fill any kind of leadership position has been a guardrail that protects us from much confusion and disunity.** It has also helped us maintain the Bible doctrines and standard of holiness.

One of the most significant characteristics differentiating us from other Christian denominations is our doctrinal position. Our beliefs are founded on a literal interpretation of the Bible, and we strive to affirm and uphold the fundamental teachings of New Testament faith. This includes a definite born-again experience, victory over sin, a second work of grace (entire sanctification), and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Even when one from another organization purports to believe the same as we do, we still do not invite that person to fill our pulpits. **We do not hold worship services in conjunction with other denominations or invite ministers from other churches to come and teach in our services in a “sharing of pulpits.”** We avoid affiliation with ecumenical religious associations unless doing so is a government requirement. However, this would not preclude us from praying publicly when invited, at events such as university baccalaureates, community Christmas celebrations, city council meetings, or other community events, as long as we are allowed to pray freely without constraint.

We cherish the Gospel that was handed down to us by the pioneers of the Apostolic Faith work, and we have no desire to compromise any part of what we have received. We have been commissioned by God to earnestly contend for and pass on to the next generation the faith which was once delivered unto us (Jude 3). **Our prayer is that as we uphold the doctrines, practices, and denominational characteristics that have always distinguished this organization, others will be inspired to commit their lives to God,** challenged to a deeper walk of holiness, and motivated to seek God for the promised infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Question 4: *Is it allowed for Apostolic Faith ladies who are workers to use hair extensions?*

Response 4: The admonition to be temperate in “all things” includes being moderate in one’s appearance and attire. We know that extreme or ostentatious clothing, hairstyles, and general appearance are not appropriate for followers of Christ. However, we want to be careful in defining what is extreme. **We are careful not to beat our ladies down.** This is very important. We have many Apostolic Faith ladies who are very

faithful to this wonderful Gospel. Some ladies are no longer able to grow hair, and other ladies have shared with us how they are dealing with health issues (e.g. cancer and hair loss). I heard of a sister who had a massive loss of hair due to a traumatic close shave with death. Of course, we have many sisters and young ladies who want to look nothing more than modest and decent. Many of these sisters use modest hair extensions. The list goes on about legitimate use of hair extensions that do not call attention to oneself. Our organization does not have a policy against wearing such moderate extensions, with moderate length and no odd colors. On the other hand, imagine an African lady wearing a red, yellow, or green hair extensions. That will immediately draw attention to her. We don't want that. **As workers, we want attention to be on Jesus Christ and not on ourselves.** We know many of our sisters who wear hair extensions and you would hardly ever know because it blends with the color of their hair and is not overly long.

The "Appearance/Modesty" section of our Minister's Manual says, "Fashions change with each generation, and what is appropriate and modest for believers in one era and culture may not be appropriate and/or modest in another. However, **the Biblical principles regarding godly appearance are timeless.** . . . In the New Testament era, Paul noted to Timothy that immodesty is marked by adornment that is elaborate, extravagant, excessive, or expensive. **He instructed godly women to adorn themselves "not with broided hair [gold weaved in braids] or gold, or pearls [referring to jewelry, ornaments], or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works"** (1 Timothy 2:9). Decorating themselves with jewelry in an ostentatious manner was a common practice among non-Christian women of Paul's day, and he was pointing out that those who professed faith in Christ should refrain from such practices" (p. 99-100).

Question 5: *Is dancing accepted in traditional wedding receptions or any part of our weddings?*

Response 5: The short answer is no, not in Apostolic Faith weddings or receptions, whether they take place in our churches or away from our churches. While we acknowledge there were occasions of dance unto the Lord in the Old Testament (including David in 2 Samuel 6:14), there were also occasions of dancing before idols (including Israel when Moses was on the Mount in Exodus 32:15, 19). New Testament references to dancing are very few and include dances of celebration (at the return of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:25) and provocation (Herodias in Matthew 14:6). Where celebratory dancing occurs in the Bible, the focus is consistently on worshipping God. Additional information about our church's stand on dancing can be found in our Minister's Manual: "No indication is given of dance occurring within the New Testament church, and neither Jesus nor His Apostles allude to dancing as a method of worship. In fact, there are only five references to dancing in the New Testament (see Matthew 11:16-17; 14:6, Mark 6:22; Luke 7:31-32; 15:22-25), and none of these passages have anything to do with congregational worship. **Dancing, even under the guise of worship, appeals to the baser instincts of human nature. . . . and therefore has no part in an Apostolic Faith church setting**" (p. 224).

Paul wrote, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Dancing is not edifying or spiritually helpful to the dancer or for observers since the focus inevitably is on the body of that dancer rather than upon God. In that sense, public dancing detracts from helping us better appreciate the mystery of unity that exists between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32), of which Paul wrote when speaking of marriage. **We encourage our newly wedded couples to honor God by abstaining from public dancing. We understand that some cultures endorse dancing that involve husband and wife, and such dancing may connote endearment to each other. In such cultures, we still do not endorse public dancing because of the reasons we offered above. Such dancing may be appropriate for a**

husband and wife in the secluded privacy of their home—completely away from the public eye and never published on social media.

Question 6: *Issues of women wearing trousers/pants in the United States is causing a lot of saints in my district concern, and there is already some division and misunderstanding. Please, I need help in addressing this. What is our church's stance on this?*

Response 6: Our church has always taught both modesty and moderation as a part of the holiness movement from which we grew, and we continue to do so. Those principles are well documented within Scripture but are also enculturated and so must be properly imported into the various cultures where we have churches. The way in which we do this should be governed also by moderation. A recent *Apostolic Faith* magazine article quotes Philippians 4:5 and states, “Some have suggested that the word *moderation* in this text could also be understood to mean ‘sweet reasonableness.’ . . . When we become Christians, a change happens that begins to make us sweet and reasonable. We live in a world where tension and extremism are common, but Christians live differently. God has transformed us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, so our lives are filled with moderation, gentleness, and patience.” We are called to proclaim the Gospel with these traits, and as such we do not have a harsh, unbending rule against women wearing pants/trousers, particularly when the activity in which they are participating is not modest or safe when wearing a skirt or dress. **Some types of employment now require women to wear such for the same reasons, and we do not condemn our sisters for such. We teach clear differentiation of the two Biblical genders and condemn the blurring of them as taught in Deuteronomy 22:5,** but do not use that Scripture as justification to forbid trousers/pants, as that is not what it actually teaches. (See the Minister’s Manual pages 101 for further explanation.) Modesty is exhibited in dress but is also influenced by deportment (behavior) and ultimately must come from the heart. There are some who follow the “rules of dress” perfectly, but their deportment sends a quite different message. **We must focus our efforts on transformed hearts and character, building godly individuals**

(both male and female), and helping them to become reflections of Jesus.

We must remember as leaders that “the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” We must not major in minors. We teach and encourage modesty or moderation for both men and women, but we must not devolve into being the “skirt police” or “beard patrol,” destroying godly folks over trivial matters. As ministers, we may also take some inspiration from our Minister’s Manual, which says, “Pastors may wonder how to deal with concerns regarding appropriate attire. **It may not be wise to address a whole group of workers, such as the choir or orchestra, in order to correct a matter that actually concerns only one or two individuals.** We also should be mindful of the fact that there is a difference between a thoughtless (or even somewhat careless) attitude regarding appropriate attire, and a spirit that is resistant to the Biblical principles of modesty and temperance. As pastors, our goal is to teach the Biblical principles, and encourage everyone to be sensitive and open to the instruction of the Spirit in the matter of modest dress” (p. 101).

Question 7: *Is it appropriate for women to wear pants to church music rehearsals?*

Response 7: It is not appropriate. Although we cannot speak to every church on every occasion in every place (including the United States), **the practice in our churches around the world (and in the United States) reflects our sisters’ wearing skirts/dresses to church and to choir/music practices and other church activities. There could be times, such as work projects (painting, landscaping, etc.) or youth camps (climbing, sport activities, etc.), when some ladies wear pants/trousers as they are modest for those activities. We are well aware of countries where specific job-related tasks require ladies to wear pants, and we do not go against such.** However, we ask our workers who are ladies to not wear pants to music practices or any of our church services. We also request that men do not wear athletic-type shorts in these venues. In order to more directly address this concern, we encourage anyone to watch the [February 26, 2025 Music Rehearsal](#) held in Portland. The rehearsal was webcast live without any foreknowledge from members of the choir and orchestra. You will notice that they are permitted to dress

casually, but none of them ever consider dressing contrary to what has just been stated. In fact, it is never even necessary to remind them to dress appropriately for church practices.

Question 8: *What can pastors and ministers do to protect those in our congregations who are facing challenges from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)? Could we create a form to educate ministers on what to do?*

Response 8: We all understand that issues related to Immigration and Customs Enforcement could be very sensitive and emotional, especially when we put faces of loved ones in the conversation, which will be the case if a member of our congregation is involved. **We care deeply about our saints and do all we can to help and support them spiritually.** In fact, all our board members have had a lot of experience with either being immigrants to the United States or pastoring people who are immigrants to the United States. Unfortunately, many issues in our society today, especially immigration enforcement, have become political and divisive. **Rather than join in any campaign that could potentially cause division and set our church up as participating in a political campaign or something that would cause disunity, we will rather take a Biblical stance that commands us to love the people around us.** Hence, we encourage our pastors and workers to continue to show the love of God and support members who are immigrants and are affected by immigration enforcement orders of the federal government. We know some families in the church who have benefited from such pastoral love and care and are now lawful permanent residents and citizens of the United States. Hence, we encourage our pastors and ministers to continue to show the love of God. In addition, rather than creating a new form to educate our workers about immigration enforcement, **we already have our Church Volunteer Handbook that has sections on “Safety and Security” as well as “Emergency Procedures.”** The handbook contains pertinent information that we encourage pastors, ministers, and all workers to read and be familiar with.

Question 9: *Why is it that in Portland, retired leaders like Brother Darrel and Brother Dwight still officiate, while in many other areas of the work, previous leaders are not allowed to preach or officiate again?*

Response 9: First, we must understand that **we are not political parties that seek to dismiss previous leaders and their work. We are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28). It was never the policy of world headquarters to preclude retired leaders from participating in the work at whatever level the retiree's leader deemed best.** Brother Loyce Carver preached after he retired. His two predecessors (Sister Florence Crawford and Brother Raymond Crawford) passed on before retiring. We thank God that we can still benefit from Brother Dwight and Brother Darrel preaching here in Portland. They are still effective, and we thank the Lord for them.

Short of moral failure or gross insubordination, effectiveness rather than age is the criteria when it comes to using retired pastors. In writing to Titus, Paul made no mention of age when he wrote, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:5–9). If a minister at any age fails to meet those criteria or becomes ineffective, it is okay to lovingly **suggest** that he or she step aside from preaching and/or officiating. **We encourage current leaders to work with retired leaders and we also encourage retired leaders to be flexible and understand that current leaders may not operate the exact same way they operated.** In all, we preach and live sound doctrines, submit one to another, and lift up Jesus, who will draw all men unto Himself (John 12:32).

Question 10: *Is it okay for Apostolic Faith workers who are males to wear braided, locked, twisted, or very long hairstyles?*

Response 10: No, **we do not endorse our men workers wearing long hair.** “We uphold Paul’s conclusion that a woman’s head covering is her long hair” (Minister’s Manual, p. 97). **Similarly, we do not endorse our men workers wearing braided, locked, or twisted hairstyles.** These styles (braids, locks, twists) are impractical with short hair, and as such would be excluded under the admonition for men to have shorter hair compared to women and for all to avoid extremes in style and color. On page 137 of our Minister’s Manual we read: “Our personal appearance should be a credit to the Gospel message we proclaim. We should dress appropriately for the House of the Lord, and make sure that we are clean, neat, and well-groomed, as representatives of God himself.” **Again, a good Gospel worker does not call attention to himself or herself. We want people’s attention to be on Jesus, the focal point of the Gospel message.**