

POLICIES AND CRITERIA FOR THE ORDER OF MINISTRY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

(Policies and Criteria approved by the General Assembly are in regular type. Procedures in addition to those approved by the General Assembly and particular to the Southwest region are in *italicized* type.)

I. MINISTRY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

- A. The Ministry of Jesus Christ. Within the church the fundamental ministry is that of Jesus Christ whose servanthood, offered to God in behalf of humanity, defines and gives character to all ministry exercised in his name.
- B. The Corporate Ministry. As head of his body, the church, Christ calls upon his people to participate in his ministry and thus to make known in the life of the world the reality of God as Creator, Lord of History, Judge, Savior, Father. By baptism all Christians are inducted into the corporate ministry of God's people and by sharing in it fulfill their own callings as servants of Christ. This corporate ministry of all Christians is marked by these elements:
1. The praise of God in the church's public worship and by acts of faithful service;
 2. Care for the common life of the whole body within which all members come to know themselves as children of God and find confirmed their gifts and callings for special service;
 3. Mediation of the divine love to the life of all persons, including the society as a whole, through loving service, particularly at the points of greatest human need, and primarily through the daily work of God's people.
- C. The Order of Ministry. Within the ministry of the whole people of God there is and has been from the beginning a representative ministry called of God and authorized by the church. While all Christians share in the corporate ministry, the term "minister" particularly describes a person to whom the church entrusts representative responsibility. Through the centuries this Order of Ministry, in various offices, has been responsible to lead in transmitting the Christian tradition from one generation to another, translating and interpreting the Scriptures, proclaiming the gospel of Christ, administering the sacraments, serving to maintain a company of Christians in continuity with the life and faith of the Apostles and acting as pioneers and leaders in the church's reconciling mission in the world.
1. Personal Qualifications for Admission to the Order. In all of its procedures concerning the Order of Ministry the church seeks these qualities in the men and women whom it inducts into office.
 - a. Faith in Christ Jesus and commitment to a life of Christian discipleship.
 - b. Definite and informed decision, in response to God, to serve in the Order of Ministry.

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- c. Personal fitness sufficient to the demands of the office, including mental and physical capacities, emotional stability and maturity, and standards of morality.
2. Preparation for Service in the Order of Ministry. Persons to be inducted into the Order of Ministry are to prepare themselves for their work. That preparation shall include:
- a. Participation in the life and work of a congregation of Christians.
 - b. Breadth of theological study so that the candidate shows an understanding of the Christian faith, the Bible, the church, the history and polity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the world in theological perspective and the Christian mission.
 - c. Professional study and supervised experience in the work of the ministry, with emphasis upon that form of ministry in which the candidate hopes to serve.
 - d. Formation of responsible relations with and concern for the church, both as community of faith and institution.
 - e. Growth in personal character, Christian insight, spiritual formation and disciplined commitment to ministry.
 - f. Formation of ethical principles to guide professional relationships and personal conduct.
- D. Offices Within the Order of Ministry. The Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciple of Christ) includes two offices: the office of ordained minister and the office of licensed minister. Each office is authorized to carry out representative ministry according to provisions established by the General Assembly.
- E. **The Committee on the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest.**
1. ***The Committee on the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ in the Southwest shall be responsible for implementing these policies and criteria within this region.***
 2. ***This committee shall be made up of the chairpersons of the area/district committees on the ministry, plus six (6) members-at-large appointed by the regional council. These at-large members shall include laypersons, women and ethnic minorities. One-half of the members-at-large shall be appointed each biennium for terms of four years and may be appointed for a second term. In addition, the regional minister, the dean and director of field service education of Brite Divinity School, the chairperson of the department of religion-studies of Texas Christian University and the chairperson of the department of religion at Jarvis Christian College shall be members ex-officio.***
 3. ***The committee shall have three regularly scheduled meetings each year, normally in January, April and September. The meetings for each year shall be scheduled in advance and the dates publicly announced. Special meetings may be arranged as necessary.***

4. Each area or district of the Christian Church in the Southwest shall have a committee on the ministry related to the regional committee to provide for the care and concerns of ministers within the area or district and to function when requested as the agent of the regional Committee on the Ministry.

5. The committee shall report regularly to the regional council and to the regional assembly.

II. CANDIDACY FOR THE ORDER OF MINISTRY

A. A Definition: Candidacy. Candidacy is the initial step for entrance into the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Candidacy is entered into when a man or woman declares the intention to fulfill the requirements for entrance into the Order of Ministry, and the church affirms that intention.

B. The Criteria for Candidacy. The applicant shall be a member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation, and shall make application for candidacy to the region of the candidate's choice through the official board of that congregation. The applicant shall have the acceptance, approval and support of the congregation. In unusual circumstances, the person may make direct application to the region.

It is advisable that the candidate be at least a junior in college or university or have demonstrated sufficient maturity and competency for potential leadership. Candidacy shall be applied for at least one year prior to ordination and ordinarily at least one year prior to licensing as a commissioned church worker or lay preacher.

Upon receipt of the application, the region will begin the process of assessing (through avenues such as personal interviews, consultation with the congregation(s), appropriate region(s) and educational institution(s)) the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual and educational capacities of the applicant for the practice of ministry. Upon approval of the application, the region shall admit the applicant to candidacy.

C. The Procedures During Candidacy. The candidate shall seek admission to the Order of Ministry by preparing for ordination or licensing. The candidate shall seek to be responsive to the opportunities for personal and spiritual growth provided during the period of nurture and care by regional and general units of the church. Where possible these opportunities will be developed in consultation and cooperation with either or both the congregation(s) and educational institution(s) to which the candidate is related.

In the exercise of its responsibility, the region shall give continuing counsel and guidance to the candidate's preparation for ministry, and shall provide assistance to the candidate in discovering avenues for continued personal and spiritual growth. This may involve experiences such as supervised field education, internships, apprenticeships and individual or group career assessment.

The candidate who has not yet fulfilled all the qualifications for ordination or licensing as a lay preacher or commissioned church worker may be granted a license as a theological student. When a candidate seeks licensing for the practice of ministry in a region other than where the person is a candidate, the licensing region shall consult with the region of candidacy. In the event a candidate from one region seeks ordination, commission or license as a lay preacher in a region other than the one in which the person is a candidate,

that region shall consult with the region of candidacy regarding endorsement and transfer of candidacy.

The region shall advise the theological seminaries, and when appropriate the undergraduate institutions of higher education in which it has candidates, of the standards relating to candidacy, ordination and licensing.

Institutions of higher education related to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall: (1) share with the region in the nurture and guidance of enrolled candidates; (2) assist potential candidates to relate to a region; and (3) be aware of standards for licensing and ordination applicable to students in that institution. In non-Disciples-related institutions, the Division of Higher Education shall seek to discover potential candidates, inform the institutions and students of procedures for candidacy in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and shall seek to relate the students to a region for care.

Candidacy is terminated by: (1) ordination, or licensing as a commissioned church worker or lay preacher; (2) withdrawal by the candidate; or (3) decision of the region to remove the candidate from candidacy.

D. Application for Candidacy. A person who desires to enter the Order of Ministry either through ordination or through licensing should apply for candidacy to the Christian Church in the Southwest using a form provided by the region. Completion of the application will include certification of the action of the official board of the congregation in which the applicant holds membership giving its "acceptance, approval and support" to the individual.

1. Filing of an Application for Candidacy Form and approval of the application by the region brings the applicant under the care of the regional Committee on the Ministry as a candidate.

2. In the case of a member of a congregation related to the Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship, a constituency group of black Disciples, candidacy may also include care by the Committee on the Ministry of the fellowship.

III. THE OFFICE OF ORDAINED MINISTER

A. Description of the Office. The broadest authorization for representative ministry granted by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is conferred upon men and women whom it inducts into the office of ordained minister. By ordination the church recognizes that ordained persons, in fulfilling their calling as servants of Christ, possess the abilities, qualities and preparation needed for the performance of their assigned functions, accepts their ministry in and for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and for the whole body of Christ, covenant to undergird that ministry as a representative of the church.

In accepting ordination, the ordained minister covenants to obey God by caring for the church, offering gifts of mind and body to that service and agreeing to fulfill the functions of a minister.

- B. Authorization to Ordain of Behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Within these policies and criteria established by the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the regions and their related congregations share responsibility for ordination. Specifically assigned to the regions is the responsibility to establish procedures to evaluate applicants, admit them to candidacy, care for their nurture, authorize ordination and supervise the act of ordination.
- C. Theological and professional study in preparation for ordination ordinarily includes the securing of a baccalaureate degree and the completion of a seminary program of study.
- D. The Act of Ordination
1. The act of ordination shall be under the authorization and guidance of the region.
 2. The candidate ordinarily shall be recommended for ordination by a recognized congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the one in which membership is held.
 3. Representatives of the recommending congregation or congregations, the region and, if possible, the general and ecumenical church ordinarily shall participate in the act of ordination.
 4. The service ordinarily shall take place in the congregation.
 5. The certificate of ordination shall be issued by the region and signed by the appropriate officials of the church and participants in the ceremony.
- E. The Right of Appeal. Applicants and candidates shall have the right of appeal from decisions or prolonged inaction of the region to the General Board committee on ministerial standing.
- F. Ordained ministers with standing are voting members of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- G. **Procedures for Ordination. *The candidate, the congregation and the regional Committee on the Ministry.***
1. ***A candidate for the Order of Ministry as described in section II above should make application for ordination during the last year of his/her preparation and at least six months prior to the time when an ordination service is desired.***
 2. ***Applicants for ordination under the authorization of the regional committee may include the following:***
 - a. ***applicants from the Christian Church in the Southwest who are students in Brite Divinity School;***
 - b. ***applicants from the Christian Church in the Southwest who are students in other seminaries and are to be ordained under the authorization of the committee;***
 - c. ***applicants from other regions who are students in Brite Divinity School and***

who, with the approval of the region of home residence, are to be ordained under the authorization of the Southwest regional committee; or

- d. applicants in unusual cases where circumstances do not permit the completion of the requirements for a professional seminary degree and all other elements of preparation are fulfilled (the committee may consider the completion of an approved program of directed study and satisfactory service over a period of years under the guidance of the committee an adequate qualification for ordination).

3. Steps to be taken by the candidate for ordination:

- a. *Make application to the regional committee at least six months prior to desired ordination date.*
- b. *Request his/her congregation to recommend and sponsor him/her as a candidate for ordination.*
- c. *Schedule an ordination interview with the regional committee on the ministry.*
- d. *Send the following to the committee at least 60 days prior to the ordination interview:*
 - (1) *a letter of recommendation and sponsorship from his/her congregation signed by the minister and board chairperson;*
 - (2) *Ministerial Record and Relocation Assistance Forms giving biographical, educational and service data, and listing references;*
 - (3) *a written statement presenting in some detail his/her religious background and personal commitment to the representative ministry; expressing his/her concept of the church and its ministry, including the office of ordained minister; and articulating what it would mean for him/her to be ordained into the order of ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); and*
 - (4) *a statement from the dean of the seminary that requirements for a professional degree will be completed by the date of ordination.*
- e. *Meet with the regional Committee on the Ministry for the scheduled ordination interview.*
- f. *Request the sponsoring congregation to arrange a service of ordination following approval for ordination by the regional Committee on the Ministry.*
- g. *In the case of a candidate whose care is supplemented by the Committee on the Ministry of the Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship, a letter of recommendation will be requested from the chairperson of that committee.*

4. Steps to be taken by the sponsoring congregation:

- a. *Receive the candidate's request that the congregation recommend and sponsor him/her for ordination. Before taking action, the congregation should consider the candidate's personal qualifications and determine the satisfactory completion of the necessary preparation for the ministry as set forth in this document.*
- b. *Take action to recommend and sponsor the candidate for ordination if the individual is deemed to have the personal qualifications and has made the necessary preparation.*
- c. *Send a letter signed by the minister and board chairperson to the regional Committee on the Ministry stating that the congregation recommends and is willing to sponsor the candidate for ordination.*

(Following approval of the candidate for ordination by the regional Committee on the Ministry, the congregation proceeds with steps d-g.)

- d. *Appoint an ordination committee to plan the service of ordination in cooperation with the candidate and under the guidance of the regional Committee on the Ministry. Recommended orders of service for the act of ordination may be secured from the regional office.*
- e. *Conduct the service of ordination with representatives of the congregation, area/district or regional Committee on the Ministry, and, if possible, the general and ecumenical church ordinarily participating.*
- f. *Secure signatures of the participants in the act of ordination on the ordination certificate provided by the regional Committee on the Ministry.*
- g. *Send a report of the ordination and a copy of the order of service of ordination to the regional office for permanent filing.*

5. Steps to be taken by the regional Committee on the Ministry:

- a. *Receive an application for ordination from the candidate.*
- b. *Schedule an ordination interview with the candidate.*
- c. *Prepare and review the candidate's file including:*
 - (1) *letter of recommendation and sponsorship from the congregation;*
 - (2) *Ministerial Record and Relocation Assistance Forms;*
 - (3) *record of candidate's period of preparation;*
 - (4) *the candidate's statement concerning his/her background and concepts;*
 - (5) *statement from the seminary dean; and*
 - (6) *several letters of endorsement from references given on the minister's*

Relocation Assistance Form.

- d. Interview the candidate.**
- e. Approve or disapprove the candidate's request for ordination.**
- f. Notify the sponsoring congregation of the committee's action.**
- g. Cooperate with the congregation and candidate in planning and conducting a service of ordination. Provide guidance as to the basic elements to be included in the service.**
- h. Provide a certificate of ordination for the candidate. The certificate will contain the official seal of the Christian Church in the Southwest and be signed by the regional minister and the participants in the service of ordination.**
- i. Deposit records of the ordination in the regional office.**

IV. THE OFFICE OF LICENSED MINISTER

- A. Description of the Office. Authorization for representative ministry in specific situations and with periodic review is conferred by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) upon men and women whom it inducts into the office of licensed minister. By the act of licensing the church recognizes that licensed persons, in fulfilling their calling as servants of God, possess abilities, qualities and preparation needed for the performance of their assigned functions, accepts their ministry in and for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and for the whole body of Christ, promises to undergird that ministry and grants authority to perform that ministry in the prescribed area of responsibility as a representative of the church. (State/provincial laws may vary in their recognition of license. The granting of license does not, therefore, necessarily meet all legal requirements for the performance of marriages or other legal functions.)

In accepting this license, licensed ministers affirm their vocation to obey God by caring for the church, offer gifts of mind and body to that service and agree to fulfill the functions of a minister appropriate to the prescribed area of responsibility.

- B. Authority to License on Behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Within these policies and criteria as established by the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) the regions and their related congregations share responsibility for licensing. Specifically assigned to the regions is the responsibility to establish procedures to evaluate candidates, care for their nurture, define their prescribed area of responsibility, authorize licensing and supervise the act of licensing.
- C. Classifications Within the Office of Licensed Minister. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizes classifications within the office of licensed minister, each of which carries its own title and limitations.
- 1. The Licensed Minister.
 - a. Licensed ministers are authorized to perform general ministerial functions under

supervision in the region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) granting the license.

- b. The geographical area within which the licensed minister may function and the term of service are stated on the license.
2. The Licensed Theological Student.
 - a. Men and women licensed as theological students are authorized to perform general ministerial functions under supervision of the educational institution and the region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) granting the license.
 - b. The geographical area within which the licensed theological student may function is stated on the license, which is issued for one year, subject to renewal.

D. The Act of Licensing.

1. The act of licensing shall be under the authorization and guidance of the region.
2. The candidate shall ordinarily be recommended for licensing by a recognized congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the one in which membership is held.
3. Representative of the recommending congregation or congregations, the region and, if possible, the general and ecumenical church shall participate in the act of licensing.
4. The service shall ordinarily take place in the congregation.
5. The certificate of licensing shall be issued by the region and signed by appropriate officials of the church and participants in the ceremony.

E. The Right of Appeal. Applicants and candidates shall have the right of appeal from decisions or prolonged inaction of the region to the General Board committee on ministerial standing.

(Ben has folks working on rewrite for this portion — 07.16.02 — lg)

F. **Procedures for Licensing for the Christian church in the Southwest.**

1. The "Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" defines the office of "licensed minister" as equal in ministerial standing with the office of "ordained minister." Two classifications of "licensed minister" are defined as "commissioned church worker" and "licensed lay minister."

(1. The "Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" defines the office of "licensed minister" as equal in ministerial standing with the office of "ordained minister."

2. The applicant for "commissioned church worker" or "licensed lay minister" shall normally submit an application in writing to the area/district committee on the ministry in the geographical area in which he/she plans to practice ministry.

- 3. The area/district committee on the ministry shall be responsible for recommending licensure of "commissioned church workers" and "licensed lay ministers" to persons engaged in the work of ministry, with licensure being terminated when such work is ended.**
- 4. The applicant shall request his/her congregation to recommend him/her for licensing and send a letter of recommendation signed by the minister and board chairperson to the area/district committee on the ministry.**
- 5. The applicant shall, at least 30 days prior to the action of the area/district committee, submit a statement giving his/her understanding of the Christian faith, the nature and work of the church and its ministry; and also submit evidence of adequate educational preparation for the ministry to be performed under the authorization of the license being sought.**
 - a. The applicant for a license as a "commissioned church worker" shall give evidence of adequate educational preparation and theological base for the specialized functions to be performed.**
 - b. The applicant for license as a "licensed lay minister" will give evidence of books read in areas related to the work and ministry of the church, and demonstrate the ability to accept the discipline of study.**
 - c. The applicant shall agree to participate in disciplined study and development with the guidance of the area/district committee on the ministry or an appointed counselor.**
- 6. The applicant shall meet with the area/district committee on the ministry for an interview, and the committee shall take action to recommend to the Committee on the Ministry of the Christian Church in the Southwest, approval or disapproval of the applicant for licensing.**
- 7. Upon the recommendation of the applicant by the area/district committee and upon approval by the Committee on the Ministry of the Christian Church in the Southwest , a Certificate of Ministerial License indicating the geographical area in which the ministry may be performed and the term of service shall be signed by the regional minister and the area/district minister and sent to the recommending congregation for appropriate presentation.**
- 8. Term of license**
 - a. In the case of a commissioned church worker the license shall be issued for a term stated at the time of the commissioning for particular service.**
 - b. In case of a licensed lay minister, the license shall be subject to renewal annually for the first three years; thereafter, if the quality of service and conduct of the licensed minister (consult V ,B ,3) has been exemplary, the term of the license could be extended to three years and thereafter shall be subject to renewal (see IV, F,9) at the end of each three-year period. Within a term, should the licensed lay minister change positions, the license must be reissued for the new post, although the renewal cycle (that is, one-year or**

- three-year term) would continue uninterrupted.*
- c. In the case of a licensed theological student, the license shall be subject to renewal on an annual basis.*
 - d. It shall be the responsibility of the individual holding a license to seek renewal in writing at the appropriate time.*
- 9. A license can be renewed provided the minister has demonstrated adherence to the licensed duties stated and has maintained qualifications for continuation of standing in the Order of Ministry (consult V,B,3).*
 - 10. Since the person being licensed will have "ministerial standing" in the Order of Ministry, he/she shall review with at least one member of the area/district committee on the ministry the "Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church" and its implementation by the Christian Church in the Southwest.*
 - 11. Upon the first act of licensing, the new licensee and the congregation which he/she is serving shall participate in a licensing service for the educational purpose of conveying the importance and responsibility of being admitted to the Order of Ministry. Such a licensing service might meaningfully take place during the morning worship.*
 - 12. "Licensed ministerial student" is the third classification.*
 - a. The applicant for license as a "licensed ministerial student" may be licensed by the Committee on the Ministry of the Christian Church in the Southwest after an interview by, and upon the recommendation of an appropriate subcommittee of the committee, or he/she may request to be interviewed for a license at any of the regular meetings of the Committee on the Ministry of the Christian Church in the Southwest.*
 - b. The applicant shall apply for licensing in writing in advance of the interview, with proper endorsements from the field education director of Brite Divinity School, or other appropriate seminary endorsement, and the congregation in which the candidate plans to practice ministry. It is not the intention of the Committee on the Ministry of the Christian Church in the Southwest to grant a license to an undergraduate student, either during the academic year or for a summer apprenticeship program.*
 - c. The purpose of the licensing procedure for ministerial students is to grant licensing, when it is needed, to perform certain aspects of ministry, as a part of the care and nurture of candidates of the Order of Ministry and in preparation for ordination. A student may be granted a temporary license by the field education director of Brite Divinity School, where circumstances warrant (this license shall be valid for 30 days).*
 - 13. In the case of an applicant whose care and supervision is supplemented by the Committee on the Ministry of the Texas Christian Missionary fellowship, a letter of recommendation will be requested from the chairperson of that committee.*

- 14. The following special procedures will be followed in the licensing and appointment of unordained staff members for overseas service:**
- a. The Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will follow its established procedures in selecting a commissioned church worker for overseas service and thereby function as the agent of the regional Committee on the Ministry in determining whether the person should be licensed.**
 - b. In the process of selecting a church worker to be commissioned, DOM will notify the Christian Church in the Southwest.**
 - c. The regional Committee on the Ministry will authorize licensing on the recommendation of DOM.**
 - d. The worker will be appointed and licensed in an appropriate congregation in the region with representatives of DOM and the region participating.**
 - e. Standing of the licensed person will be reviewed and certified annually by the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing (this provision relates to paragraph A, 2 in article V, "Ministerial Standing").**
 - f. Standing license will be terminated after the term of service, including furlough.**

V. MINISTERIAL STANDING

A. Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1. Standing affirms that the ordained or licensed minister is presently engaged in the practice of ministry, whether on an occasional part-time or full-time basis, with continuous accountability maintained with a congregation, organization, related institution or regional or general unit of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Such ministers are listed in the Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and may call upon the church for services and support such as relocation assistance, ecclesiastical endorsement, scholarship aid and, if ordained, have voting privileges in the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

2. Responsibility for certification of standing of ministers and for periodic review of that standing within these policies and criteria is lodged with the regions, except in the case of those engaged in non-regional ministries for which these responsibilities concerning standing are lodged with the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.

For purposes of this policy statement, non-regional ministries are defined as all ministries outside the United States and Canada and those ministries engaged and accountable to one of the general administrative units of the church. All other ministries are hereby defined as regional as determined by the primary work location of the minister.

B. Standing of Those Ordained or Licensed by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1. By virtue of ordination or licensing according to the criteria and procedures of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the minister becomes eligible for standing in the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
2. Standing is granted initially by the region in which the minister's service begins or by the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.
3. Standing continues so long as the minister does the following:
 - a. Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by ordination or licensing, either in an occupation recognized by the church as ministerial in purpose or in service recognized by the church as ministerial in purpose. (A person will not be continued in standing who is neither employed by, nor actively seeking employment in, nor accountable to a congregation, organization, related institution or regional or general unit of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)).
 - b. Participates in programs of study, research, growth and renewal.
 - c. Maintains relationships with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including participating membership in a recognized congregation in the community where feasible.
 - d. Continues to meet the personal qualification for admission to the Order of Ministry (see Section I, C, 1).
4. The region or the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing will provide means by which the standing of all ministers in its care will be reviewed periodically.
5. When an ordained minister moves from a ministry position in one region to a ministry position in another, standing in the Order of Ministry is retained. Responsibility for review and subsequent certification is assigned to the region in which the minister functions or to the General Board committee on Ministerial Standing. When an ordained minister who is not actively seeking relocation moves from a ministry position in one region to another region and is no longer engaged in ministry, ministerial standing will lapse in six months except in the case of retirement until review and subsequent certification is granted by the region into which the minister has moved.

The standing of licensed ministers is removed when they no longer serve in the region

which granted the license.

6. Ministers with standing at the time of retirement retain this standing, except when the minister no longer meets the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry (see Section I, C,1).

C. Admission to Standing of Persons Ordained or Licensed by Other Churches. Ministers ordained or licensed by other churches may be received into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and granted standing as ordained or licensed ministers. Responsibility for this process is lodged with the region or the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.

1. Temporary recognition of applicants shall be granted upon the fulfillment of the following requirements:
 - a. Consultation, whenever possible with appropriate officials of the church from which the candidate transfers.
 - b. Investigation of personal and ministerial references.
 - c. Filing of the Ministerial Record Form with the appropriate offices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Temporary recognition does not constitute standing in the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Temporary recognition shall be reviewed annually by the body granting it, either the region or the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.
2. A Certificate of Ministerial Recognition and admission to ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will be granted by the region or the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing upon fulfillment of the following requirements.
 - a. Membership in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), or recognition by a region of the applicant's participation in the life and work of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - b. Acquaintance with the history, polity and practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - c. Fulfillment of the prerequisites and preparation for the Order of Ministry.

D. Termination of Ministerial Standing. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall develop policies and criteria by which ministerial standing can be terminated. Until such a time as these policies and criteria are developed, the following shall apply:

1. Procedures leading to a review of standing may be initiated by the minister or the region when one or more of the following conditions are present:

1. Policy additions regarding the mutual recognition and reconciliation of Ordained Ministers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ are contained in Appendix II of this document.

- a. The minister desires to be released from the practice of ministry, either temporarily or permanently.

- b. The minister requests transfer into the Order of Ministry of another church.
 - c. The minister enters into a full-time occupation not recognized by the church as ministerial in purpose and no longer performs the normal functions of a minister.
 - d. The minister discontinues active relationships with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - e. The minister no longer meets the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry (see Section I, C, 1).
2. When the region or the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing takes the initiative in the review of standing, the procedures shall include:
 - a. Written notice to the minister that standing is to be reviewed with the possibility of termination.
 - b. A hearing by a committee appointed by the region or the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.
 3. When the minister takes the initiative in the review, the procedures shall include:
 - a. Written notice to the regional minister or the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing requesting that standing be reviewed with the possibility of termination.
 - b. A consultation with a committee if appropriate.
 4. Standing may be granted to a minister whose standing has been terminated or suspended by another region or church only after thorough investigation of the reasons for the termination or suspension.
- E. Sexual Misconduct. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) understands ministerial sexual misconduct to be activity of a sexual nature which violates the covenantal character of the ministerial office as expressed in the Ministerial Code of Ethics.
1. Responsibilities.
 - a. It is the responsibility of each region to have specific definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for receiving, investigating and adjudicating sexual misconduct charges of ministers with standing in the region. It is the responsibility of the region to communicate such definitions and procedures to ministers and congregations within the region.
 - b. It is the responsibility of the General Board to have specific definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for receiving, investigating and adjudicating sexual misconduct charges of ministers engaged in non-regional ministries. It is the responsibility of the General Commission on the Ministry to communicate such definitions and procedures to ministers, units and other organizations in the general church.

2. Reporting.

Regions will report formal actions and decisions to remove standing for sexual misconduct to Center for Leadership and Ministry, Division of Homeland Ministries and these will be communicated to all regions.

3. Temporary Suspension of Standing.

In extreme situations of alleged sexual misconduct, ministerial standing may be temporarily suspended by the region or the General Commission on Ministry during investigation and adjudication.

F. Standing in Regions. Nothing in these statements of policy and criteria is intended to preclude a region from developing further appropriate statements pertaining to recognition and/or standing within that region. However, only those persons meeting the specific criteria established by the policies of this document should be recognized as holding standing in the ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

G. Right of Appeal. All procedures and decisions with respect to standing, and especially those dealing with termination, may be appealed by the minister or region to the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing. Appeal from the decision of the General Board committee may be made to the Administrative Committee of the General Board for Final decision.

H. ***Procedures Concerning Ministerial Standing.***

1. ***Certification of Standing. Each year the regional Committee on the Ministry shall review the listing of ministers within the region and certify to the Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) the names and addresses of those who have standing as ordained ministers and those who have standing as licensed ministers. In addition, the committee shall maintain a list of those persons in the region who have been ordained or licensed but are no longer continuing ministerial standing.***

2. ***Admission to standing of persons ordained or licensed by other churches.***

a. ***A minister ordained or licensed by another church (denomination) who desires recognition and standing in the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will file an application with the regional Committee on the Ministry. In applying, the minister will furnish information that will enable the committee to understand his/her reasons for seeking a transfer, to verify his/her credentials and to obtain letters of reference. The application must be filed at least 90 days prior to any interview of the applicant by the regional Committee on the Ministry.***

- b. After filing an application but before meeting with the entire regional committee the applicant will be interviewed by two members of the committee to discuss "Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry" and the committee's procedures, and to arrange for an interview with the committee. The applicant might also be advised to meet with an area committee on the ministry to receive guidance and care prior to an interview with the regional committee.**
- c. The applicant will submit the following data 60 days prior to meeting with the regional committee:**

 - (1) letters of endorsement from two ministers who have standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);**
 - (2) a Ministerial Record Form;**
 - (3) a written statement giving reasons why the applicant wishes to transfer ministerial credentials, his/her concept of the church in its various manifestations and an expression of his/her willingness to be a minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).**
- d. The applicant will meet with the regional committee for an interview. The committee will have the following options:**

 - (1) Accept the applicant as a candidate for recognition and standing. Candidacy affords a candidate opportunities to become acquainted with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and to prepare for temporary recognition (see item G, 2, e).**
 - (2) Grant temporary recognition (see item G, 2, e) if the applicant demonstrates readiness.**
 - (3) Deny either candidacy or temporary recognition.**
- e. Temporary recognition.**

 - (1) Temporary recognition may be granted by the committee if the candidate has met the requirements of V,C,1 above. The status of temporary recognition will be required for a period of at least one year.**
 - (2) A supervisory subcommittee designated by the regional Committee on the Ministry, usually an area committee on the ministry, will be appointed for each person who is seeking standing. The function of this subcommittee will be to provide a continuing personal relationship with the applicant during the time of temporary recognition and to supervise a program of reading or formal study consistent with recognized needs. The subcommittee will make an evaluation and a recommendation to the regional committee prior to final consideration of standing.**

(3) In the case of an applicant who is a member of a congregation related to the Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship, supervision will be requested from the chairperson of that committee prior to final consideration of standing.

f. Full Recognition. A Certificate of Ministerial Recognition (standing) may be granted after one year of temporary recognition, that determination being made by the regional Committee on the Ministry in keeping with provisions of V, C, 2 above.

I. Retention of Standing. In conforming to the policies on gaining and retaining standing (V, A, 1 and V, B, 3, respectively), the regional Committee on the Ministry recognizes two criteria for retention of standing:

- 1. Regional recognition of the ordained or licensed minister's practice of ministry.**
- 2. Continuous accountability of the minister's practice of ministry to a congregation, organization, related institution or regional or general unit of the church.**

It will be the responsibility of the regional Committee on the Ministry to provide the recognition (certification) that the minister actually is engaged in ministry. It will be the responsibility of the congregation, organization, related institution or regional or general unit to provide the condition of continuous accountability.

In those instances where continuous accountability is not sufficiently clear by virtue of full-time employment or significant part-time employment, it will be the responsibility of the minister and the part of the church to which accountability is maintained to provide information and attestation that will permit certification. This information and attestation must be provided to the regional Committee on the Ministry in written form.

The regional Committee on the Ministry will use the following procedures in considering persons whose standing is in question:

- 1. In the case of a person who no longer is engaged in ministry and says he/she does not expect to be: withdraw standing.**
- 2. In the case of a person who has made no response to inquiries from the Committee on the Ministry: withdraw standing.**
- 3. In the case of a person who has made no commitment to seek a ministerial position in which he/she is continuously accountable to a congregation, organization, related institution or regional or general unit: present information to the Committee on the Ministry so the committee can make a determination concerning that individual's standing.**
- 4. In the case of a person who reportedly is actively seeking a ministerial position: continue standing for one year.**
- 5. When the Committee on Ministry determines through use of these procedures and appropriate deliberation that standing should be withdrawn from a person**

who desires to retain ministerial standing, a hearing will be offered in keeping with D, 2, b of this article.

J. Withdrawal of Standing for Reasons of Immorality or Unethical Conduct

It shall be the responsibility of the regional Committee on the Ministry to conduct a Disciplinary Hearing for clergy accused of Immorality or Unethical Conduct.

The Disciplinary Hearing shall be convened at the request of the Regional Minister by the Chairperson of the Committee on the Ministry. If the cause is an accusation of clergy sexual misconduct, the hearing will be convened at the request of the Misconduct Policy Coordinator according to the "Policy and Procedure for Response to Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest."¹

For purposes of a Disciplinary Hearing, the Regional Committee on the Ministry shall be composed of those members of the Committee on the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest who have vote. Ex Officio members will not participate in the Disciplinary Hearing.

The Disciplinary Hearing shall be for the purpose of adjudication of the allegations made against a clergy person with standing in the order of the ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest. The Disciplinary Hearing of the Regional Committee on the Ministry may issue one of the following findings:

- the allegations have no merit (refer to the "Policy and Procedure for Response to Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest" for the procedure to follow.)

- a continuance of the allegations to provide for monitoring (refer to the "Policy and Procedure for Response to Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest."

- censure. This is an admonishment or warning concerning unacceptable behavior delivered with advice concerning remedial steps that can be instituted. Should a minister be censured, a letter stating that shall be placed in the minister's file in the office of the regional minister. The minister shall also have the right to have materials concerning remedial actions and experiences placed in the file.

- suspension of ministerial standing. This is a temporary withdrawal of standing for a specified period during which redemptive and/or corrective action can occur. Suspension is lifted at the end of the specified period if the minister has successfully completed the remedial action prescribed by the regional Committee on the Ministry. Copies of the minutes of the Committee on the Ministry meetings and letters concerning the imposition and the lifting of the suspension will be placed in the minister's file in the office of the regional minister. The minister affected has the right to have placed in the file materials concerning remedial actions and experiences.

1. A copy of "Policy and Procedure for Response to Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest" is included as Appendix I of this document.

- termination of ministerial standing. This is action whereby the minister's standing as a minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is formally removed. It is permanent unless the minister is granted reinstatement by a later Committee on the Ministry. Copies of meeting minutes and all relevant correspondence shall be placed in the minister's file in the office of the regional minister.

The files of the cases will be sealed in the office of the Regional Minister. Actions and/or findings of the Committee on the Ministry in these cases will be shared as provided for in the Disciplinary Hearing process.

In cases not involving clergy sexual misconduct, the process shall be:

- 1. A complainant must express to the regional minister or one of the persons on the Regional/Area Minister Staff their concerns and the specific allegations.**
- 2. The regional minister , upon receiving a complaint, will involve the area minister and the chairperson of the area committee on the ministry. Together they will seek to use every means possible to redeem the situation in Christian love.**
- 3. If the situation is not resolved by this pastoral effort, then a Subcommittee on Ministerial Conduct of the Regional Committee on the Ministry will be activated by the chairperson of the regional committee at the request of the regional minister (this five member subcommittee, which will be appointed in the January meeting starting a new biennium in odd-numbered years, will include laity as well as ministers and, as necessary, will be allowed to acquire professional counsel in such pertinent fields as law and psychology). The subcommittee will take the following steps:**
 - a. Receive a full report of the situation from those who have attempted to resolve it pastorally - the regional minister, the area minister, and the chairperson of the area committee on the ministry.**
 - b. Hold confidential conferences with the accused minister and with any other persons the subcommittee may deem necessary in order to gain a pastoral understanding of the situation.**
 - c. Deliberate and make a decision from the following options:**
 - (1) The allegation is unfounded and no disciplinary action is required.**
 - (2) A problem exists, but a plan can be developed for addressing it short of censure, suspension of standing, or termination of standing.**
 - (3) Censure the minister in question.**
 - (4) Request the suspension of the standing of the minister in question.**
 - (5) Request the termination of the standing of the minister in question.**
 - d. If the subcommittee recommends censure, suspension of standing or termination of standing, it will prepare a presentation of the facts of the case**

for the regional Committee on the Ministry.

- 4. If the Subcommittee on Ministerial Conduct presents a recommendation for censure, suspension of standing or termination of standing, that recommendation will be considered in a Disciplinary Hearing of the Regional Committee on the Ministry to which the accused minister shall be invited to be present and if the minister desires to make a presentation.*
- 5. The Regional Committee on the Ministry will act upon the subcommittee's recommendation and notify the accused minister of its decision.*
- 6. In any instance, the accused minister has the right to appeal any decision of the Regional Committee on the Ministry to the Regional Council of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest. Further appeal can be made under the guidelines of the "Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" as printed in the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.*
- 7. If it is determined that the allegation is without merit, the disciplinary process will cease. The committees and persons which have been involved will then respond with care and concern to the various parties:*
 - a. The person(s) who initiated the complaint(s) will be counseled, and opportunities will be sought for reconciling actions.*
 - b. The exonerated minister. A record of the proceedings, including disposition of the complaint will be placed in the minister's file as evidence of exoneration. If the minister so chooses, the regional Committee on the Ministry through the office of the Regional Minister will issue a public statement of exoneration.*

In all cases involving the allegation of clergy sexual misconduct, the process to be followed is as stated in the "Policy and Procedure for Response to Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the Christian Church in the Southwest." Such allegations will be heard in a Disciplinary Hearing of the Regional Committee on the Ministry. The presentation to the committee will be by the Intervention Team and the Misconduct Policy Coordinator.

It is the right of the accused minister to be present for the Disciplinary Hearing. The Committee will strive to see that the session is fair to all of those involved. This session is not to be held to strict legal procedures. The reasons for the hearing will be presented by the Intervention Team and the Misconduct Policy Coordinator. The accused minister may choose to make a presentation. The accused minister has the right to have an attorney present for advice and counsel. The attorney may not ask questions, present evidence or argue the issue(s) in question.

The possible findings of the Regional Committee on the Ministry are listed earlier in this policy. The accused minister has the same right and process for appeal as listed in Section J, Item 6. (page 21)

In ALL cases resulting in a Disciplinary Hearing, the Regional Committee on the Ministry will forward a summary of its actions and appropriate materials to the Regional Council of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest. When the Regional Council has accepted the action of the Regional Committee on the Ministry, the findings and appropriate supporting materials will be filed in the office of the Regional Minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest, and sent to the Office of Leadership and Ministry of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

K. Reinstatement of Standing. Standing may be reinstated to ministers who return to the practice of ministry with continuous accountability to a congregation, organization, related institution or regional or general unit of the church.

- 1. Reinstatement should be made through the regular procedures of the regional Committee on the Ministry.***
- 2. The regional Committee on the Ministry will determine what documentation will be required for its consideration.***

VI. MINISTERIAL RELOCATION

A. The General Principle. Ministerial relocation is the term applied to the process developed to facilitate the employment of ordained and licensed ministers who hold standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It provides a covenantal framework within which ministers and the general, regional and congregational manifestations of the church can serve to upbuild the whole church of Jesus Christ. Freedom and responsibility are inherent in the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). General, regional and congregational manifestations of the church are accorded full freedom to issue ministerial calls within their own established or constitutional provisions. Ministers, likewise, are accorded full freedom to accept or reject a call to any particular service. All, however, covenant to work within these policies in the interest of assuring an orderly and responsible system of ministerial relocation.

B. Operating Principles.

- 1. Ordained ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will have complete and unhindered access to the ministerial relocation process of the church.***
- 2. Licensed ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will have access to the ministerial relocation process in the region for which their ministry is licensed.***
- 3. Congregations, regions, institutions and general units of the church will be provided assistance when so desired in their search for ministerial leadership.***

4. Any minister's relocation file in the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry will be open to the minister concerned, except for confidential references for which a waiver has been signed.
5. Confidentiality, when assured to the persons completing the reference forms, will not be violated.
6. Ordained ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may have their names considered for any ministerial position for which they are qualified, following the selection processes used for the position.
7. Ordained ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall have access to information regarding available ministerial openings in the church.
8. Every congregation, region, institution and general unit will strive to be open to the ministry of all persons, putting aside prejudice and considering candidates based on gifts and skills for ministry rather than such givens as race, ethnic origin, sex, age or physical disability.

C. Responsibilities.

1. Congregations. Within the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), congregations have the right and responsibility to seek and call their own leadership, establish the terms of employment, undergird the ministry and to effect terminations within their own procedure. In the ministerial relocation process congregations will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
 - a. Congregations will advise regions of impending vacancies and work within regional procedures to receive advice and counsel in seeking ministerial leadership.
 - b. Congregations will have freedom to consider any ordained minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The congregation should inform the region and request biographical and reference material on all ministers it wishes to consider.
 - c. Congregations will keep the region informed of all names being considered, including persons who apply directly to the congregation and persons whose names are suggested by members of the congregation.
 - d. Congregations will strive to be fair and open in the consideration of all candidates, putting aside prejudice based on race, ethnic origin, sex, age or physical disability.
 - e. Congregations will treat with confidentiality all information including personal biographical information and reference material, taking care to insure that the information does not go beyond the search committee. When the call has been issued and accepted, all records relating to the minister called to serve, including any minutes of the search committee regarding that minister, shall be given to the regional office for reasons of safe keeping and confidentiality. All records relating to other candidates in the search process shall be destroyed.
 - f. Congregations may talk with a number of ministers concurrently, but will negotiate

with only one minister at a time. A search committee and candidate are in negotiation when both agree that they will not discuss relocation with any other candidate or search committee until the expiration of a mutually agreed upon date. It is the obligation of the search committee to be specific with the minister about its degree of interest.

- g. Congregations will issue a written call providing copies of the call for the congregation, the minister and the region.
 - h. Congregations will provide a fair salary (including parsonage provision) within the capabilities of the congregation, as well as adequate benefits (pension, health insurance, continuing education and Social Security offset).
 - i. Congregations will provide for the reimbursement of church-related expenses to cover actual expenses of accomplishing ministry.
 - j. Congregations will stay in communication with candidates whom the search committee has contacted, especially informing candidates who are no longer being considered for the position.
2. Regions. Regions bear the primary responsibility for providing advice and counsel to both congregations and ministers in matters of ministerial relocation. Regions may delegate or share this responsibility with their subdivisions, e.g., areas or districts. In the ministerial relocation process regions will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. Each region will provide advice and counsel to congregations either at the request of the congregation or at the initiation of the region when it is known that new ministerial leadership is being or will be sought.
 - b. Each region will receive and review all ministerial relocation materials from the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, giving special attention to those persons who have indicated an interest in their region.
 - c. Each region will refer all ministers within the region who wish to seek relocation outside the region to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, for entry into the relocation process.
 - d. Each region will share with search committees biographical and reference materials on candidates who appear to meet the requirements of the congregations and institutions with whom the region is working.
 - e. Each region will encourage congregations to give fair and equal consideration to candidates regardless of their race, ethnic origin, sex, age or physical disability.
 - f. Each region will share with specific search committees biographical and reference materials on any minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who requests consideration in that congregation.

- g. Each region will maintain a list of churches seeking ministerial leadership in the region and make it available upon request to ministers who are seeking relocation.
 - h. Each region will secure permission from any minister not actively seeking relocation before releasing references to a search committee. The minister has the right to know the name and location of the interested congregation.
 - i. Each region will provide, upon request of ministers seeking relocation, a list of congregations which have received their biographical and reference material.
 - j. Each region will treat with confidentiality all material on the Regional Ministers Reference Form and confidential material reported on page one of the Relocation Assistance Form.
 - k. Each region will communicate to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, and to other regions any official action by their commissions on the ministry concerning the conduct of a minister. The minister shall be informed and given a copy of the report which will also be placed in the minister's file.
 - l. Each region will refer all requests for assistance from congregations outside the region to the appropriate regional office.
 - m. Each region will notify the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, monthly of all relocation occurring within, to or from the region.
 - n. Each region will grant provisional standing for the purpose of entering the relocation process to senior theological students whose ordinations have been authorized in their region and to ordained ministers from other denominations who have been given temporary recognition and are in the process of transferring standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - o. Each region will make information available about vacancies to be filled on the regional staff through such channels as The Disciple, regional publications and the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
3. Educational Institutions. The undergraduate department of religion and the theological educational institutions have unique responsibilities with respect to the relocation process of the church. Each relates to a limited number of congregations in which pre-theological and theological students may be employed. The theological institutions have responsibility for relating their graduating students who are candidates for standing as ordained ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to the relocation processes of the church. In the ministerial relocation process educational institutions will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. Educational institutions will relate to congregations served by students upon approval of the region in matters pertaining to the employment of students during their pre-theological and theological education.

- b. Educational institutions will refer requests from congregations for relocation assistance to the appropriate regional office, when the congregation is one that is not a student congregation.
 - c. Educational institutions will cooperate with regions seeking candidates by announcing position vacancies when received. Any nominations or applications for such positions shall be made through the appropriate regional office.
 - d. Educational institutions will cooperate with regions in orienting seminary students to the relocation process of the church.
4. General Units. Except for those units with assigned responsibilities, i.e., the Pension Fund, the Division of Higher Education and the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, general units and their staffs will not engage in programs or practices related to ministerial relocation. In the ministerial relocation process general units will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. General units will call their own staffs, establish the terms of employment, undergird their staffs and effect terminations within their own procedures.
 - b. General units will refer all requests for relocation assistance to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
 - c. General units will refrain from making nominations to congregations for ministerial vacancies. Refer requests for candidates' names to the appropriate region.
 - d. General units will make information available about vacancies to be filled within the general units through such channels as The Disciple, regional publications and the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
 - e. General units will notify the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, of vacancies in ecumenical and experimental ministries, when known, so the information can be made available to clergy seeking relocation for such positions.
5. The Pension Fund. The Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is charged with responsibility for coordinating the employment of retired clergy in interim and supply ministries. In the ministerial relocation process the Pension Fund will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. The Pension Fund will maintain current lists and appropriate biographical data on clergy with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who desire to be considered for interim or supply work and periodically make such lists available to the regions.
 - b. The Pension Fund will refer requests from congregations seeking interim or supply leadership to the regions.
 - c. The Pension Fund will refer requests from ministers seeking relocation assistance to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
6. The Division of Higher Education. The Division of Higher Education is charged with

responsibility for coordinating a referral system of both academic and administrative leadership in institutions of higher education related to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and notification of openings in campus ministries in related institutions and in United Campus Ministries. In the ministerial relocation process the Division of Higher Education will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.

- a. The Division of Higher Education will compile and maintain appropriate personnel and academic dossiers on persons who desire employment in higher education ministries.
 - b. The Division of Higher Education will refer all requests from congregations for candidates' names to appropriate regions.
 - c. The Division of Higher Education will refer all clergy seeking relocation assistance in ministries other than higher education to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
7. The Division of Homeland Ministries. The Department of Ministry is the primary locus of the ministerial records of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and is responsible for coordinating the relocation process of the church. In the ministerial relocation process the Division of Homeland Ministries will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. The Division of Homeland Ministries will maintain the personnel files of all ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - b. The Division of Homeland Ministries will maintain the Ministers Directory of the Year Book and Directory reflecting the current listing of ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), as reported to the department by the regions.
 - c. The Division of Homeland Ministries will receive, reproduce and make available relocation assistance materials of ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to regions and general units. The Ministerial Record Form will be reproduced as prepared and submitted by the minister.
 - d. The Division of Homeland Ministries will collect and release reference material to regions, congregational search committees or general units upon permission of the minister applying for relocation assistance.
 - e. The Division of Homeland Ministries will protect the confidentiality of references when confidentiality has been promised.
 - f. The Division of Homeland Ministries will secure permission from any minister not actively seeking relocation before releasing references to a search committee. The minister has the right to know the name and location of the interested congregation. Permission need not be secured for the release of the Ministerial Record Forms or biographical information.

- g. The Division of Homeland Ministries will secure, maintain and release to regions and, on request, to ministers who have applied for relocation assistance, a list of staff vacancies in regions, general units of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ecumenical organizations.
 - h. The Division of Homeland Ministries will make available educational and informational materials regarding the relocation system to congregations, regions, institutions and general units.
 - i. The Division of Homeland Ministries will refer all requests from congregations for names of potential candidates to the appropriate regions.
 - j. The Division of Homeland Ministries will refer all theological students seeking student preaching/pastoral positions to the field education office of the appropriate institution or to the region in the case of students in non-related institutions of higher education.
 - k. The Division of Homeland Ministries will refer all persons seeking academic appointments to the Division of Higher Education and all persons seeking interim/supply positions to the Pension Fund of the Christian Church.
 - l. The Division of Homeland Ministries will share with regions and, where appropriate, general units, the record of any official action by a region's commission on the ministry concerning conduct of a minister who is entering the relocation process.
8. Minister. Ordained and licensed ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have both freedom and responsibility within these policies and criteria. They have the freedom to accept or reject any call offered to them, to negotiate whatever contracts of employment or service seem appropriate and to have access to the relocation process of the church. In the ministerial relocation process the Ministers will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. Ministers will provide information for a personnel file to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, upon entry into the ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and maintain current data in that file. For purposes of relocation, the Ministerial Record Form and the Relocation Assistance Form will be reproduced as prepared and submitted by the minister. A brief supplemental resume or statement may be included.
 - b. Ministers will utilize the relocation process of the region in which the minister is located when a move is desired within that region. If relocation is desired beyond the region where the minister is presently serving, relocation assistance may be requested from the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry and the appropriate regions.
 - c. Ministers will strive to be as specific and honest as possible about any limiting factors in relocation, such as geographical preferences and salary requirements.

- d. Ministers will provide the region or the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, with reference material that will be held in confidence once received by the region or department, if a waiver has been signed by the minister.
 - e. Ministers will negotiate with only one congregation at a time. A search committee and candidate are in negotiation when both agree that they will not discuss relocation with any other search committee or candidate until the expiration of a mutually agreed upon date. It is the obligation of the minister to be specific with the congregation about the degree of interest.
 - f. Ministers will stay in communication with search committees who have indicated interest, especially informing a congregation immediately when a decision has been made not to consider accepting a call to that particular congregation.
 - g. Ministers will contact the appropriate region if they wish to be a candidate for a specific congregation in that region and request that their name be submitted to the search committee. Ministers will not initiate the relocation process by contacting the congregation directly.
 - h. Ministers will advise the region, if contacted directly by a congregation, should mutual interest in exploring a possible call be determined.
 - i. Ministers will advise the region where currently located, the region where moving and the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, as soon as a call has been accepted.
- D. Right of Review and Counsel. The right to review and counsel is limited to perceived violations of Section VI of Policies and Criteria for the Order of ministry and should be initiated with the appropriate region, institution or general unit. A request for review and counsel beyond the region shall be to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry. If the perceived violation involves the department, the request for review and counsel may be directed to the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.

Basic document -- approved by Louisville General Assembly, 1971.

Section II on candidacy -- approved by Kansas City General assembly, 1977.

Section V on ministerial standing -- amended by Anaheim General Assembly, 1981.

Regional implementation sections II,D; III, G; IV, F and V, G -- amended by Fort Worth Regional Assembly, 1984.

Section VI on ministerial relocation -- added by Des Moines General Assembly, 1985.

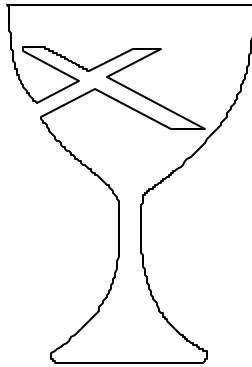
Regional implementation Sections IV, F, 8 and 9; and V, G, 2, and I -- amended by Corpus Christi Regional Assembly, 1988.

Regional implementation Section V, I -- authorized by action of the Executive Committee of the Christian Church in the Southwest, March 26, 1994.

Section V, B5 and C1, C approved by Pittsburgh General Assembly, 1995.

Section V E, Sexual Misconduct, added by Pittsburgh General Assembly, 1995.

Appendix II, approved contingent upon ratification of Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ, Pittsburgh General Assembly, 1995.



POLICIES AND CRITERIA
FOR THE ORDER OF MINISTRY
IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest
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APPENDIX I

E-mail ccsw@ccsw.org

Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure for Response

Policy Overview

Clergy Sexual Misconduct is unethical behavior and a matter which the Christian Church in the Southwest takes very seriously. It is Clergy Sexual Misconduct whenever two things are present:

- A **Professional Ministerial Relationship** such as that between a pastor and parishioner, and
- **sexualized behavior** such as sexual contact, gestures or verbal suggestion.
- **if a minor is involved it is child sexual abuse.**

When such behavior invades the ministerial relationship, severe disruption and harm occurs. While particularly harmful to victims, this behavior is also detrimental and destructive to the accused clergy, families of both victims and clergy, and to congregations.

Whether or not an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct is proven, the allegation itself and subsequent investigation and adjudication can be traumatic and disruptive. All involved will need support and guidance if health and healing are to be restored following an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. In order to respond with seriousness, sensitivity and concern for all involved, every response will include four steps:

Discovery: those persons with a need to know are informed that an allegation has been received and the process is set in motion.

Investigation: every allegation is investigated in order to gather the information necessary for deciding the facts and determining an appropriate course of action. Interviews will be conducted with the accuser, the accused and the leadership of the local congregation or ministry setting.

Intervention: resources and support will be offered to the principal parties involved. Efforts will be made to help victims, the accused and local leaders identify persons who can provide expertise, counsel and support which they may need or desire.

Adjudication: decisions will be made regarding the facts of the allegation, whether or not misconduct occurred, and if so, its nature and scope. After deciding the nature and scope of any misconduct, decisions will be made regarding any action that will be taken.

The pages that follow are intended to serve as a guide to help victims, the accused, church leaders and others who become involved when an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct is made within the Christian Church in the Southwest. Clergy Sexual Misconduct is defined, the process described, the participants identified and their roles and responsibilities detailed. A full and complete understanding of how the Christian Church in the Southwest will respond to an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct is contained in the policy and procedure that follows this brief overview.

INTRODUCTION

In order to maintain the integrity of the ministerial office and to protect those who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse within a ministerial relationship, it is necessary to adopt policies that define Clergy Sexual Misconduct and set forth the procedures that will be used for responding to allegations of Clergy Sexual Misconduct involving clergy whose standing as ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is maintained through the Christian Church in the Southwest.²

AN ECCLESIAL MATTER

All parties must maintain the distinction between civil, criminal and ecclesial proceedings. This policy and procedure is concerned with an ecclesial matter: namely the fitness of a person for authorized ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Ministerial ethics is a matter of great importance in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Clergy Sexual Misconduct is a serious violation of ministerial ethics. While there may be civil or criminal issues and proceedings as well, the concern of the Church is to maintain the integrity of the ministerial relationship by implementing this policy as an ecclesial matter.³

DEFINITION OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), persons who have standing for ministry agree to abide by commonly held values and norms for the ethical conduct of ministry. These commonly held values are expressed in the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) which state in part "Personal fitness sufficient to the demands of the office, including mental and physical capacities, emotional stability and maturity, and standards of morality."⁴ **Clergy Sexual Misconduct is unethical behavior** and provides the basis for disciplinary action within the Christian Church in the Southwest. *It is Clergy Sexual Misconduct when any authorized minister engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with any person with whom there is a professional ministerial relationship.* The ministerial relationship exists whenever the bond between the parties involved is primarily a result of the minister's role and identity as a minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)⁵ Because the ministerial office in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is one involving formal vestment, the minister is inherently in a position of power and authority relative to parishioners, clients, students, colleagues or others. Conversely, those with whom the minister is in a ministerial relationship are vulnerable

² Clergy with standing are those who are ordained or licensed and under the care of the Christian Church in the Southwest.

³ This policy describes the response of the Christian Church in the Southwest to allegations of sexual misconduct brought against standing only. It only addresses the role and responsibility of the Region to grant and maintain ministerial standing. It does not, and is not intended to replace or limit actions that may need to be taken by individual congregations or others who have responsibilities as employers.

Because the Christian Church in the Southwest does not have any authority to respond in instances where the alleged misconduct is by persons without ministerial standing (i.e. lay employees or volunteers in ministry settings), this policy does not and is not intended to resolve all employment or other issues that might be related to issues of sexual misconduct within the churches and agencies of the Southwest Region.

⁴ from Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Southwest Regional Edition, p.2

⁵ Ministerial relationships may include the following relationships: pastor-parishioner, counselor-client, teacher-student, employer-employee, staff-staff, professional-volunteer, pastor-former parishioner, etc.

relative to that power and authority. This imbalance of power is inherent within the ministerial relationship. Sexual contact or sexualized behavior within the ministerial relationship is a violation of ethics because a minister with standing is always in a position of authority and power over those being served. It is the minister's moral and ethical responsibility to use this power and authority for the benefit of those being served. It is unethical when a minister in a position of power takes advantage of a vulnerable person instead of protecting her/him.⁶

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The following procedures have been designed to meet three overriding purposes and goals:

1. to **minimize the pain, hurt and suffering experienced by all who are impacted by allegations of Clergy Sexual Misconduct.** This includes the victims of misconduct, those who are accused, the congregation (or other setting) wherein the abuse is alleged to have taken place, and the whole church.
2. to **discern the truth and take action that will result in healing and justice:**
 - ! **healing** and restoration to wholeness for those who have been harmed or injured;
 - ! **justice** that *acknowledges* the harm that has occurred, has *compassion* for those who have been wronged, *protects* the vulnerable, ensures that those responsible accept *accountability* for their role, provides for *restitution*, as possible, for harm caused, and *vindicates* those who have been wronged.
3. to **reconcile broken relationships and restore persons to community through grace and forgiveness based on healing and justice.** We acknowledge that it is not possible for reconciliation and restoration to occur without authentic healing and justice for those involved.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESPONSE

Any response to an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct will necessarily involve a number of persons. A variety of important roles and functions require attention and it is essential to have clarity of role and function among the various participants in the response.

⁶ Clergy sexual misconduct includes but is not limited to those behaviors codified in civil and secular law as Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation, and Sexual Harassment.

Sexual Abuse is generally understood as sexual behavior directed towards children, minors and vulnerable adults who are protected by law. This is defined in the legal codes of Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas, the states within the Southwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Sexual Exploitation is sexual contact toward a person receiving counseling from a minister, if there is an emotional dependence on a minister, or if the sexual contact occurred by means of a therapeutic deception. By definition, the ministerial relationship is a counseling relationship.

Sexual Harassment is "the use of one's authority or power, either explicitly or implicitly, to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to punish another for his or her refusal; or the creation of an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment through verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." (US Federal Employment Opportunity Commission definition)

AREA/REGIONAL STAFF

In responding to allegations of Clergy Sexual Misconduct, there is great potential for confusing the roles and responsibilities of the Regional/Area Staff. There is particular tension between the pastoral, administrative and adjudicative functions of the office of Regional/Area Staff. This policy defines the Regional/Area Staff as administrators who promptly respond to all allegations of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. Their role is one of coordination rather than one of pastoral care. They administer policy and implement process rather than adjudicate a particular case. Even though staff will forego their pastoral role, they will be in a position to insure that pastoral concerns are addressed by others and that pastoral resources are made available to all persons affected by an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. Regional/Area Staff will not judge or even conduct the investigation of a particular case. They will work to ensure that the appropriate bodies and persons do investigate and adjudicate the case according to this policy and procedure.

MISCONDUCT POLICY COORDINATOR

The Regional Minister, in consultation with the Regional/Area Staff and the Executive Committee of the Region, shall appoint one of the Regional/Area Ministers to serve as the Misconduct Policy Coordinator.⁷ This person shall receive special training in responding to allegations of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. The Regional Minister or one of the other Regional/Area Ministers may be appointed to this position.

The Misconduct Policy Coordinator has the primary responsibility for implementation of this procedure and mobilization of the various persons and resources that need to be brought to bear in responding to an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. The Misconduct Policy Coordinator will convene, coordinate and manage other participants who will perform the investigative, intervention, adjudicative and pastoral tasks.

OTHER AREA/REGIONAL MINISTERS

Other Regional/Area Ministers may be invited to participate in the response as needed and deemed appropriate by the Misconduct Policy Coordinator.

The Misconduct Policy Coordinator shall pay careful attention to the separate roles that need to be fulfilled and the potential for conflict between the various roles required of the response and otherwise expected of the Regional/Area Ministry. In no instance, will the same individual be asked to provide advocacy or counsel to the leadership of the local church, the accused minister and the Committee on Ministry.

⁷ When the Misconduct Policy Coordinator is unavailable to carry out the requirements of this policy and procedure in a timely fashion because of travel or vacation, an Acting Misconduct Policy Coordinator shall be named from among the Regional/Area Ministers of the Region. The Regional Minister shall appoint an Acting Misconduct Policy Coordinator to initiate the process and serve all functions of the Misconduct Policy Coordinator until the Misconduct Policy Coordinator returns to resume and carry out those responsibilities.

If an allegation is brought against the Misconduct Policy Coordinator, the allegation shall go to the Regional Moderator or if the Moderator is not available, to the Chairperson of the Regional Personnel Committee. If an allegation is brought against another member of the Regional/Area Staff, the Misconduct Policy Coordinator may choose to call upon the Regional Moderator or the Chairperson of the Regional Personnel Committee to act as the Misconduct Policy Coordinator in order to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest. In either of these instances, this person shall function as Misconduct Policy Coordinator and carry out those functions assigned to the Misconduct Policy Coordinator.

Where possible, the Regional/Area Minister responsible for relating to the congregation or ministry setting will continue to provide counsel, advice and expertise to the leadership of the congregation. Where circumstances warrant, another Regional/Area Minister shall be assigned to fill this role.

Regional/Area Ministers not otherwise involved may serve as the Advocate for the accused minister or be called upon to provide procedural counsel and advice to the Committee on Ministry of the Christian Church in the Southwest.

The Misconduct Policy Coordinator may consult with the Area/Regional Ministers as a whole or in part, for guidance and support in implementing this policy.

RESPONSE TEAM

A response team of persons with special training will be available for assignment to either of two teams with responsibilities for each incident. The response team shall include persons with expertise in each of the following areas: psychology and pastoral care, law, insurance, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) policy and disciplinary procedures, congregational life and conflict intervention. The Response Team is the trained pool of individuals from which the Investigation and Intervention Teams are drawn.

INVESTIGATION TEAM

Two members of the Response Team shall be assigned to an Investigation Team to conduct the initial investigation with the accuser, the accused and the leaders of the local congregation or ministry setting. The Investigation Team shall normally include a male and a female.

INTERVENTION TEAM

Up to five members of the response team representing a variety of the disciplines above shall be assigned to an Intervention Team for each case. The two persons who were assigned to the Investigation Team for a particular case shall be members of the Intervention Team. The Intervention Team shall receive the reports of the Investigation Team and offer advice and counsel to the parties involved while further investigation and adjudication takes place.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

The Committee on Ministry shall be convened in special session to adjudicate the allegations based on any formal written charges and the report of the Investigation Team. The Committee on Ministry shall proceed according to the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Southwest Regional Edition. The chairperson of the Committee on Ministry shall convene the Committee.

CARE PROVIDERS

ADVOCATES

Advocates shall provide for support, care and procedural guidance for both the accused and the accuser . Advocates for the victim shall be identified and made available. A Regional/Area Minister or other qualified person may be appointed to provide support, care and procedural guidance for the accused minister.

PASTORAL CARE

Both victims and the accused minister (and their families) will be referred for counseling and support. Care givers shall not be directly involved in any investigative, adjudicative or disciplinary role. Those conducting investigations, judging the matter or potentially exercising a disciplinary function shall not provide primary pastoral care or counseling.

RESPONSE PROCEDURE

The procedure for responding to an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct shall include the steps of discovery, investigation, intervention and adjudication.

DISCOVERY

Any allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct shall be conveyed to the Misconduct Policy Coordinator as soon as possible. This allegation can be in the form of either an oral or written communication. All members of the Christian Church in the Southwest Regional/Area Staff, and all members of the Committee on the Ministry or members of the Response Team shall convey any allegation that comes to their attention to the Misconduct Policy Coordinator as soon as possible.⁸ The time that the Misconduct Policy Coordinator receives the allegation shall be considered the time of discovery.

The Misconduct Policy Coordinator shall immediately convene an Investigation Team from among the Response Team members and notify the Regional Minister and the Regional/Area Minister who works with the ministry setting that an allegation has been received.

The Misconduct Policy Coordinator shall offer the services of a Victim Advocate to support and stand with the victim throughout the investigation, intervention and adjudication of the event.

The Misconduct Policy Coordinator shall also convene an Intervention Team and assign a Regional/Area Minister or other appropriate persons to work with the Committee on the Ministry and the accused minister. The Team and Staff shall simply be notified that an allegation has been received and that an investigation has begun.

The Misconduct Policy Coordinator shall notify the appropriate legal authorities of allegations of clergy sexual misconduct in those instances where applicable laws require such reporting. This notification and subsequent investigation by secular authorities shall not prevent or deter the Misconduct Policy Coordinator from proceeding with this policy regarding an ecclesial matter or

⁸ Under normal circumstances, "as soon as possible": is understood to be within hours - literally, as soon as the Misconduct Policy Coordinator can be reached by telephone either at the office, at home or on the road.

concern.

INVESTIGATION

The Investigation Team shall interview the accuser(s)/victim(s),⁹ the accused and consult with the leadership of the ministerial setting in which the accused serves. Whenever possible, the accuser(s) and/or victim(s) shall be interviewed prior to meeting with the accused or local congregational leadership. All interviews shall be conducted in a timely manner¹⁰ that reflects the seriousness of the concern and sensitivity for confidentiality and the welfare of all involved.

The purposes of these interviews shall be to listen to the parties involved, share information about resources available in dealing with the situation, and gather information that will be used for intervention and adjudication of the case. In every case, the Investigation Team will take careful notes of the interview. The written record of the interview shall be shared with the person interviewed¹¹ and that person shall be invited to offer written comment for the record. The written record combined with the comments of the person interviewed shall be the official record of the interview. In the absence of a written allegation, the accuser will be asked to sign the interview record. In this case, the signed interview record shall be understood to be the written allegation.

The records of all interviews shall be released only to those who have a demonstrable need to know in order to proceed with the investigation, intervention and adjudication of the matter. Only such records shall be kept in a permanent confidential file as specified in the procedure for Disciplinary Review of the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church, Southwest Regional Edition.

INTERVIEW WITH THE ACCUSER(S)/VICTIM(S)

The Investigation Team will arrange to interview the person or persons making the accusation. If the person making the allegation is not an alleged victim the Investigation Team will seek to interview any victims as well. An advocate for the victim may be present during the interview to provide support, counsel and procedural guidance.

The purposes of the interview are as follows:

1. Listen to and clarify the victim's account of the misconduct.
2. Identify resources that are available to assist the victim in dealing with the issue, including victim advocates, referrals for counseling, etc.
3. Explain the policies and procedures that will be used in responding to this allegation.

⁹ Throughout this document, the phrase accuser(s)/victim(s) is used to denote that person or persons who are bringing the allegation. The victim is that person who is alleged to have been subjected to Clergy Sexual Misconduct whether or not the allegation is eventually proven. The victim may or may not be the accuser. The accuser may bring an allegation because she or he claims to have knowledge even though he or she is not directly involved as a victim. In some cases, the accuser may claim to be a victim when in fact no misconduct has occurred. In all instances, the allegation will be taken seriously, investigated and adjudicated whether brought by a victim of Clergy Sexual Misconduct or by a non-victim accuser.

¹⁰ Normally, these interviews shall occur within days of the time of discovery.

¹¹ The Interview Team needs to prepare the interview records as soon as possible, remembering that under normal circumstances, the interview records will be needed by the Misconduct Policy Coordinator, the Intervention Team and the Committee on the Ministry within days of the conclusion of the interviews.

4. Encourage the accuser(s)/victim(s) to follow this procedure and discourage efforts designed to circumvent, short circuit or abbreviate the process.¹²

INTERVIEW WITH THE ACCUSED MINISTER

As soon as possible after the interview with the accuser(s)/victim(s) the Investigation Team shall interview the accused minister. An advocate for the accused may be present during the interview to provide support, counsel and procedural guidance.

The purposes of the interview are as follows:

1. Notify the accused that an allegation has been received and share the nature and substance of the allegation.
2. Listen to the accused minister's response to the allegation, including her/his account of the incident(s) and/or concerns she/he might have about the allegation.
3. Explain the resources that are available to assist the accused minister in dealing with the issue, including advocates, referrals for counseling, etc.
4. Inform the accused that efforts to obstruct, short circuit, abbreviate or undermine this process are grounds for disciplinary action in and of themselves.¹³ The accused will be reminded of the "Acknowledgment Form" requested of all ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest.
5. Provide information about the policies and procedures that will be used in responding to this allegation.

CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MINISTRY SETTING

As soon as possible after interviewing the accuser(s)/victim(s) and the accused, the Investigation Team shall meet with the leadership of the congregation or ministerial setting. The Regional Area Minister with responsibility for working with the leadership will be asked to be present to provide support, counsel and procedural guidance to the leadership.

The purposes of this consultation are as follows:

1. Notify the leadership that an allegation has been received and share the nature and substance of the allegation.
2. Solicit any information they might have regarding any allegations of misconduct against the accused minister.
3. Make it clear that no determination has yet been made and that an orderly investigation, review and adjudication of the matter will take place.
4. Provide information about the policies and procedures that will be used in responding to this allegation.
5. Clarify the roles and responsibilities for action and decision-making between the Christian

¹² It is recommended that the accuser(s)/victim(s) NOT communicate with the accused in any way. As a result of coming forward, the accuser(s)/victim(s) may be experiencing a range of confusing and sometimes contradictory emotions such as anger, fear, guilt or concern for the accused. This increases their emotional vulnerability and the potential for additional abuse. Attempts to bring victims and the accused together in an effort to resolve the issues between them without opportunities for justice will seriously undermine efforts towards health and reconciliation.

¹³ Any attempt to communicate directly with the accuser(s) and /or victim(s) will be viewed as a misuse of ministerial authority. Likewise any attempt to discuss this matter with the leadership of the ministry setting or other congregants except through this process and procedure constitutes a breach of ministerial ethics and a misuse of ministerial authority. There can be no reconciliation without full investigation and adjudication of the charges. The healing and justice that result from this process are prerequisites for any reconciliation and restoration.

Church in the Southwest and its Committee on Ministry who grant standing to a minister and the leaders in the local setting who maintain the authority to continue, terminate or suspend employment.

6. Discuss with and assist the leadership in taking immediate steps that may be necessary to protect persons from potential abuse pending further investigation and adjudication of the allegation.¹⁴
7. Determine, in consultation with the leadership of the congregation, if disclosure is warranted, what information should be disclosed, who should be informed (i.e. selected leaders or committees or the entire congregation), when disclosure should be made and the means of disclosure.¹⁵ In any case, the information shared must be true and should be limited as much as possible to the facts that an allegation has been made and an investigation has commenced. If the allegation is proven, only such facts shall be disclosed as are required and necessary by the Disciplinary Policy of the Christian Church in the Southwest. Except as necessary for the investigation and adjudication of the allegation, the identities of the victim(s) shall not be disclosed without their written permission.
8. Encourage the leadership of the congregation to cooperate with the implementation of this policy and point out that efforts to bring the accuser(s)/victim(s) together and seek a resolution of issues without a full investigation and adjudication by appropriate authorities will undermine the possibility of health, justice and reconciliation.
9. Describe the resources that are available to assist the leadership in responding to the allegations and their impact upon the life of the membership, the accused minister, the minister's family and the congregation.

INTERVENTION

The Misconduct Policy Coordinator shall convene an Intervention Team in a timely manner.¹⁶ The Intervention Team shall be fully informed of the nature of the allegations and any decision(s) of the Christian Church in the Southwest Committee on the Ministry regarding the need for a

¹⁴ Depending on the nature and scope of the allegations, often it is necessary for the pastor's ministerial activity to be restricted or suspended while the allegation is investigated and adjudicated. When the employer in consultation with the Investigation Team determines that suspension is necessary, it is recommended that the minister shall be suspended with pay and without prejudice regarding the allegations. This shall be seen as leave with pay. If the allegation involves a minor or a vulnerable adult, the congregation, as the employing institution will be reminded of its special responsibilities and of the need to separate the accused from contact with minors and/or vulnerable adults, at least while the allegation is resolved.

The Investigation Team and the local leadership may request that the Christian Church in the Southwest through the Regional Minister, implement an Administrative Suspension of the accused's standing. This is to prevent access to the relocation process and to protect other congregations while the allegation is being investigated and adjudicated.

¹⁵ Although it is painful and difficult, it is almost always best to inform the congregation that an allegation has been received and is under investigation. It is healthier for a congregation to deal with a matter no matter how unpleasant, if it is confronted openly rather than shrouded in secrecy.

Disclosure by the congregational leadership ensures that the membership receives reliable and accurate information. A pastor who has been involved in sexual misconduct cannot always be relied upon to be truthful in dealing with the church leadership or the congregation.

If there are other victims, disclosure may encourage them to come forward and contribute additional information to the investigation.

Disclosure may also help prevent future abuse within the congregation and the community.

Disclosure by the local leaders also protects the identity and confidentiality of those who may have been the victims of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. Disclosure is also one of the steps toward healing in the congregation. Victim's names and identities will not be disclosed without their written permission.

Finally, disclosure helps protect the congregation from potential legal liability for the actions of a pastor involved in sexual misconduct.

¹⁶ This will normally be within days of the time of discovery.

Disciplinary Hearing. It shall offer to meet separately, as needed, with the victim(s), the accused minister and the leadership of the ministry setting to offer guidance and direct each party to sources of support, guidance and assistance. The Intervention Team shall help the affected

parties identify issues and concerns that call for attention and make referrals to those who can provide direct aid.¹⁷

Throughout, the goal and purpose of the Intervention Team shall be to minimize suffering and to bring the truth to light so that there may be healing, justice and reconciliation.

ADJUDICATION

Upon learning that an allegation has been made, the Misconduct Policy Coordinator will notify the chairperson of the Regional Committee on the Ministry that an allegation has been received and that it will be necessary to have a special meeting of the Committee on the Ministry. The voting members of the committee shall be convened in a timely manner¹⁸ to take whatever steps are necessary to begin a Disciplinary Hearing.¹⁹ The reports of the Investigation Team and any additional written charges available shall form the basis for convening the Disciplinary Hearing. A Disciplinary Hearing shall be conducted as soon as possible and according to the policies and procedures in force within the Christian Church in the Southwest.

Where the allegations are found to be without substance or merit, the Intervention Team shall meet with the accused minister and the leadership of the local setting to develop a mutually acceptable plan for exoneration and restoration of the minister to the ministry setting. They shall also offer to meet with the person(s) bringing the allegation in a effort to bring reconciliation and healing and address any unresolved issues.

Where there is insufficient information for the Committee on the Ministry to either take disciplinary action or fully exonerate the accused minister, the Intervention Team shall meet separately with the accuser(s), the accused minister and the leadership of the local setting to develop a mutually acceptable plan for monitoring the situation. The voting members of the Committee on the Ministry may reconvene after six months to reevaluate the situation and seek a resolution. At that time, it may exonerate, reconvene the Disciplinary Hearing or continue monitoring the situation and reevaluate after another six months.

Guidelines for Appeal are found in the "Policies and Criteria for the order of Ministry in the

¹⁷ For example, the Intervention Team member with a legal background can help the accused understand and recognize legal issues that might be involved and the role that legal counsel would play as the issue is adjudicated - especially if the matter is before secular as well as ecclesial forums for adjudication. This team member would not serve as legal counsel to any of the persons or groups involved, but might encourage the parties to obtain and consult with their own legal counsel. Team members from other disciplines would function similarly.

¹⁸ This will normally be within a few weeks of the time of discovery.

¹⁹ In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the review, support and discipline of ministers with standing is the responsibility of a Region. In the Christian Church of the Southwest, this responsibility is carried out through its Committee on the Ministry. Depending on the nature and scope of a concern, the Committee on the Ministry will initiate a Disciplinary Hearing. In some forms of unethical conduct, a Pastoral Intervention is used because there has been a "break of relationship" between a minister and the ministry setting. The goal of a Pastoral Intervention is reconciliation and restoration of the relationship. Because Clergy Sexual Misconduct involves much more than a "break in relationship", Pastoral Intervention is not appropriate in response to an allegation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct.

A Disciplinary Hearing is that process whereby the Committee on the Ministry addresses matters of ethics, illegality or wrong doing. Clergy Sexual Misconduct is by definition a breach of ethics and a violation of the standards for ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). As such it jeopardizes the minister's standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Questions of ministerial standing and action called for in response to alleged wrong doing are addressed through the process of a Disciplinary Hearing. Disciplinary actions may include rehabilitation, censure, suspension of standing or termination of standing. By definition, Clergy Sexual Misconduct is a matter for a Disciplinary Hearing.

Cases of Clergy Sexual Misconduct will normally go directly to a Disciplinary Hearing for adjudication.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest Regional Edition".

CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

Every effort will be made to protect the individuals involved from further or unnecessary harm. Confidentiality of victims will be maintained as far as possible. The accused will receive respect and sensitivity during the investigative stages of the process. The fact that an investigation is underway and detail of the allegations that are uncovered during the investigation will only be shared as necessary and only with those who have a demonstrable need to know in order to minimize additional harm and proceed with the intervention and adjudication of the matter. At all times, there will be an effort to protect those who are at risk from further harm.

Throughout, all persons must be helped to understand the role and place of confidentiality and privileged communication. ***Response Team members and Regional/Area Ministers are not providing direct psychotherapy or legal counsel for any individual or party. Persons who need and want protected conversations about the issues raised by the allegations need to enter a clearly defined counseling, legal or priest-penitent relationship.*** The Regional/Area Ministers involved have roles and responsibilities that preclude privileged communication.

The processes in this policy may lead to a Disciplinary Hearing, which by its very nature is public and open to many throughout the Church. While every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality, it cannot be guaranteed. Regardless of the decision(s) made, it may be necessary for the Committee on the Ministry to share its decision(s) and action(s) with those involved in and others widely throughout the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In responding to matters of Clergy Sexual Misconduct, this policy shall take precedence over all other policies and procedures that have been adopted by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest. There are other documents that set forth policies and procedures for responding to matters of Clergy Sexual Misconduct and ministerial ethics in general. When forced to deal with matters and issues not specifically addressed in this policy, the Christian Church in the Southwest will refer to (in order of precedence):

1. Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) adopted by the Regional Assemblies of the Christian Church in the Southwest.
2. Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as stated in the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

Where there is silence in all documents on a particular matter or concern, the stated purpose and goals of this document shall provide the framework for response.

APPENDIX II

CHANGES AND/OR ADDITIONS TO THE POLICIES AND CRITERIA FOR THE ORDER OF MINISTRY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) WHICH WILL FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION OF ORDAINED MINISTERS IN THE ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) AND THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Background Information

In response to the General Assembly Business Item 9337, "Progress Report on the Implementation of the Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, "the General Commission on Ministry has prepared the following amendments to the "Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)."

SECTION V. MINISTERIAL STANDING

- C. Recognition and Reconciliation of the Ordained Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ
 - 1. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ recognize the ordained ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries of grace within that church and these ministries to be valid and full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The ordained ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ are reconciled. An Ordained Minister with ordained ministerial standing in one church may function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as an ordained minister of the other.
 - 3. The designation "Ordained Ministerial Partner" and "Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing" manifest the corporate and individual nature of the recognition and reconciliation of the ordained ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.
 - 4. Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - 5. Each member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who holds ordained ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the United Church of Christ).
 - 6. When a person no longer has ordained ministerial standing in either the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or the United Church of Christ, that person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner and Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is nullified.

7. United Church of Christ ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an ordained minister with ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ who has a call to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This recognition is based upon a demonstration of knowledge, and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

- a. A United Church of Christ minister has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) only when serving a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calling body.
- b. Once a United Church of Christ minister has demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that Ordained Ministerial Partner may seek a call in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- c. A United Church of Christ Ordained Ministerial Partner who secures a call in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) applies for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the region in which the minister's congregational membership is held.
- d. A United Church of Christ ministerial who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall maintain ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. Ordained ministerial standing shall be held in the association in which the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) membership is held.
- e. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing shall maintain relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including participating membership in a recognized congregation in the community where feasible.
- f. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in a region has voting privileges in the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- g. A United Church of Christ minister who holds ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall relate to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for his or her primary support and accountability in ordained ministry.
- h. When a United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) accepts a call in another region, they shall be subject to review and subsequent certification by that region.

- i. When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to a United Church of Christ minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the association of the United Church of Christ in which the United Church of Christ minister's ordained ministerial standing is maintained shall be informed and invited to participate in the procedures.
8. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ.

Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an ordained minister with ordained ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who has a call to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ. This recognition is based upon a demonstration of knowledge and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.

- a. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister has Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ only when serving a United Church of Christ calling body.
- b. Once a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister has demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ, that Ordained Ministerial Partner may seek a call in the United Church of Christ.
- c. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained Ministerial Partner who secures a call in the United Church of Christ applies for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the association in which the minister's congregational membership is held.
- d. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall maintain ordained ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Ordained ministerial standing shall be held in the region in which the United Church of Christ membership is held.
- e. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall hold local church membership in the United Church of Christ.
- f. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ is eligible for election as a delegate to a Conference or General Synod or election as a member of any instrumentality board.

- g. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall relate to the United Church of Christ for his or her primary support and accountability in ordained ministry.
- h. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ is subject to periodic review by the region in which ordained ministerial standing is maintained.
- i. When a disciplinary procedure is instituted by an association in relation to a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) region in which standing is held shall be informed and invited to participate. The region may accept the procedures and outcome of the association or utilize its own procedures to determine the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister's ongoing standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The General Assembly approved the amendments to the "Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry" with a recommendation that they be adopted contingent upon ratification of amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ and that these changes to the Policies and Criteria of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) take effect only upon declaration by the UCC General Synod that the amendments to their Constitution have been ratified.