

REFLECTIONS ON THE MATTER OF COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The preparation process requires that Committees on Preparation for Ministry, because of their pivotal role, be well prepared, committed and effective. Presbyteries will need to give added attention and support to their committees to enable them to do the important work assigned and outlined for them by the Constitution. The following issues need particular attention:

- 1) Selection of committee members. The presbytery will need to consider the representation guidelines in the Book of Order G-9.0105a and the specific kinds of skills required to accomplish the tasks of the committee. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry may want to give special guidance to Presbytery Nominating Committees regarding the kinds of skills, abilities, insights and gifts that are needed by persons invited to serve on this committee. Careful attention must be given to the question of continuity of membership in relationship to the work of CPM's.
- 2) Continuity of membership. Long terms in a system of regular rotation provide for consistency in support of persons preparing for ministry and for returning the acquired wisdom and experience of the committee.
- 3) Adequate training of committee members including:
 - A) Knowledge of the process and what it requires of committee members.
 - B) New member orientation and integration.
 - C) Review of relevant resources that relate to the preparation process including the Book of Order, the manual for Committees on Preparation for Ministry, other resources provided by the General Assembly, and resources developed by presbyteries.
 - D) Provision of financial resources for the committee to do its work with its own members as well as Inquirers/Candidates.
- 4) Adequate planning by the Committee for its tasks outlined in the Book of Order including:

GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

- 1) Supporting and guiding the inquirer with understanding and sympathetic interest (G-14.0306).
- 2) Providing regular, open, candid, and sensitive communication and evaluation of inquirers' progress in preparation for ministry of the Word and Sacrament, and

expecting same from the inquirer.

- 3) Providing specific written descriptions of requirements and time line for meeting inquirer's responsibilities to this particular presbytery. (attached copy)
- 4) Giving guidance to the inquirer regarding: course of study, familiarity with the Bible and with the confessions, practical training and plans for education including the choice of institutions, the inquirer's financial needs, and service to the church. Giving guidance and instruction in the faith and polity of the church (G-14.0308), (G-14.0306a).
- 5) Receiving from the inquirer the annual written report concerning progress in studies and service to the church, including a report from the inquirer's institution of learning (G-14.0308).
- 6) Checking with the inquirer in advance when scheduling annual consultations and other meetings with the committee, with appropriate consideration of the person's schedule and responsibilities and adequate lead time to effectively complete and return preliminary reports.
- 7) Conducting annual consultations and preparing jointly with the inquirer a written report of each consultation, submitting copies to the presbytery, the sponsoring session, and to the theological seminary (G-14.0309). Maintaining an accurate and appropriately comprehensive file of the inquirer's records and information regarding progress in preparation for ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
- 8) Promptly processing requests for exceptions, transfers, and transfers of credentials as agreed to by the Committee and the inquirer.

Preparing the Committee on Preparation for Ministry for its tasks

- 1) Expectations of committee members.
 - A) Attendance at meetings.
 - B) Participation in annual events designed to educate, train and /or edify committee members for their tasks.
 - C) Identify responsibilities of committee members in their work with Inquires/Candidates when serving as the Liaison Person.
 - D) Identify responsibilities of committee members in shouldering the work of the committee as a whole.
 - E) Establish committee norms with respect to the handling of confidential information related to Inquirers and Candidates: files, psychological exams, personal reference (verbal/written) reports from theological institutions, other information.

- 2) Develop a common understanding of the process and how it is to be implemented within the presbytery.
 - A) Identify specific expectations, requirements and timelines for each phase of the preparation process including:
 - Pre-Inquiry: What is needed in order to become an applicant?

 - Inquiry Phase: In what specific ways does the Presbytery Committee plan to explore and test one's call and suitability for ministry of Word and Sacrament?

 - Candidacy Phase: In what specific ways does the Presbytery Committee plan to prepare a Candidate for Ministry of the Word and Sacrament?

 - Readiness Phase: What specific concerns does the committee plan to focus on during its final assessment of the Candidate's readiness to be examined for ordination?
 - B) Identify committee expectations in the five key areas for each phase of the process: Education for Ministry, Personal Growth, Spiritual Development, Interpersonal Relations, Professional Development.
 - C) Determine methods of communication with Inquirers/Candidates, theological institutions, governing bodies, and career counseling services with particular attention to individual rights of privacy and confidentiality.
 - D) Establish clear policies/guidelines for written statements, reports, and biblical exegesis papers expected from Inquirers/Candidates including: length, content, and time requirements.
 - E) Establish clear committee policies and rationale for recommending the withdrawal and or removal of an Inquirer or Candidate from the preparation process.
 - F) Establish clear guidelines for determining when or under what conditions a Candidate can circulate his/her PIF (and when they cannot) during the senior year of theological education.
 - G) Examine the financial implications for implementing the process and what that means for the committee and for Inquirers and Candidates.
- 3) Enabling Committee Development

- A) Provide opportunity for committee members to discuss theology of call with appropriate resource persons from congregations, theological institutions and areas of specialized ministries. Develop list of books or papers to recommend to committee members to assist them with their tasks.
 - B) Provide opportunity for committee members to dialogue with appropriate staff from Career Development Centers regarding developmental needs and trends among Inquirers and Candidates.
 - C) Provide opportunity for the committee to examine and speak frankly about leadership needs in the church; and to identify specific qualities, skills, and abilities they feel are needed by those seeking to become Ministers of the Word and Sacrament.
 - D) Arrange for an annual meeting between CPM and COM to discuss trends/needs in Presbyterian ministerial leadership.
 - E) Encourage dialogue about how the committee would counsel with persons whose gifts and skills are clearly in areas other than Ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
 - F) Identify what specific abilities, skills, gifts, knowledge, and experiences Candidates are expected to have in order to be certified as ready to receive a call.
- 4) Establish clear guidelines for conducting Annual Consultations.
- A) Expectations of Inquirers/Candidates Liaison Person and other committee members.
 - B) Expectations of Inquirers/Candidates
 - C) Process of conducting Annual Consultation.
 - D) Distinguish between process for Annual Consultation and “Final Assessment.”
- 5) Other considerations.

CPM’s are encouraged to seek feedback from those with whom it relates in the preparation for ministry process.

- A) Arrange for an annual meeting with representatives from partner relationships in the preparation process: Inquirers/Candidates, Sessions, and Theological Institutions.
- B) Encourage written feedback from recently ordained persons and persons who withdrew from the process; from former committee members.