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# **Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

*Preamble* “Within the universal Body of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is identifiable by its testimony, tradition, name, institutions, and relationships. Across national boundaries, this church expresses itself in covenantal relationships in congregations, Regions, and General ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), bound by God’s covenant of love. Each expression is characterized by its integrity, self-governance, authority, rights, and responsibilities, yet they relate to each other in a covenantal manner, to the end that all expressions will seek God’s will and be faithful to God’s mission.”

~ from paragraph 2 of *The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, revised 2005

*And Regional Procedures of the Christian church of Northern California-Nevada,  
as approved by the Regional board of directors on 10/06/2012*

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36

## ***Preface***

37

38

39 This document, *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of*  
40 *Ministry, 2009*, became the policy document for the Christian Church (Disciples of  
41 Christ) in the United States and Canada once the General Assembly adopted the  
42 document. It will replace the current document, *Policies and Criteria for the Order of*  
43 *Ministry, 2003* on August 1, 2011.

44

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75 **I. Theological Foundations**  
76 **for the Ordering of Ministry**  
77 **in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

78  
79 PREFACE

80  
81 *Theological Foundations for the Ordering of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of*  
82 *Christ)* functions interdependently with *Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry*  
83 *of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* to clarify evolving patterns of ministry as we  
84 seek to respond in faithful ways to ever changing contexts of service and witness. It is  
85 not a comprehensive theology of ministry nor does it attempt to offer the final word on  
86 Disciples’ understanding of ministry.

87  
88 **A. The Ministry of the Whole People of God**

89  
90 God calls all persons to receive the good news of the Gospel and accept their call to be  
91 God’s people. In a divided and unbelieving world, those who accept this good news are  
92 drawn into the fellowship (*koinonia*) of a new community, the church. In this body, the  
93 Holy Spirit unites those who follow Jesus Christ and sends them as witnesses into the  
94 world [ref: I Corinthians 12.12-13; Ephesians 4.4-5; Matthew 28:16-20]. The church’s  
95 mission is to proclaim and prefigure the justice and joy of the Realm of God. In order to  
96 fulfill this mission faithfully, the members of the Body of Christ are given ministries of  
97 witness, service and reconciliation.

98  
99 The ministry of Christ is entrusted to all the people of God. Through baptism they are  
100 called to servant ministry lived out in covenant community. Implicit in the confession of  
101 faith and the act of baptism is an acceptance of the vocation of the baptized—the  
102 special calling shared by all followers of Christ to witness to the sovereign love of God,  
103 the grace of Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit in all of life. The gifts  
104 (*charisms*) of the Holy Spirit are different and diverse, but in tremendous and simple  
105 ways they proclaim the mighty acts of God and mediate God’s loving and reconciling  
106 work to and in the world. Every baptized person is called to witness to Christ in  
107 whatever situation he or she lives—to express in their daily lives the ministry of Christ.

108  
109 In Christ the individual becomes a member of “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a  
110 people of God’s own possession” (1Peter 2:9). Thus it has been common to speak of the

111 “priesthood of all believers”<sup>1</sup>—the persons who live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in  
112 the church and in the world. This language highlights the sacramentality of the work of  
113 the laity through whose witness and service the grace of God is made manifest.

114

115 The ministry of God’s people (the *laos* – the Greek term used in the New Testament for  
116 “people,” which is the source of our English words “laity, laywomen, laymen”), taken as  
117 a whole and in its diverse individual expressions, is to manifest and so continue the  
118 saving ministry of Jesus Christ. This ministry includes all who join together in witness to  
119 God’s justice and reconciliation through worship, daily work, sharing the Gospel,  
120 pastoral care, relief of human suffering, engagement in the struggle for peace and  
121 justice, and realization of the unity of the Church Universal. It is within this context of a  
122 shared ministry of the people of God that Commissioned ministry and Ordained ministry  
123 is to be understood.

124

125 Within the ministry of the whole people of God there is, and has been since the early  
126 church, representative ministry called by God and set apart by the Church for distinctive  
127 functions. The Commissioned and the Ordained are both of the *laos*, but in recognizing  
128 God’s call to particular individuals, the Church designates persons “to re-present to the  
129 Church its own identity and calling in Jesus Christ” (*The Nature of the Church, A Word to  
130 the Church on Ministry*). Authority and blessing to perform this ministry are celebrated  
131 in Ordination and Commissioning.

132

### 133 **B. Historical Survey of Disciples Ministry**

134

135 Alexander Campbell and Barton Warren Stone relied on the Bible, especially the New  
136 Testament, as the only rule of faith and practice. This premise shaped their  
137 understandings of ministry in its many expressions.

138

139 Campbell’s attitudes on ministry progressed as the movement grew and the changing  
140 circumstances of the church demanded new approaches to and appropriations of  
141 leadership. Conversely, Stone’s attitudes on ministry remained relatively consistent.

---

<sup>1</sup> The “priesthood of all believers” refers to the persons who have entered into a covenanted relationship through confession and baptism. It ought not be confused with the role of congregational elders in the administration of the Lord’s Supper. Although in some circumstances anyone can administer the Sacraments/Ordinances of the Church, in Disciples practice it has usually been the duly appointed congregational leaders who administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper. This practice derives not from the “priesthood of all believers” but from early distinctions between the roles of elder and evangelist/preacher. The evangelist, called from outside the congregation, was restricted to ministries of preaching/teaching. The elder(s), called from within the congregation, bore responsibility for congregational governance, including the administration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The right and responsibility to preside at the Table is increasingly a role shared by Elders and ministers.

142 While he promoted freedom from ecclesiastical control, he retained a sense of order in  
143 ministry and structure. One notable point of agreement between the two is that both  
144 regarded ministry as servanthood even though the forms and functions of that ministry  
145 were expressed and authorized in different ways.

146

147

### Alexander Campbell

148

149 Although Alexander Campbell was staunchly anti-clerical, he was clearly pro-ministry.  
150 This position was elaborated throughout various pages of the *Christian Baptist* in the  
151 1820s to 1830. The clergy of the day represented for Campbell a class that he could only  
152 term self-serving and pompous, promoting a specific set of sectarian or denominational  
153 tenets in place of the gospel. His opposition was to a professional clergy—independent  
154 of the local congregation, and accountable only to itself—not to the exercise of ministry  
155 which he considered essential to the life of the Church:

156

157 Campbell developed a specific formula for the church’s ministry, quite apart from what  
158 others might consider the roles of the clergy:

159

1. Establish necessary offices for perpetuity and growth
2. Select the best qualified persons for those offices
3. Consecrate or set apart those persons for those offices
4. Give oneself completely to the work and continue growing so that everyone can see the growth.

160

161

162

163

164 In *The Christian System* he outlined:

165

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175

176

The standing and immutable ministry of the Christian community is composed of Bishops [Elders],<sup>2</sup> Deacons, and Evangelists. Of each of these there is but one order, though possessing great diversities of gifts. There have been bishops, deacons, and evangelists, with both ordinary and extraordinary gifts. (*CS*, 82-3)

Campbell argued from Ephesians 4.12, “the work of ministry [is] for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Bishops, deacons and evangelists each had a distinctive role or function on behalf of the Body: *Bishops* engaged in ministries of oversight; *Deacons* in ministries of service; and, *Evangelists* in ministries of proclamation.

From Campbell’s perspective in this early period, the movement of ministers from church to church was unacceptable. Appointed from a particular congregation, the leader stayed and served in that congregation or lost credentials.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Bishop and Elder are alternate translations of the Greek word *episkopos*.

<sup>3</sup> In an 1835 edition of the *Millennial Harbinger*, Campbell wrote: “The jurisdiction of such bishops [elders] is always circumscribed by the congregation which ordained them. A single church is the largest dioceses (sic) known in the New Testament. Neither does his election and ordination give him a perpetual office. Should he leave the church, which under the direction of the Holy Spirit, created him, and become a member of another church, he enters it as a private member, and so continues until that church elect and ordain him, should they call for his services. The bishops [elders] and deacons of the

177

178 As the church grew after the union of the Disciples and Christians in 1832, Campbell was  
179 compelled to distinguish between elders of oversight in local congregations and  
180 preaching elders who moved from congregation to congregation.

181

182

Barton Warren Stone

183

184 In an 1831 issue of the *Christian Messenger*, Barton Stone wrote that the pastoral office  
185 included “bishops, elders, pastors, and evangelists” (*CM*, 5:7/31, 162). For Stone, the  
186 pastoral office was one office with multiple functions, such as: to preach and teach,  
187 administer the sacraments/ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and, according  
188 to his Presbyterian heritage, provide moral oversight within the congregation, but not  
189 from outside it.

190

191 Not unlike Campbell, the bishops/elders and pastors, were internal to the congregation  
192 while the evangelists were traveling preachers/planters. Although Stone did not  
193 specifically identify deacons, a description in the *Christian Messenger* is helpful: “The  
194 word *Diakonos* translated *deacon* but commonly, *minister* is frequently applied to all  
195 those who minister in the word as well as in other matters” (*CM*, IX:2/35, 45).

196

197 As early as the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* (1804), it was willed  
198 that: “the church of Christ resume her native right of internal government – try her  
199 candidates for ministry, as to their soundness of faith, acquaintance with experimental  
200 religion, gravity and aptness to teach; and admit no other proof of their authority but  
201 Christ speaking in them.” In an 1827 issue of the *Christian Messenger*, Stone spoke again  
202 of candidates for ministry implying that those individuals must have had some sort of  
203 Standing or recognition in the church. This reaffirmed his position in the *Last Will and*  
204 *Testament* that the church try its candidates. He further argued that only Licensed  
205 preachers and Ordained elders were empowered to preach, giving rise to his notion of  
206 “pastor.” He evoked a strong Pauline tendency here in that preachers should not  
207 wander about the countryside in a freelance manner, but be sent from the churches  
208 with letters of commendation (*CM*, 1:2/27, 80).

209

210 Stone lifted up the pastoral office by identifying not only the functions but the  
211 authorization. He makes a distinction between choosing or appointing to an office and  
212 Ordaining to an office. (*CM*, IX: 2/35, 45) Through Acts and the Pastoral Epistles, he  
213 contends “...that Ordination to the work of ministry was performed by the [imposition]  
214 of the hands of the elders in the New Testament church. – Therefore it appears that no  
215 person can be legally inducted into the ministry without this act” (*Ibid*, 46).

---

church in Philippi were the bishops [elders] and deacons of the church in Philippi and of  
no other church; and so of Ephesus, Antioch, Rome, and Jerusalem.”(*MH*, VIII:10/35,  
503)

216

217 When queried on the form of Ordination, Campbell, like Stone, responded “Imposition  
218 of hands, accompanied with fasting and prayer. Thus have persons been consecrated to  
219 sacred offices in the Christian church from the beginning.” And then the question, “*Who*  
220 *may, or who ought to lay hands on the bishops, or deacons, or messengers elect?* I  
221 answer, without dubiety, and in a few words, The community, the whole community as  
222 may be approved in behalf of the congregation.” (MH, VIII:10/35,498)

223

224 A significant departure from Campbell’s position, however, was the authority to Ordain.  
225 While Campbell had the congregation appoint and Ordain, Stone had the congregation  
226 appoint to the pastoral office but a conference or college of ministers, already Ordained,  
227 was the Ordaining body.

228

229

### Later Views

230

231 The search for Ordained ministers from outside the congregational membership  
232 addressed some of the leadership problems created by the rapid growth of the churches  
233 in the 1840s and 50s. There were times when it was determined that qualified persons  
234 simply were not available from within the churches. Young men educated in colleges  
235 and even seminaries were beginning to be called to settled ministries. The evangelists,  
236 too, were well known and seen as a ready and important pool for resident preachers.

237

238 The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a variety of new issues for the Disciples that began to  
239 shape understandings of the ordering of ministry. At the 1935 San Antonio  
240 International Convention, a Commission on Ordination was appointed. In 1939, the  
241 Richmond International Convention approved a new system which called for Ordination  
242 councils comprising ministers and elders representing three or more congregations to,  
243 in Stone’s words, “try her candidates.” Announced still as a local church matter, this  
244 new approach more fully satisfied Stone’s system of Ordinations being conducted by a  
245 conference or college of ministers. Such a system began to afford broader church  
246 ownership and accountability as ministers moved from congregation to congregation. In  
247 effect, the convention was following the example of Black Disciples in North Carolina  
248 who had already determined in 1886 that Ordination should not be authorized by a local  
249 congregation acting alone and had adopted standards for evaluating candidates for  
250 ministry. Some local congregations continued to Ordain their candidates without  
251 consultation of supporting churches or state societies, but those were becoming more  
252 rare in light of emerging covenantal relationships. At the 1964 Detroit International  
253 Convention, the church formally recommended a seminary degree prior to Ordination,  
254 even though some state societies and congregations had been enforcing that  
255 educational requirement for many years.

256

257

### Origins of Licensed Ministry

258

259 The 1939 Richmond report commended three criteria for Ordination:



- 260 1. Good moral character and personal fitness for ministry  
261 2. A full college course, and if possible, graduate training in religion  
262 3. Experience in Christian work which shows real leadership, vision, pastoral  
263 qualities, and preaching ability  
264 Persons who fulfilled points 1 and 3 but not point 2 were accorded Licenses - a new  
265 category of ministry created from the Ordination report.  
266

267 Licensed ministry, as we conceive it today, is fairly recent in Disciples history. Barton  
268 Stone was Licensed by the Orange Presbytery of North Carolina as a missionary to the  
269 lower North Carolina area. Alexander Campbell was Licensed to preach at the Brush Run  
270 Meeting House in 1811. During the Stone-Campbell era, “licensing to preach” was a trial  
271 period prior to Ordination to see if the candidate had the disposition for ministry and  
272 the qualities for preaching the true gospel without any mixture of human philosophy,  
273 deceit, or rudiments of the world (*cf Last Will and Testament*).  
274

275 In 1948 the church recognized a licensing process which defined certification for a  
276 limited period of time, primarily for college students in preparation or candidacy and for  
277 “those laymen who desire to serve as part-time ministers” (“License and Ordination of  
278 the Christian Minister,” 1948, para.16). Among the primary beneficiaries were small  
279 churches that were unable to attract or support full-time ministers. This established a  
280 standard of a two-fold office that was incorporated into *The Design for the Christian*  
281 *Church (Disciples of Christ)* in 1968 and the *Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry*  
282 in 1971.  
283

#### 284 Emerging Practice at the Turn of the Millennium

285

286 Toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the trend toward higher educational standards for  
287 Ordained ministry reached its peak and patterns of preparation began to diversify. Some  
288 Regions determined that a single model of ministerial formation was too restrictive to  
289 serve faithfully the changing contexts of ministry. A few began to utilize criteria that  
290 allowed for the Ordination of ministers without a Master of Divinity degree from an  
291 *Association of Theological Schools (ATS)* accredited seminary. The emergence of these  
292 *de facto* alternate educational tracks led to calls for a review of expectations with an eye  
293 toward developing a new consensus on educational standards for Ordained ministry.  
294

#### 295 **C. Ministry in the Congregation**

296 It is the usual practice among congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
297 to nominate, elect, and install or in other ways recognize for service deacons and elders.  
298 Women and men serving in these offices manifest various spiritual gifts, including  
299 maturity, prayer, insight, and leadership.  
300

301 The offices of elder and deacon are ordered by the congregations, through  
302 election and recognition with appropriate ceremony, for the performance of  
303 certain functions of ministry appropriate to the offices.

304 a. a person elected elder is authorized to exercise within the congregation  
305 which elects her or him to the ministerial functions it assigns for periods  
306 of time which it specifies, such as sharing in the ministration of baptism  
307 and the Lord's Supper and the conduct of worship, and sharing in the  
308 pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation. The eldership  
309 is a voluntary ministry, each congregation having a plurality of elders  
310 [more than one elder].

311 b. a person elected deacon is authorized to serve in the congregation which  
312 elects her or him for periods of time which it specifies by assisting in the  
313 ministration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, in the conduct of worship,  
314 and in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation. The  
315 diaconate is a voluntary ministry (paragraph 87, *The Design of the*  
316 *Christian Church*).

317  
318 The role of elders and deacons is most evident in the ways these ministries represent  
319 the congregation in their communities of faith and in the larger community. For  
320 example, elders and deacons are seen visiting persons in hospitals, nursing homes, or  
321 with the home-centered. They may also lead congregations in ministries of outreach and  
322 social justice.

323  
324 It is, however, at the Table that the ministry of the congregation comes into view for the  
325 gathered community. The pastor and elders as they preside and pray and the deacons  
326 as they serve, re-present the whole ministry of the church.

327

#### 328 **D. Order of Ministry**

329

330 "The church recognizes an order of ministry, set apart under God, to equip the whole  
331 people to fulfill their corporate ministry" (Paragraph 86, *Design of the Christian Church*).

332

333 In its ordering of ministry, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizes a  
334 Commissioned ministry and an Ordained ministry. The church expects the women and  
335 men it Commissions and Ordains to demonstrate educational qualifications and  
336 competencies in several areas of personal integrity and pastoral practice, as well as a  
337 clear call to and passion for ministry. The church is called to provide significant  
338 Congregational and Regional support for those seeking to serve in ministry, whether  
339 Ordained or Commissioned.

340

341 The church gives grateful acknowledgment to God who in every age grants to women  
342 and men the spiritual gifts necessary for such ministry. In making decisions about whom  
343 to Commission or Ordain, the church looks to candidates for:

344 ❖ the personal, inward call from God, which leads persons to seek such ministry,

- 345 ❖ the God-given gifts and graces,  
346 ❖ the personal characteristics and aptitudes, and  
347 ❖ the preparation and promise (e.g., education, skills, etc.) that they have for  
348 effective ministry.

349 By these criteria the church discerns whom it will Commission and/or Ordain.<sup>4</sup>

350

351 It bears reiteration that throughout history, Disciples have recognized various methods  
352 of preparation for ministry. Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Disciples placed  
353 increasing emphasis on a graduate seminary degree as a credential for Ordination, even  
354 while recognizing that for some individuals other methods of preparation might be  
355 more appropriate in consideration of certain circumstances such as life situation,  
356 community, ministry setting, and cultural and ethnic context.

357

### 358 **1. Commissioned Ministry**

359

360 In the development of Disciples understanding of ministry, “Commissioned” ministry is  
361 replacing some forms of “Licensed” ministry. Men and women are authorized and  
362 Commissioned by their Regions to offer ministry in a particular place for a specified  
363 period of time. “The word ‘Commissioned’ means one who is appointed to a position  
364 entrusted with a task, or one who is authorized or sent on behalf of another for a task or  
365 proclamation” (*The Nazareth Consensus*, page 8, para.1).<sup>5</sup>

366

367 The term “Commissioned” contains the word “mission,” which sets the stage for a  
368 spiritual expectation. Paul describes himself as one commissioned to preach the gospel  
369 as in Col. 1:25: “I became [the church’s] servant according to God’s *commission* that was  
370 given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known...” (NRSV). In II Corinthians  
371 Paul writes, “But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has *commissioned*  
372 us;...” (II Cor. 1:21, RSV) and again, “For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God’s  
373 word; but as men [and women] of sincerity, as *commissioned* by God, in the sight of God  
374 we speak in Christ” (II Cor. 2:17, RSV).

375

376 The word “Commissioned” has been used and continues to be used by the church for  
377 people appointed to various positions or sent forth to carry God’s message. Thus, the  
378 term has ecclesiastical connotations of being entrusted with the tasks of ministry. The  
379 use of the term “commission” or “commissioned” in English translations of Paul’s letters  
380 has further shaped our understanding of the concept in the contemporary setting.

381

382 Commissioning is an acknowledgment by the Church of the gifts of the Spirit in the one  
383 commissioned, and a commitment by both the Church and the Commissioned to the

---

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from *A Word to the Church on Ministry* (1985), Commission on Theology, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), p 3.

<sup>5</sup> A proposal for transformative action by the Dialogue on Licensed Ministry Action Team, July 2004, growing out of the gathering at Barton College in May 2003.

384 new relationship. Those Commissioned offer their gifts to the Church and commit  
385 themselves to the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility. At the  
386 same time, they enter into a collegial relationship with all ministers. By receiving the  
387 Commissioned minister in the act of commissioning, the Church acknowledges the  
388 minister's call and commits itself to be open to it. This liturgical service occurs in the  
389 context of Congregational worship in partnership with the Region.

390

## 391 **2. Ordained Ministry**

392

### 393 **a. The meaning of Ordination**

394 In Ordination — through prayers invoking the Holy Spirit and the laying on of  
395 hands — the Church confirms in women and men the call of God, acknowledges  
396 their gifts and graces, and authorizes this ministry in and for the Church.

397 The act of Ordination by those who are appointed for this ministry attests the  
398 bond of the church with Jesus Christ and the apostolic witness, recalling that it is  
399 the risen Lord who is the true Ordainer and bestows the gift. In Ordaining, the  
400 church, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, provides for the faithful  
401 proclamation of the Gospel and humble service in the name of Christ. The laying  
402 on of hands is the sign of the gift of the Spirit, rendering visible the fact that the  
403 ministry was instituted in the revelation accomplished in Christ, and reminding  
404 the church to look to him as the source of its commission. (*"Ministry," Baptism*  
405 *Eucharist and Ministry*, WCC, para. 40.)

406

407 Disciples understand the meaning of Ordination as an action of God and the  
408 community during which the Ordained are strengthened by the Spirit for their  
409 task and are upheld by the acknowledgment and prayers of the congregation.

410

411 Ordination sets one apart for leadership in the life and witness of the church.  
412 While the Ordained ministry cannot be reduced to any mere listing of tasks, it  
413 may be identified by leadership with regard to three fundamental aspects of the  
414 church's life and witness:

415 (1) acting in servant obedience to God's commandment of love in self-sacrifice  
416 on behalf of others and in a servant life in the world;

417 (2) proclaiming the gospel in faithfulness to Jesus Christ by word (teaching and  
418 preaching), by sacrament (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and by deed  
419 (mission and service);

420 (3) overseeing the life of the community in its worship, education, witness,  
421 mission, fellowship, and pastoral nurture through the leading of the Holy  
422 Spirit.

423

424 In selecting men and women for Ordination, the church thus seeks to insure that  
425 its ministry of service, proclamation, and oversight shall be constantly upheld by  
426 its members.

427 **b. The character of Ordained ministry**

428 Disciples accept Ordination as a gift of the Holy Spirit at work in the community  
429 of faith. In every service of Ordination we, therefore, seek to witness to at least  
430 four aspects of this ordering of ministry:

431 1) *Apostolic Ministry*: The Ordained enter the *apostolic ministry*. By this we  
432 mean they receive their authority and commission from the risen Christ. The  
433 first Christian ministers were the apostles in the New Testament, to whom  
434 the living Lord revealed himself and sent "to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)  
435 Ministers in every generation preach, celebrate, witness, and gather disciples  
436 in continuity with those early apostles.

437 2) *Representative Ministry*: Ordination witnesses to a *representative ministry*.  
438 Those who accept the ministry of the Word, sacrament, and mission are  
439 responsible for re-presenting (showing forth) to the world and to all baptized  
440 Christians the character of Christ's ministry and witness. A central task of  
441 such representative ministry is personally and publicly to point the church to  
442 its dependence on Jesus Christ, who is the source of its faith, mission, and  
443 unity.

444 3) *Collegial Ministry*: Those who receive Ordination enter a *collegial ministry*.  
445 Ministry is inherently a shared responsibility. No minister is independent or  
446 autonomous, all seek to teach and work together to express fellowship  
447 (*koinonia*) in support and care for each other. This collegiality relates  
448 Ordained and lay persons in common ministry. The ministries of all members  
449 of the believing community are complementary, given to one to be  
450 supportive of the other. All are to build up the Body of Christ in love. No  
451 differences of vocation, function or education should obscure the fact that  
452 the one ministry of Christ is shared by the whole people of God. Lay and  
453 Ordained are partners together in governance and witness; together they  
454 empower the church for effective participation in discovering God's will for  
455 all humanity.

456 4) *Universal Ministry*: Most appropriately, Ordination is a *rite of the Church*  
457 *Universal*. While Ordination is normally done by a particular denomination,  
458 and Standing is limited to a particular communion, the intention is that no  
459 one is ever Ordained into a particular denomination or tradition, certainly  
460 not into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Those Ordained are  
461 representative ministers of the Church Universal: one, holy, catholic and

462 apostolic. While we serve with the vision of universality, the Church lives  
463 with the pain of a divided ministry. Nevertheless, all ministers are called to  
464 point out the community of Jesus Christ, to work to bring new expressions of  
465 the one universal Church into being, and to search for forms of unity which  
466 the divided churches cannot yet express.<sup>6</sup>

467 **c. Offices of the Ordained ministry**

468  
469 The New Testament does not describe a single pattern of ministry which might  
470 serve as a blueprint or continuing norm for all future ministry in the Church. In  
471 the New Testament there appears rather a variety of forms which existed at  
472 different places and times. As the Holy Spirit continued to lead the Church in life,  
473 worship and mission, certain elements from this early variety were further  
474 developed and became settled into a more universal pattern of ministry (*BEM*,  
475 para. 19).

476  
477 In 1985, the Commission on Theology commended to the whole Church a single  
478 order of Ordained ministry which would include three offices.<sup>7</sup>

479  
480 This pattern of ministerial leadership corresponds to the three aspects of the  
481 church's life identified as fundamental:<sup>8</sup>

- 482
- 483 ❖ the ministry of service to church and world (the *diaconate* or deacons),  
484 where the active witness and mission of the church as servant is advanced;
  - 485 ❖ the ministry of proclamation by Word and Sacrament (the *presbyterate*, or  
486 pastors), where preaching, teaching, and the sacraments/ordinances (Table  
487 and Baptism) of the church are lifted up; and,
  - 488 ❖ the ministry of oversight (the *episcopate*, or bishops), where oversight of the  
489 community's life occurs.

490  
491 Thus, within a single order of Ordained ministry, there can be three distinct  
492 offices that are at the same time mutually supportive and interrelated. The

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from "Theological and Historical Foundations," Ordination Service and Guidelines for Ordination for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Division of Homeland Ministries and Council on Christian Unity, 1990, pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> This ordering of ministry appears to be in line with the emerging consensus within the ecumenical movement and is the current pattern accepted by many churches throughout the world, e.g., Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, and United Churches, and thus appears to offer a strong possibility for wider ecumenical relationships in the future.

<sup>8</sup> The nomenclature of *diakonos*, *presbuteros*, and *episkopos* is drawn from I Timothy, chapters 3 and 5, which is rendered in the NRSV as deacon, elder, and bishop, respectively.

493 recognition of these offices does not carry with it any implications of hierarchical  
494 structure. The three-fold Ordained ministry, taken as a whole, thus re-presents  
495 the fundamental characteristics of ministry shared by all baptized believers. (*A*  
496 *Word to the Church on Ministry*, pp. 3- 4.)  
497

498 Persons are not Ordained into a particular office, but rather into the order of  
499 ministry. The church may call them to a role that emphasizes one of the three  
500 offices. However, these offices are not located exclusively in any particular  
501 ministerial role. Most ministries encompass varying aspects of all three offices.

502 **d. The act of Ordination**

503 A long and early Christian tradition places Ordination in the context of worship  
504 and especially of the Lord's Supper. Such a place for the service of Ordination  
505 preserves the understanding of Ordination as an act of the whole community.  
506 The act of Ordination by the laying on of hands of those appointed to do so is at  
507 one and the same time the invocation of the Holy Spirit, a sacramental sign, and  
508 an acknowledgment of gifts and commitment.<sup>9</sup>  
509

510 In the act of Ordination, the Church Ordains in confidence that God, being  
511 faithful to the promise in Christ, enters sacramentally into historical forms of  
512 human relationship, and draws upon those relationships for God's purpose.  
513 Ordination is thus a sign performed in faith that the spiritual relationship  
514 signified is present in, with, and through the words spoken, the gestures made  
515 and the forms employed.<sup>10</sup>  
516

517 Finally, Ordination is an acknowledgment by the Church of the gifts of the Spirit  
518 in the one Ordained, and a commitment by both the Church and the Ordinand to  
519 the new relationship. By receiving the new minister in the act of Ordination, the  
520 Church acknowledges the minister's gifts and commits itself to be open to these  
521 gifts. Likewise those Ordained offer their gifts to the Church and commit  
522 themselves to the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility;  
523 at the same time, they enter into a collegial relationship with all ministers.<sup>11</sup>  
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<sup>9</sup> Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 43.

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from *BEM*, Ministry para. 44.

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## II. Policies and Criteria For The Ordering Of Ministry

### A. Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

1. *The Order of Ministry*. The Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) comprises Commissioned Ministers and Ordained Ministers.
2. *Personal Qualifications for the Order of Ministry*. The church expects to find within the women and men it receives into the order of ministry:
  - a. Faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to a life of Christian discipleship and nurturing spiritual practices;
  - b. A sense of call to the ministry affirmed by the church;
  - c. An understanding of pastoral identity;
  - d. Capacity to engage in theological reflection;
  - e. Strong moral character and personal integrity;
  - f. Commitment to spiritual, physical and emotional wellness sufficient for healthy ministry;
  - g. Care and compassion for all people with appropriate relational skills;
  - h. Responsible personal financial management;
  - i. Wise and generous stewardship in the use of God’s gifts;
  - j. Skills and abilities necessary for the rigorous, pastoral tasks of ministry.

### B. The Commissioned Ministry

1. Description: Commissioned ministry provides the Church opportunity for creativity and imagination in acknowledging the fresh work of the Holy Spirit. These ministries may include: pastors, evangelists, Christian educators, ministers of music, youth ministers, parish nurses, chaplains, bi-vocational ministers, recognized congregationally-based or non-congregationally-based community ministers, or others, where Regional nurture and authorization are deemed appropriate.



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2. Common criteria of Commissioned ministry:

In order to be Commissioned ministers persons must:

- ❖ Be baptized members of a Disciples congregation in the commissioning Region and serving in a Congregationally, Regionally or Generally recognized call;
- ❖ Be recommended for Commissioning by a recognized congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the one in which his/her membership is held;
- ❖ Meet with the Regional Commission or Committee on Ministry (or that process which serves to function as a Commission on Ministry regardless of the name assigned Regionally) for Commissioning; and
- ❖ Comply with any other expectations of the Region.

In accepting Commissioning, the minister covenants to obey God by caring for the church, offering gifts of mind, body, and spirit to that service, agreeing to fulfill the functions of a minister, and adhering to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

Commissioned Minister Standing authorizes one to perform ministry on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The granting of Commissioning may or may not meet all legal requirements for the performance of marriages.

Persons are Commissioned by Regions for ministry in a specific context. Change of ministry context requires Regional re-Commissioning.

3. Categories of Commissioned Ministry:

- a. Commissioned Minister (Not Seeking Ordination): These are men and women who minister in a particular place for a specified period of time. Their call is context specific and is affirmed by the Region. Expectations for formation and education may be established by the Region, and may be accomplished in consultation with the calling congregation.
- b. Commissioned Minister (Seeking Ordination): These are women and men serving in a Congregationally or Regionally authorized call who are under the care of a Region and involved in a specified program of study and formation in preparation for Ordination.

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4. Candidacy for Commissioning
- a. *Definition:* Candidacy is that period of time in which the individual who has received a call to serve a particular ministry is in preparation with the Region for Commissioning.
  - b. Candidacy begins when a person who has received a call from a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or a recognized non-congregational ministry applies to the Region for Commissioning.
  - c. *Steps for Candidacy.* The candidate shall:
    - 1. be a member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation;
    - 2. have a letter of recommendation from the congregation of which the applicant is a member;
    - 3. complete the *Ministerial Profile*; and
    - 4. meet with the Regional Commission on Ministry.
      - a. *The Regional Minister or designee determines the appropriate committee with whom the Candidate will meet.*
      - b. *A Candidate who believes the Apprentice Track for ordination is more congruent with her/his economic, linguistic, vocational, or familial circumstances, will meet with the Training and Care Committee.*
      - c. *In preparation for their initial meeting with either committee, the Candidate completes the Self-Assessment and References document and submits it to the Regional Office two weeks prior to their scheduled meeting.*
      - d. *If the Candidate is requesting Commissioning – Not Seeking Ordination, s/he skips step 4c and meets directly with Recognition and Standing. If the Candidate is ordained seeking transfer of ordination, s/he skips Step 4c and meets directly with Recognition and Standing.*
  - d. The Region shall assess the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and educational capacities of the applicant for the practice of ministry. This assessment will be accomplished through such avenues as personal interviews, letters of reference, background checks, psychological and vocational testing, consultation with congregations, and as appropriate, coordination between Regions in reciprocal relationships, and communications with educational institutions.

- 652 e. Upon approval, the Region brings the candidate under care and Commissions  
653 her/him for a particular ministry.  
654
- 655 5. Regional Responsibilities: Specifically assigned to Regions are the responsibilities  
656 to:
- 657 a. establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Commissioned minister,  
658 which must include the *Ministerial Profile* and a current denominational  
659 criminal background check;
  - 660 b. consult with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic  
661 communities whenever considering a person of color;
  - 662 c. bring applicants “under care”;
  - 663 d. provide for their nurture;
  - 664 e. provide opportunities for building collegiality with other ministers;
  - 665 f. make available appropriate programs of study (such as readings, experiential  
666 learning, intensive weekend seminars, guided reflection on ministerial  
667 practice with a mentor-companion, and distance learning, etc.) in  
668 preparation for ministry;
  - 669 g. authorize the designation of an applicant as a Commissioned Minister;
  - 670 h. offer resources and presence of the Regional Minister or the Regional  
671 Minister’s designee for services of Commissioning;
  - 672 i. oversee formation processes for candidates for Ordination;
  - 673 j. encourage lifelong learning through continuing education opportunities  
674 including training in healthy boundaries and anti-racism; and
  - 675 k. establish additional requirements as desired.
- 676

### 677 C. The Ordained Ministry

678

- 679 1. *Description.* By Ordination the church recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in  
680 calling particular persons to creative and imaginative servanthood in Christ;  
681 accepts their ministry in and for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and for  
682 the whole body of Christ; covenants to undergird the ministry; and grants  
683 authority to perform that ministry as a representative of the church. Ordained  
684 ministers are baptized members of a Disciples congregation.

685  
686 In accepting Ordination, the minister covenants to obey God by caring for the  
687 church, offering gifts of mind, body and spirit to that service, agreeing to fulfill  
688 the functions of a minister, and adhering to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* of the  
689 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

690  
691 Ordained Minister Standing authorizes one to perform ministry on behalf of the  
692 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Ordination may or may not meet all the  
693 legal requirements for the performance of marriages.  
694

695 Historically called a ministry of word and sacrament, among others, this ministry  
696 may include pastors, educators, ecumenical leaders, recognized  
697 congregationally-based or non-congregationally-based community ministers,  
698 chaplains, pastoral counselors, and ministers who serve in the General and  
699 Regional church.

700

701 2. *Educational Requirements.* There are two educational tracks in preparation for  
702 Ordination: an apprentice track (AT) and a seminary track (ST).

703

704 ❖ Those in the apprentice track will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas  
705 of ministerial practice by completing a program of study of at least 250  
706 contact hours approved by the Region in which they are under care.

707

708 ❖ Those in the seminary track will demonstrate competency in the 16 areas of  
709 ministerial practice by securing a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent  
710 from a theological school accredited by the Association of Theological  
711 Schools in the United States and Canada or its equivalent.

712

713 Candidates for Ordination are expected to follow the seminary track, unless, in  
714 consultation with their Region, the Regional Ministry Commission determines  
715 that their economic, linguistic, vocational, or familial circumstances make the  
716 apprentice track more appropriate. Regardless of the educational track chosen,  
717 the church expects the women and men it ordains to demonstrate competency  
718 in the following areas of ministerial practice, listed alphabetically:

719

720 ***Biblical Knowledge:*** Be rooted and grounded in scripture and able to  
721 interpret and apply the scriptures in ways that are appropriate to original  
722 and contemporary contexts.

723

724 ***Church Administration and Planning:*** Be able to practice the principles of  
725 good administration, planning and implementing short- and long-range goals  
726 to enhance Congregational life in collaboration with teams and committees.

727

728 ***Communication:*** Be an effective communicator and be able to facilitate  
729 effective communication within and on behalf of the church.

730

731 ***Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience:*** Be sensitive to the different  
732 manifestations of racism and prejudice in the culture and be committed to  
733 confronting and overcoming them.

734

735 ***Ecumenism:*** Exhibit a commitment to working with other Christians and  
736 denominations and with other faiths in programs of common witness and  
737 service, and to articulating the vision of the ecumenical and global church as  
738 a starting place for mission.

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**Education and Leader Development:** Know the foundations of Christian education and the principles of leader development. Show competency in teaching children, youth, and adults, including lay leaders and staff.

**Ethics:** Be able to help parishioners think critically about the relationship of their faith to issues of justice, ethics and morality

**Evangelism:** Be able to motivate Congregational members to share their faith through word and action.

**Mission of the Church in the World:** Be able to understand and articulate the centrality of the call to mission given by Jesus Christ and the prophets. Be able to empower congregations to engage in mission from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.

**Pastoral Care:** Be able to engage other persons with empathy and assess situations and relationships with the compassion of Christ, with sensitivity to culture and context. Be able to convey the healing power of God to those who suffer.

**Proclamation of the Word:** Know the practice and theory of Christian preaching. Be able to proclaim the Word of God, share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and help Congregational members apply their faith to daily life.

**Spiritual Development:** Establish and maintain spiritual disciplines that lead to personal growth and help others develop a rich spiritual life.

**Stewardship:** Be able to develop and encourage healthy stewards who recognize and share generously God's abundant gifts for all creation.

**Theology:** Be able to articulate a coherent view of God's nature and activity in relation to the Christian tradition, to critically engage human situations from a perspective of faith, and to help persons recognize theological issues in their daily lives.

**Understanding of Heritage:** Have knowledge of and appreciation for the history and thought of Christianity and of the history, structure, practices, and ethos of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

**Worship:** Know the purpose and elements of Christian worship. Have the ability to plan and lead meaningful worship by working with the worship team, musicians, and Congregational members.

- 783 3. Regional Responsibilities:  
784 Regions are strongly encouraged to offer an apprentice track (AT) program on  
785 their own or in collaboration with Regional Fellowships,<sup>12</sup> theological  
786 institutions, or ecumenical partners. Those offering an AT program will submit  
787 their curriculum to the General Commission on Ministry for evaluation.  
788  
789 Specifically assigned to Regions are the responsibilities to:  
790 a. establish procedures to evaluate applicants for Ordination;  
791 b. evaluate the educational experience of candidates for an AT program which  
792 would include a high school diploma or its equivalent and some post  
793 secondary educational experience;  
794 c. consult with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic  
795 communities whenever considering a racial/ethnic applicant;  
796 d. bring applicants “under care” (See II.D.3.);  
797 e. provide for their nurture;  
798 f. be in relationship with the sponsoring congregation and the candidate’s  
799 educational setting;  
800 g. authorize and supervise the act of Ordination; and  
801 h. facilitate continuing education including training in healthy boundaries and  
802 anti-racism .

#### 803 **D. Candidacy for Ordination**

- 804  
805 1. *Definition:* Candidacy is that period of time in which the individual is under the  
806 care of a Regional Commission on Ministry and involved in a specified program  
807 of study and formation in preparation for Ordination.  
808  
809 2. *Application for Candidacy.* Application for candidacy is entered into when a man  
810 or woman declares the intention to seek Ordination through the Christian  
811 Church (Disciples of Christ), and their congregation affirms that intention.  
812  
813 3. *The Criteria for Candidacy.* The applicant shall be a baptized member of a  
814 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation and shall make application for  
815 candidacy to the Region of the candidate's membership or to the Region where  
816 she or he is a student. In special circumstances and subject to agreement

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<sup>12</sup> Regional Fellowships (Clusters) are gatherings of Regions in geographical proximity. They include:  
ROSES (Regions Of the Sun Equipping and Serving: Oklahoma, Southwest, and Great River);  
WRIM (Western Regions In Ministry: Arizona, Pacific Southwest, Northern California-Nevada, Oregon,  
Northwest, South Idaho, Montana, Central Rocky Mountain);  
SERF (SouthEast Regional Fellowship: Florida, Alabama-Northwest Florida, Georgia, South Carolina,  
North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee);  
NIRF (Northeast Inter-Regional Fellowship: Canada, Northeast, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Capital Area, West  
Virginia and Michigan);  
HEARTLAND (Heartland Regional Fellowship: Nebraska, Kansas, Greater Kansas City, Mid-America,  
Upper Midwest, Illinois-Wisconsin, and Indiana).

817 between appropriate Regional Ministers and/or Regional Commissions on  
818 Ministry, persons may apply for candidacy in another Region. The applicant shall  
819 have a letter of recommendation from a recognized congregation of the  
820 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the candidate's Region of membership.

821  
822 Upon receipt of the application, the Region will begin the process of assessing  
823 (through avenues such as personal interviews, letters of reference, background  
824 checks, psychological testing, consultation with congregations, coordination of  
825 Regions in reciprocal relationships, and communications with educational  
826 institutions), the spiritual, emotional, moral, intellectual, and educational  
827 capacities of the applicant for the practice of ministry. Upon approval of the  
828 application, the Region shall admit the applicant to candidacy. Once accepted as  
829 a candidate, the individual comes under the care and direction of the Regional  
830 Commission or Committee on Ministry (or that process which serves to function  
831 as a Commission on Ministry regardless of the name assigned Regionally).

832  
833 *Throughout the process of Candidacy, meetings are scheduled between the*  
834 *Candidate and her/his committee. At these meetings, updates in the Candidate's*  
835 *development will be documented. As the relationship unfolds between the*  
836 *Candidate and the committee, the committee will discern which specific areas*  
837 *are progressing or not progressing. Each of these meetings is a snapshot of how*  
838 *the committee experiences the candidate, with the goal being development of all*  
839 *Personal Qualifications and Areas of Ministerial Practice sufficient to begin*  
840 *professional ministry.*

841  
842 4. *The Procedures During Candidacy.* The candidate shall seek Ordination through a  
843 discernment process established by the Region. That preparation may include  
844 authorization as a Commissioned Minister (Seeking Ordination). The candidate  
845 may complete the educational requirements for either track without serving as a  
846 Commissioned Minister.

847  
848 Separate from candidacy, Commissioned Minister status authorizes one to  
849 perform ministry on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The  
850 granting of candidacy may or may not meet all legal requirements for the  
851 performance of marriages.

852 5. *Preparation for Ordination.* A candidate for Ordination is to prepare himself or  
853 herself spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically for her/his ministry.  
854 The following areas support and enhance the performance of an applicant's  
855 chosen ministry:

- 856  
857 a. Participation in the life and work of a congregation of Christians;  
858  
859 b. Breadth of theological study so that the candidate shows an  
860 understanding of the Christian faith, the Bible, the church universal,

- 861 the history and polity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and  
862 the formation and function of Christian mission;  
863  
864 c. Professional and ecclesiological study plus supervised experience in  
865 the work of ministry, exhibiting competencies in that form of ministry  
866 in which the candidate hopes to serve;  
867  
868 d. Formation of responsible relations with and concern for the church,  
869 both as communities of faith and as institution;  
870  
871 e. Growth in personal character, Christian insight, spiritual formation,  
872 wellness and disciplined commitment to ministry;  
873  
874 f. Formation of and adherence to ethical principles to guide  
875 professional relationships and personal conduct as outlined in the  
876 *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.  
877  
878 6. *Conclusion of Candidacy*. Completion of a prescribed program of study  
879 (apprentice track) or the receipt of a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent  
880 from an institution of higher education accredited by the Association of  
881 Theological Schools (seminary track) does not guarantee Ordination.  
882

883 Candidacy is concluded by Ordination, voluntary withdrawal by the candidate, or  
884 decision of the Region to terminate candidacy. Completion of candidacy within  
885 seven years is recommended, but may be extended at the discretion of the  
886 Region.  
887

## 888 **E. The Act of Ordination**

889  
890 Ordination is a process of the Congregational and Regional Church on behalf of the  
891 whole church to commend to Christians everywhere individuals who meet the  
892 qualifications and have fulfilled the requirements established by the Christian Church  
893 (Disciples of Christ) for Ordination.  
894

- 895 1. The candidate shall be recommended for Ordination by a recognized  
896 congregation or congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),  
897 including the one in which membership is held.  
898  
899 2. The act of Ordination shall be under the authorization and guidance of the  
900 sponsoring congregation and the Region, with the Regional Minister, or the  
901 Regional Minister's designee, presiding.  
902  
903 3. The service ordinarily shall be held in a sponsoring congregation.  
904



- 905 4. Representatives of the recommending congregation or congregations, the  
906 Regional church, the ecumenical church and, where possible, the General church  
907 shall participate in the service.  
908
- 909 5. After the Ministerial Code of Ethics is signed, the signed Ordination document  
910 shall be issued by the Region.  
911

## 912 **F. Ministerial Standing**

913

- 914 1. *Definition.* Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is credentialing  
915 for ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a call to  
916 accountability to the church, and collegiality with other ministers both  
917 denominationally and ecumenically.  
918
- 919 a. Standing affirms that the Commissioned or Ordained minister is currently  
920 engaged in the practice of ministry, whether on an occasional, part-time or  
921 full-time basis, with continuous accountability maintained with a  
922 congregation, related organization or institution, Region, or General  
923 Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Such ministers are  
924 listed in the *Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of*  
925 *Christ)* and may call upon the church for services and support such as  
926 pastoral care, ecclesiastical endorsement, and scholarship aid. In addition  
927 they have voting privileges in the General Assembly of the Christian Church  
928 (Disciples of Christ).  
929
- 930 b. Ordained ministers with Standing have access to Search and Call.  
931 Candidates for Ordination may be granted access to Search and Call at the  
932 discretion of the Regional Minister of the Region where they are under care  
933 or the Region of their educational setting.  
934
- 935 c. Responsibility for certification of Standing of ministers and for annual  
936 review of that Standing within the Order of Ministry is lodged with the  
937 Region where the minister is currently engaged in the practice of ministry.  
938 Nothing in the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry is intended to  
939 preclude a Region from developing additional appropriate statements or  
940 procedures pertaining to Standing within that Region as long as such  
941 statements are consistent with the Order of Ministry.  
942
- 943 d. For those engaged in non-Regional ministries responsibility for certification  
944 of Standing and for annual review of that Standing within the Order of  
945 Ministry is lodged with the General Commission on Ministry. For purposes  
946 of this document, non-Regional ministries are defined as all ministries  
947 outside the United States and Canada, those ministries engaged by and  
948 accountable to one of the General Ministries of the church, ministries of

949 the ecumenical church and with interfaith organizations whose  
950 responsibilities extend beyond one Region, whether in North America or  
951 abroad, and fulltime military, VA and Federal Correctional chaplaincies. All  
952 other ministries are hereby defined as Regional as determined by the  
953 primary ministry site. The General Commission on Ministry has a  
954 credentialing function but is not an Ordaining body; that is the province of  
955 Regions in cooperation with congregations. In covenant with the Regions,  
956 the General Commission on Ministry will notify Regions about persons who  
957 reside in their Region and hold Standing with the General Commission on  
958 Ministry.

959  
960 e. Since Regional Ministers “serve as a sign of the ministry of the church in  
961 sacrament and service” and lead Regions in promoting “the concept of  
962 whole church, and have a primary role in advocating and supporting the  
963 denomination’s mission and vision” (*Marks of a Faithful Regional Church*,  
964 August, 2006), the responsibility for certification of Standing is jointly  
965 lodged with the Region where the Regional Minister serves and with the  
966 General Commission on Ministry. Annually, the Regional Minister will  
967 complete Standing forms required by both the Region and the General  
968 Commission on Ministry.

969  
970 2. *Certification of Standing of those Commissioned and Ordained by the Christian*  
971 *Church (Disciples of Christ)*

972  
973 a. By virtue of Commissioning or Ordination according to the Order of  
974 Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the minister becomes  
975 eligible for Standing.

976  
977 b. Standing for ministers in active service continues so long as the minister  
978 does and reports the following:

979  
980 i. Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by  
981 Commissioning or Ordination, either in an occupation recognized by the  
982 church as ministerial in purpose or in a service recognized by the church  
983 as ministerial in purpose.

984  
985 ii. Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal.

986  
987 iii. Maintains relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
988 including participating membership in a recognized congregation in the  
989 community of residence or active ministry where feasible.

990  
991 iv. Adheres to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian Church*  
992 *(Disciples of Christ)*.

- 993  
994 v. Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the  
995 Order of Ministry. (II.A.2.)  
996  
997 vi. Seeks annual certification as requested by the Region where the  
998 ministry site is located or by the General Commission on Ministry, as  
999 appropriate. (See II.F.1.c.)  
1000  
1001 c. Standing may be continued at the discretion of the Region or the General  
1002 Commission on Ministry in cases of disability or other special hardships  
1003 affecting ministerial service, so long as other criteria for Standing are met.  
1004  
1005 d. The Region or the General Commission on Ministry will provide means by  
1006 which the Standing of all ministers in its care will be reviewed annually.  
1007 Consultation with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial Ethnic  
1008 communities is encouraged regarding the Standing of persons of color.  
1009  
1010 e. When an Ordained Minister moves from a ministry position in one Region  
1011 to a ministry position in another Region, Standing in the Order of Ministry  
1012 is retained. Commissioned Ministers who move to another Region must  
1013 contact that Regional Minister to establish Standing in the new ministry  
1014 position. Responsibility for review and subsequent certification is assigned  
1015 to the Region in which the minister functions or to the General Commission  
1016 on Ministry. The minister shall notify both the former and new Regional  
1017 Ministers upon relocation.  
1018  
1019 f. When an Ordained Minister who is not actively seeking relocation moves  
1020 from a ministry position in one Region to another Region and is no longer  
1021 engaged in ministry, ministerial Standing will be provisionally retained for  
1022 up to one year, except in the case of retirement, until review and  
1023 subsequent certification is granted by the Region into which the minister  
1024 has moved. The Ordained Minister is required to initiate contact with both  
1025 the former and new Regional Ministers regarding his or her status.  
1026  
1027 3. *Certification of Standing of Retired Ministers, Commissioned or Ordained by the*  
1028 *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*  
1029  
1030 a. Upon retirement, Commissioned Ministers retain Standing if they continue  
1031 serving in an approved ministry site. Standing of inactive retired Commissioned  
1032 Ministers may be granted at the discretion of the Region.  
1033  
1034 b. Ordained Ministers with Standing retain this Standing at the time of  
1035 retirement.  
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- i. A retired minister who intends to continue practice of ministry, whether on an occasional, part-time or full time basis must continue to seek annual certification of Standing as requested by the Region where the ministry site is located or by the General Commission on Ministry, as appropriate. (See II.F.1.c.) *Serving in an approved ministry site may include presiding at weddings, baptisms, and funerals, preaching or teaching, or offering pastoral care or counseling.*
  - ii. When Standing is granted, the active retired minister will be listed in the *Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as active retired. (aR)
  - iii. To be eligible for such Standing, the active retired minister
    - a) Performs faithfully the duties of a minister as authorized by Commissioning or Ordination, either in an occupation recognized by the church as ministerial in purpose or in a service recognized by the church as ministerial in purpose.
    - b) Participates regularly in programs of study, growth, and renewal.
    - c) Maintains relations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including participating membership in a recognized congregation in the community of residence or active ministry where feasible.
    - d) Continues to meet the personal qualifications for admission to the Order of Ministry (II.A.2) and to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*
  - iv. Retired ministers who are no longer engaging in the practice of ministry on an occasional, part-time or full time basis may seek Standing as inactive retired ministers.
    - a) Retired ministers who are granted inactive status will continue to be listed in the *Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* as inactive, retired ministers (iR).
    - b) Inactive retired ministers must continue to seek annual certification of Standing as requested by the Region where they reside.
    - c) To be eligible for such Standing, the inactive retired minister must continue to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* and must hold participating membership in a recognized Disciples congregation in the community of residence where feasible.

1081 v. If an inactive retired minister decides to once again take up the practice of  
1082 ministry, that minister must once again seek status as an active retired  
1083 minister. (See 3.c.i-iv)  
1084

1085 4. *Suspension or Termination of Ministerial Standing.*  
1086

1087 a. Procedures leading to a review of Standing may be initiated by the  
1088 minister, the Region, or the General Commission on Ministry when one or  
1089 more of the following conditions are present:  
1090

1091 i. The minister desires to be released from the practice of ministry, either  
1092 temporarily or permanently.  
1093

1094 ii. The minister requests transfer of credentials from the Christian Church  
1095 (Disciples of Christ) to another denomination or non-Disciples  
1096 congregation.  
1097

1098 iii. The minister enters into a full-time occupation not recognized by the  
1099 church as ministerial in purpose and/or no longer performs the  
1100 functions of the office of a minister.  
1101

1102 iv. The minister fails to respond to a request for annual certification from  
1103 the Region or the General Commission on Ministry.  
1104

1105 v. The minister no longer meets the personal qualifications for admission  
1106 to the Order of Ministry (II.A.2.) or fails to adhere to the *Ministerial*  
1107 *Code of Ethics*.  
1108

1109 vi. The retired minister fails to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics*.  
1110

1111 b. When the Region or the General Commission on Ministry takes the  
1112 initiative in the review of Standing, the procedures shall include:  
1113

1114 i. Written notice to the minister that Standing is to be reviewed with the  
1115 possibility of suspension or termination.  
1116

1117 ii. Consultation with the appropriate National Pastor/Leader of Racial  
1118 Ethnic communities is encouraged regarding the termination of  
1119 Standing of persons of color.  
1120

1121 iii. A hearing by a committee appointed by the Region or the General  
1122 Commission on Ministry.  
1123

- 1124 c. When the minister takes the initiative in the review, the procedures shall  
1125 include:  
1126  
1127 i. Written notice to the Region or the General Commission on Ministry  
1128 requesting that Standing be reviewed with the possibility of  
1129 termination.  
1130  
1131 ii. A consultation with a committee appointed by the Region or the  
1132 General Commission on Ministry.  
1133  
1134 d. Standing may be granted to a minister whose Standing has been  
1135 terminated or suspended by another Region or the General Commission on  
1136 Ministry only upon the recommendation of the terminating or suspending  
1137 body, whether that is a Region or the General Commission on Ministry.  
1138

1139 5. *Surrender of Standing*  
1140

1141 When a minister surrenders Standing, Standing can be granted again only upon  
1142 the recommendation of the body to which Standing was surrendered, whether  
1143 that is a Region or the General Commission on Ministry,. The Region or General  
1144 Commission on Ministry shall address any outstanding allegations of misconduct  
1145 before reinstating Standing.  
1146

1147 6. *Lapsed Standing*  
1148

1149 When a minister's Standing has lapsed, Standing may only be granted after  
1150 consultation with the body where the Standing was previously held, whether the  
1151 Region or the General Commission on Ministry.  
1152

1153 **G. Recognition and Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries**  
1154

1155 1. *Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ*  
1156

1157 The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ  
1158 recognize the Ordained ministries of the other church to be efficacious ministries  
1159 of grace within that church and these ministries to be valid and full ministries of  
1160 the one Church of Jesus Christ.

1161 The Ordained ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the  
1162 United Church of Christ are reconciled. An Ordained minister with Ordained  
1163 ministerial Standing in one church may function, whenever invited, and as  
1164 established procedures permit, as an Ordained minister of the other.

1165 The designations "Ordained Ministerial Partner" and "Ordained Ministerial  
1166 Partner Standing" manifest the corporate and individual nature of the  
1167 recognition and reconciliation of the Ordained ministries of the Christian Church  
1168 (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

1169 a. Each member of the United Church of Christ who holds Ordained ministerial  
1170 Standing in the United Church of Christ is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of  
1171 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1172 b. Each member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who holds  
1173 Ordained ministerial Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is  
1174 an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the United Church of Christ.

1175 c. When a person no longer has Ordained ministerial Standing in either the  
1176 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or the United Church of Christ, that  
1177 person is no longer an Ordained Ministerial Partner and Ordained Ministerial  
1178 Partner Standing is nullified.

1179  
1180 d. *United Church of Christ ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing*  
1181 *in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

1182  
1183 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an Ordained  
1184 minister with Standing in the United Church of Christ who has been called to  
1185 an Ordained ministry setting in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).  
1186 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical  
1187 authorization to exercise the rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry  
1188 in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

1189  
1190 i. Once a United Church of Christ Ordained minister has demonstrated  
1191 knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and practices of  
1192 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to the Regional Commission on  
1193 Ministry where the minister resides, that Ordained Ministerial Partner  
1194 may be granted access to the Search and Call process in the Christian  
1195 Church (Disciples of Christ). Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in  
1196 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is not given at this point in the  
1197 process.

1198  
1199 ii. A United Church of Christ Ordained Ministerial Partner who secures a  
1200 call in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) applies for Ordained

- 1201 Ministerial Partner Standing to the Region in which the Ordained  
1202 minister's calling body is located. Once granted, Ordained Ministerial  
1203 Partner Standing is reviewed by the Region for certification annually.  
1204
- 1205 iii. A United Church of Christ Ordained minister has Ordained Ministerial  
1206 Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) only when  
1207 serving a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calling body.  
1208
- 1209 iv. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial  
1210 Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall  
1211 maintain Ordained ministerial Standing in the United Church of Christ.  
1212
- 1213 v. Ordained ministerial Standing shall be held in the association in which  
1214 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calling body is located.  
1215
- 1216 vi. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial  
1217 Partner Standing shall maintain relations with the Christian Church  
1218 (Disciples of Christ) including (where feasible) holding associate  
1219 membership in a recognized Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
1220 congregation in the community.  
1221
- 1222 vii. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial  
1223 Partner Standing in a Region has voting privileges in the General  
1224 Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).  
1225
- 1226 viii. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial  
1227 Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall relate  
1228 to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for his/her primary support  
1229 in Ordained ministry.  
1230
- 1231 ix. A United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained Ministerial  
1232 Partner Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be  
1233 accountable to the Region for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing  
1234 and to the United Church of Christ for Ordained ministerial Standing.  
1235
- 1236 x. When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the United Church  
1237 of Christ minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the  
1238 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the association of the United  
1239 Church of Christ in which the United Church of Christ minister's  
1240 Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and  
1241 invited to participate in the procedures.  
1242
- 1243 xi. When a United Church of Christ minister who holds Ordained  
1244 Ministerial Partner Standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of



1245 Christ) accepts a call in another Region, he/she shall be subject to  
1246 review and subsequent annual certification of Ordained Ministerial  
1247 Partner Standing by the new Region.  
1248

- 1249 e. *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ministers with Ordained Ministerial*  
1250 *Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ.*

1251  
1252 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing is recognition granted to an Ordained  
1253 minister with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who has  
1254 been called to an Ordained ministry setting in the United Church of Christ.  
1255 Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing provides ongoing ecclesiastical  
1256 authorization to exercise the rights and responsibilities of Ordained ministry in  
1257 the United Church of Christ.  
1258

- 1259 i. Once a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained minister has  
1260 demonstrated knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, and  
1261 practices of the United Church of Christ to the Association Committee  
1262 where the minister resides, that Ordained ministerial partner may be  
1263 granted access to the Search and Call process in the United Church of  
1264 Christ. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of  
1265 Christ is not given at this point in the process.  
1266
- 1267 ii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained Ministerial Partner who  
1268 secures a call in the United Church of Christ applies for Ordained  
1269 Ministerial Partner Standing to the Association in which the Ordained  
1270 minister's calling body is located. Once granted, Ordained Ministerial  
1271 Partner Standing is reviewed by the Association annually.  
1272
- 1273 iii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ordained minister has Ordained  
1274 Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ only when  
1275 serving a United Church of Christ calling body.  
1276
- 1277 iv. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained  
1278 Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall maintain  
1279 Ordained ministerial Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).  
1280
- 1281 v. Ordained ministerial Standing shall be held in the Region in which the  
1282 United Church of Christ calling body is located.  
1283
- 1284 vi. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained  
1285 Ministerial Partner Standing shall maintain relations with the United  
1286 Church of Christ including (where feasible) holding associate membership  
1287 in a recognized United Church of Christ congregation in the community.  
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- vii. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in an Association has voting privileges in the Association and Conference and is eligible for election as a delegate to General Synod or election as a member of any Covenanted Ministry Board in the United Church of Christ.
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- viii. 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/her primary support in Ordained ministry.
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- ix. A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ shall be accountable to the Association for Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing and to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for Ordained ministerial Standing.
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- x. When a disciplinary review is instituted in relation to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in the United Church of Christ, the Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in which the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister's Ordained ministerial Standing is maintained, shall be informed and invited to participate in the procedures.
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- xi. When a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ accepts a call in another Association, he/she shall be subject to review and transfer of the Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing to the new Association.
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2. *Persons Ordained in Other Churches.* Ministers Ordained by other denominations or non-Disciples congregations may be considered for recognition of Ordination and the granting of Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Provisional or temporary Standing may be granted to individuals applying for recognition of Ordination by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Responsibility for this process is lodged in the Region except in the case of Military Chaplains stationed overseas.
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- a. Provisional or temporary Standing of applicants may be granted upon the fulfillment of the following requirements:
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- i. Consultation with appropriate officials of the denomination or congregation from which the candidate transfers.

- 1333 ii. Satisfactory investigation of personal and ministerial references and a  
1334 criminal background check.  
1335  
1336 iii. Filing of appropriate forms with the Region to which the applicant is  
1337 applying or with the General Commission on Ministry.  
1338  
1339 iv. Provisional or temporary Standing shall be reviewed annually by either  
1340 the granting Region or the General Commission on Ministry.  
1341  
1342 b. Removal of the provisional or temporary conditions for Standing may be  
1343 granted by the Region or the General Commission on Ministry upon  
1344 fulfillment of the following requirements:  
1345  
1346 i. Membership in a recognized congregation of the Christian Church  
1347 (Disciples of Christ).  
1348  
1349 ii. Demonstrated knowledge and appreciation for the history, polity, and  
1350 practices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).  
1351  
1352 iii. Fulfillment of the prerequisites and preparation, including educational  
1353 attainment, for the Order of Ministry.  
1354  
1355 iv. One year minimum service under the supervision or mentoring of a  
1356 Disciples of Christ minister with Standing.  
1357  
1358 v. Manifesting the personal qualifications for the order of ministry as  
1359 listed in item II.A.2.  
1360  
1361 vi. Commitment to adhere to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics of the Christian*  
1362 *Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

1363  
1364 **H. Ministerial Search and Call**  
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- 1366 1. *The General Principles.* Ministerial Search and Call is the term applied to the  
1367 process developed to facilitate the calling of ministers who hold Standing in the  
1368 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).  
1369  
1370 a. The covenantal relationship among ministers, Congregations, Regions, and  
1371 General Ministries of the church serves to build up the whole church of Jesus  
1372 Christ. This document identifies general principles for ministerial Search and  
1373 Call. The Office of Search and Call, within Disciples Home Missions,  
1374 administers these procedures of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).  
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- b. Freedom and responsibility are inherent in the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Congregations, Regions, and General Ministries 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 the Order of Ministry in the interest of assuring an orderly and responsible system of Search and Call.
  - c. The Church is best served when Regional Ministers and National Pastors/Leaders of Racial Ethnic communities work together covenantally in Search and Call. Primary responsibility for Search and Call is lodged with the Regions. Regions are encouraged to consult the National Pastors/Leaders. National Pastors/Leaders may offer their counsel to the Regional Minister in Search and Call with the understanding that the primary responsibility for Search and Call lies with the Region.

1392     2. *Operating Principles.*

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- a. Ordained ministers with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will have complete and unhindered access to Search and Call.
  - b. Commissioned ministers with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will have access to Search and Call. Circulation of their Search and Call forms is normally limited to the Region for which their ministry is commissioned.
  - c. At the discretion of the Region of care, candidates for Ordination may be granted authorized access to Search and Call.
  - d. Ordained Ministerial Partners in the United Church of Christ will have complete and unhindered access to Search and Call once they have been qualified by a Region to seek a call.
  - e. Congregations, Regions, institutions, and General Ministries of the church will be provided assistance from the Office of Search and Call.
  - f. Any Search and Call forms in the Office of Search and Call will be open to the minister concerned except for confidential references for which a waiver has been signed.
  - g. Confidentiality, when assured to the persons completing the reference forms, will not be violated.

- 1419 h. All candidates for Ordination with authorized access to Search and Call and  
1420 Ordained Ministers with Standing may be considered for any ministerial  
1421 position.  
1422
- 1423 i. All candidates for Ordination with authorized access to Search and Call and  
1424 Ordained Ministers with Standing shall have access to information  
1425 regarding available ministerial openings in the church.  
1426
- 1427 j. Every congregation, Region, educational or related institution, and General  
1428 Ministry will be open to the ministry of all persons putting aside prejudice  
1429 and considering candidates based on gifts and skills for ministry.  
1430
- 1431 3. *Responsibilities.* It is expected that all parties using Search and Call will abide  
1432 by the established procedures of the Office of Search and Call.  
1433
- 1434 a. Ministers. Commissioned and Ordained ministers with Standing in the  
1435 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have the responsibility to seek the  
1436 advice and counsel of the Region within which they hold Standing and to  
1437 avail themselves of the resources of the Office of Search and Call. They  
1438 have the freedom to accept or reject any call offered to them, and to  
1439 negotiate whatever terms of call or service seem appropriate. In all  
1440 matters, ministers will function within the covenantal relationship of the  
1441 whole church.
- 1442 i. Ministers will provide information for a permanent file to the Office of  
1443 Search and Call upon entry into the ministry of the Christian Church  
1444 (Disciples of Christ) and maintain current data in that file.
- 1445 ii. For purposes of Search and Call, the minister will update the *Ministerial*  
1446 *Profile* and complete reference requests, the *Ministerial Disclosure*  
1447 *Form* and criminal background check. The Search and Call forms will be  
1448 circulated as prepared and submitted by the minister.
- 1449 iii. Ordained ministers seeking a call shall utilize the process provided by  
1450 the Office of Search and Call.
- 1451 iv. Commissioned ministers (seeking ordination and not seeking  
1452 ordination) who desire to relocate shall request the assistance of the  
1453 appropriate Regional or Area Ministers.
- 1454 v. Ministers will be as specific and honest as possible about any limiting  
1455 factors in relocation, such as geographical preferences and salary  
1456 requirements.
- 1457 vi. Ministers will instruct the Office of Search and Call to send reference  
1458 forms to the persons whom they have identified as references. It is the  
1459 responsibility of the minister to ensure that these persons complete  
1460 and submit the reference forms. Once received, references will be held  
1461 in confidence from the minister if a waiver has been signed by the  
1462 minister.

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- vii. 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 either party declares negotiations ended. It is the obligation of ministers to be specific with congregations about their degree of interest.
  - viii. 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.
  - ix. 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.
  - x. Ministers will not initiate Search and Call by contacting a congregation directly.
  - xi. Ministers will advise the Region, if contacted directly by a congregation, should mutual interest in exploring a possible call be determined.
  - xii. Ministers will advise the Region where currently located, the Region where moving, the Office of Search and Call, and the Pension Fund, as soon as a call has been accepted.
- b. Congregations. Within the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and according to *The Design*, congregations have the right and responsibility to seek and call their own leadership, to establish the terms of call, to undergird the ministry, and to effect terminations within their own procedures. In all matters, congregations will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church and are encouraged to seek the advice and counsel of the Region/Area.
- i. Congregations will advise Regions of impending vacancies and work within Regional procedures to receive advice and counsel in seeking ministerial leadership.
  - ii. Congregations will have freedom to consider any minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or any Ordained Ministerial Partner who has been qualified by a Region to seek a call. The congregation should inform the Region and request biographical and reference material on all ministers it wishes to consider.
  - iii. 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.
  - iv. Congregations will be fair and open in the consideration of all candidates putting aside prejudice and considering candidates based on gifts and skills for ministry.

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- v. The congregational search committee will treat with confidentiality all information including personal biographical information and reference material, taking care to ensure 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 Region for reasons of safekeeping and confidentiality. All records relating to other candidates in the search process shall be destroyed.
  - vi. The congregational search committee will stay in communication with candidates whom the search committee has contacted.
  - vii. The search committee will inform, in a timely manner, candidates who are no longer being considered for the position.
  - viii. The congregational search committee may talk with a number of candidates concurrently but will negotiate with only one 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 either party declares negotiations ended. It is the obligation of the search committee to be specific with the minister about its degree of interest.
  - ix. Congregations will issue a Letter of Call providing copies of the call for the congregation, the minister, the Region, and the Office of Search and Call.
  - x. Congregations will reimburse the called candidate for the Criminal Background Check.
  - xi. Congregations will provide a fair salary (including housing allowance – parsonage provision) within the capabilities of the congregation, as well as adequate benefits (pension, health insurance, continuing education, vacation, sabbatical and Social Security offset).
  - xii. Congregations will provide for the reimbursement of church-related expenses to cover actual expenses of accomplishing ministry.
- c. Regions. Regions bear the primary responsibility for providing advice and counsel to both congregations and ministers in Search and Call. Regions will work collaboratively with General Racial Ethnic Ministries to address ministerial vacancies among their constituencies. Regions may delegate or share Search and Call responsibility with their areas, districts or other subdivisions. In all matters, Regions will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- i. 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.

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- ii. Each Region will receive and review all ministerial search and call materials from the Office of Search and Call, giving special attention to those persons who have indicated an interest in their Region.
  - iii. Each Region will refer all ministers within the Region who wish to seek relocation to the Office of Search and Call for entry into Search and Call.
  - iv. Each Region will share with search committees Search and Call forms of a selection of candidates who appear to meet the requirements of the congregations and institutions with whom the Region is working.
  - v. Each Region will encourage congregations to give fair and equal consideration to candidates putting aside prejudice and considering candidates based on gifts and skills for ministry.
  - vi. Each Region will share with specific search committees Search and Call forms of any minister with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), or any Ordained Ministerial Partner qualified by a Region to seek a call, who requests consideration in that congregation.
  - vii. Each Region will maintain a list of churches seeking ministerial leadership in the Region and make it available upon request to ministers with Standing.
  - viii. If a Region is contacted by a search committee about a minister not actively seeking a call, the Region will inquire about that minister's interest. The minister has the right to know the name and location of the interested congregation. If said minister is interested, the Region will direct said minister to Search and Call.
  - ix. Each Region will provide, upon request of ministers seeking a call, a list of congregations which have received their *Ministerial Profile*.
  - x. Each Region will treat all Search and Call forms with strict confidentiality.
  - xi. Each Region will communicate to the Office of Search and Call any formal actions and decisions to remove Standing for misconduct 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. (See also J. 1. below.)
  - xii. Each Region will refer all requests for assistance from congregations outside the Region to the appropriate Regional office.
  - xiii. Each Region will regularly notify the Office of Search and Call of all relocations occurring within, to, or from the Region.
  - xiv. Each Region will authorize access to Search and Call to
    - a. candidates for ordination whose ordinations have been authorized in their Region and
    - b. ordained ministers from other denominations who have been given temporary recognition and who are in the process of transferring Standing to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
  - xv. Each Region will make information available about Regional staff vacancies through such channels as denominational websites, Regional publications, Disciples Home Missions, and other publications.



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- d. Disciples Home Missions. The Office of Search and Call at Disciples Home Missions is the primary locus of the ministerial records of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) related to Search and Call and is responsible for coordinating the Search and Call process of the church. In all matters, Disciples Home Missions will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
  - i. The Office of Search and Call will maintain the permanent files of all ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
  - ii. The Office of Search and Call 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 by the Regions and the General Commission on Ministry.
  - iii. The Office of Search and Call will receive, process and make available Search and Call materials of ministers with Standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Qualified Ordained Ministerial Partners, and others authorized by Regions to Regions and General Ministries. The Search and Call forms will be circulated as prepared and submitted by the minister.
  - iv. The Office of Search and Call will collect and release reference material to Regions or General Ministries upon permission of the minister applying for Search and Call assistance.
  - v. The Office of Search and Call will protect the confidentiality of references when confidentiality has been promised.
  - vi. The Office of Search and Call will secure permission from any minister not actively seeking a call before releasing references to Regions or General Ministries. The minister has the right to know the name and location of the interested congregation. Information in the permanent file may be released without permission to Regional Ministers or to the Chair of the General Commission on Ministry in regard to ethical and conduct matters.
  - vii. The Office of Search and Call will secure, maintain, and release to Regions, and on request, to ministers with Standing, a list of staff vacancies in regions, general units of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ecumenical organizations.
  - viii. The Office of Search and Call will make available education and informational materials regarding Search and Call to congregations, Regions, institutions and General Ministries.
  - ix. The Office of Search and Call will refer all requests from congregations for names of potential candidates to the appropriate Regions.
  - x. The Office of Search and Call will refer all candidates for Ordination seeking student preaching/pastoral positions to the field education office of the appropriate institution or to the Region.

- 1635 xi. The Office of Search and Call will share with Regions, and where  
1636 appropriate, General Ministries, the record of any formal action by a  
1637 Region's commission on the ministry or the General Commission on  
1638 Ministry concerning the conduct of a minister who is entering Search  
1639 and Call.
- 1640
- 1641 e. Educational institutions. The undergraduate departments of religion and  
1642 the theological educational institutions have unique responsibilities with  
1643 respect to the search and call process of the church. Each relates to a  
1644 limited number of congregations in which pre-theological and theological  
1645 students may be serving. The theological institutions have responsibility for  
1646 relating their graduating students who are candidates for Standing as  
1647 Ordained ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to Search  
1648 and Call. In Search and Call, educational institutions will function within the  
1649 covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- 1650
- 1651 i. Educational institutions will relate to congregations served by students  
1652 in partnership with the Region in matters pertaining to the employment  
1653 of students during their pre-theological and theological education.
- 1654 ii. Educational institutions will refer requests from congregations for  
1655 search and call assistance that is outside the student field placement  
1656 process to the appropriate Region.
- 1657 iii. Educational institutions will cooperate with Regions in orienting  
1658 students to the Search and Call process of the church.
- 1659
- 1660 f. General Ministries. In all matters, General Ministries will function within  
1661 the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- 1662
- 1663 i. General Ministries will refer all requests for Search and Call assistance  
1664 to the Office of Search and Call and the appropriate Regional Minister.  
1665 They will refer requests for candidates' names to the appropriate  
1666 Region.
- 1667 ii. General racial/ethnic ministries will work collaboratively with Regions  
1668 to address ministerial vacancies among their constituencies.
- 1669
- 1670 4. *Right of Review and Counsel.* The right to review and counsel is limited to  
1671 perceived violations of Search and Call and should be initiated with the  
1672 appropriate Region, institution or General Ministry. A request for review and  
1673 counsel beyond the Region shall be to the General Commission on Ministry.
- 1674

1675 **I. Ministerial Code of Ethics**

1676

1677 Believing that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, and proclaiming him Lord and  
1678 Savior of the world, I reaffirm my vows as a minister. Through dedication and discipline I

1679 will lead and serve with integrity. Relying on the grace of God, I commit myself to the  
1680 following:

1681

1682 *Personal Conduct*

- 1683 • Witnessing to the ministry of Jesus Christ
- 1684 • Dedicating time, strength, vitality, and energy for effective ministry
- 1685 • Growing in faith, knowledge, and the practice of ministry through the spiritual  
1686 disciplines, study, continuing education, and service
- 1687 • Living a life that honors my commitments to my family, including the need for  
1688 privacy and time together
- 1689 • Taking time for physical and spiritual renewal, recreation, and vacation
- 1690 • Being a faithful steward of God's gifts to me by managing time, talents, and  
1691 financial resources responsibly and generously
- 1692 • Accepting responsibility for all debts that I incur
- 1693 • Keeping physically and emotionally fit and refraining from substance abuse and  
1694 other abusive behaviors
- 1695 • Using my position, power, and authority in non-exploitive ways
- 1696 • Maintaining high moral standards in my sexual behavior
- 1697 • Regarding all persons with equal respect and concern and undertaking to  
1698 minister impartially

1699

1700 *Relationships to the Church which I Serve*

- 1701 • Nurturing and offering my gifts for ministry to the church
- 1702 • Calling forth and nurturing the gifts of others in the church and joining their gifts  
1703 with mine for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ and the health of the church
- 1704 • Preaching and teaching the gospel without fear or favor and speaking the truth  
1705 in love
- 1706 • Administering the sacraments/ordinances and services of the church with  
1707 integrity and not for financial gain
- 1708 • Working cooperatively and collegially with those whom I serve in the particular  
1709 ministry to which I have been called
- 1710 • Administering the corporate finances of the church with personal integrity
- 1711 • Refraining from accepting any gift which would compromise the church's  
1712 ministry
- 1713 • Protecting confidences; covenanting to only tell those who need to know, what  
1714 they need to know, when they need to know it
- 1715 • Acting to prevent and to report known or suspected cases of physical or sexual  
1716 abuse or neglect
- 1717 • Encouraging and participating in the regular evaluation of my ministry and  
1718 cooperating with the Region in the annual review of my ministerial Standing
- 1719 • Seeking the counsel of the Regional Minister should divisive tensions threaten  
1720 my relationship with those I serve

1721

- 1722 *Relationships to Ministry Colleagues*
- 1723 • Engaging in covenantal relationships with colleagues which involve nurture,
- 1724 discipline, family support, vigorous dialogue, mutual teaching/learning, and
- 1725 spiritual formation
- 1726 • Supporting colleagues in ministry and their families while not exploiting their
- 1727 problems or crises
- 1728 • Performing pastoral services within another congregation or for a member of
- 1729 another congregation only at the request of that congregation’s elders and
- 1730 current pastor
- 1731 • Supporting and at no time speaking maliciously of the ministry of my
- 1732 predecessors or another minister
- 1733 • Encouraging the ministry of my successor upon my retirement or other
- 1734 departure from a ministry position, without interfering or intruding and by
- 1735 making it clear to former parishioners that I am no longer their pastor, nor will I
- 1736 perform any pastoral services unless requested by the congregation’s elders and
- 1737 current pastor
- 1738

1739 *Relationships to the Community and the Wider Church*

- 1740 • Participating responsibly in the life and work of my community, bearing
- 1741 prophetic witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and working towards a just and
- 1742 morally responsible society
- 1743 • Participating faithfully in the life and work of all expressions of the Christian
- 1744 Church (Disciples of Christ)
- 1745 • Seeking to know, understand, and respect the diversity of opinions and people
- 1746 within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- 1747 • Being a responsible representative of the one church of Jesus Christ and
- 1748 participating in activities which strengthen its ministry, witness, and mission
- 1749

1750 **J. Misconduct**

1751

1752 The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) understands ministerial misconduct to be

1753 activity which violates the covenantal character of the ministerial office as expressed in

1754 the Ministerial Code of Ethics. Investigation and adjudication of violations of the

1755 Ministerial Code of Ethics shall be the responsibility of the Region through the

1756 committee or Commission on Ministry or the General Commission on Ministry.

1757

1758 1. *Reporting*

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1760 Regions or the General Commission on Ministry will report formal actions and

1761 decisions to remove Standing for misconduct to the Office of Search and Call,

1762 Disciples Home Missions, and these actions will be communicated to all Regions.

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1764 2. *Suspension of Standing*

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

3. *Sexual Misconduct*

- 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. Each Region will periodically and systematically review its definitions and procedures. 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 Commission on Ministry to have specific definitions of sexual misconduct and procedures for receiving, investigating, and adjudicating sexual misconduct charges of ministers engaged in non-Regional ministries. The General Commission on Ministry will periodically and systematically review its definitions and procedures. It is the responsibility of the General Commission on the Ministry to communicate such definitions and procedures to ministers, ministries, and other organizations in the General and ecumenical church.

**Addendum to Section VII —  
Regional Clergy Ethics Policy and Procedures**

*The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Northern California-Nevada understands clergy sexual misconduct (as discussed in Section VII, above) as **one type** of clergy ethics violation. This section, “VII — Addendum — Regional Clergy Ethics Policy and Procedures,” defines the Region’s understanding of clergypersons’ ethical obligations (and is intended to implement the standards and issues mentioned in Sections VII, I.C.1, V.B.3.d, and V.E.1.e).*

*Premise: The whole church receives the call of God to embody and carry forth Christ’s ministry in the world. For the sake of the mission of Christ Jesus and the most effective witness to the Gospel, and in consideration of their influence as representatives of Christ, ministers should be willing to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life. Furthermore, they are called to exercise responsible self-control in personal habits, and to be persons in whom the community can place trust and confidence. Violation of the ministerial relationship by unethical behavior is a sin against God and an offense to the church.*

1808 Further, the ethical conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of critical  
1809 importance to the church because through its leaders is conveyed an understanding of  
1810 God and the good news of the gospel. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of  
1811 the Christian gospel in the church and the world. For,

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1813 As (God) who called you is holy,  
1814 be holy yourselves in all your conduct...

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1816 ...tend the flock of God that is in your charge...

1817 not under compulsion but willingly...

1818 not for sordid gain but eagerly.

1819 Do not lord it over those in your charge

1820 but be examples to the flock.

1821

1822 You know that we who teach  
1823 shall be judged with greater strictness.

1824 (1 Peter 1:15; 5:3; James 3:1, NRSV)

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1827 **A. Types of Misconduct:**

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1829 1. A sexual relationship between a minister and a person with whom he/she is in a  
1830 ministerial or pastoral relationship.

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1832 2. Rape, or touching by force, threat, or intimidation.

1833 3. Any other type of sexual conduct which is injurious to the physical or emotional  
1834 health of another.

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1836 4. Sexual harassment which includes but may not be limited to: making unsolicited  
1837 advances, requesting sexual favors, inducing a person into a sexual relationship,  
1838 giving unwanted sexual attention to a person, punishing a refusal to comply with  
1839 sexual demands, or engaging in sexual behavior with minors. This may involve a  
1840 wide range of behavior from verbal innuendo, subtle suggestions and  
1841 inappropriate sexual jokes and remarks to overt demands and physical abuse.

1842

1843 5. Violation of confidentiality except as required by law.

1844

1845 6. Unauthorized use of church or employer funds for personal purposes.

1846

1847 7. Abuse of alcohol or drugs.

1848

1849 8. Flagrant, repeated, or serious violations of the Ministerial Code of Ethics.

1850

1851 **9. Failure to be truthful in information provided to the Region, congregation, or**  
1852 **employer.**

1853

1854 **B. Principles of Procedure**

1855

1856 *1. All claims of clergy ethical misconduct will be taken seriously by the Christian*  
1857 *Church (Disciples of Christ) of Northern California-Nevada. When received in a*  
1858 *signed, written format, such claims will be responded to as quickly as possible by*  
1859 *the Recognition and Standing Committee, and the Regional Minister(s) will be*  
1860 *advised of such claims. It is recognized that in some cases the complainant may*  
1861 *not be the victim of the alleged misconduct. However, it is the right of anyone*  
1862 *affected by the conduct and who may therefore be a secondary victim, including*  
1863 *congregational or Regional church officials, to bring forth a complaint.*

1864

1865 *2. Ordinary Initial Process in Sexual Misconduct or Other Flagrant Ethical Violations:*

1866

1867 *a. Upon the receipt of such a signed, written complaint by the Regional*  
1868 *Church office, the Chair of the Recognition and Standing Committee in*  
1869 *conjunction with the Regional Minister(s) will make an initial review of*  
1870 *the allegation.*

1871

1872 *b. That initial review shall include appointment by the Chair and Regional*  
1873 *Minister(s) of a 2-3 person response team (one of whom to be*  
1874 *designated as the leader) to meet with the complainant in a timely*  
1875 *fashion and to offer support and to hear further the nature of the*  
1876 *complaint and to be a resource concerning the process.*

1877

1878 *c. The confidential written results of such an interview will be forwarded*  
1879 *as quickly as possible by the response team leader to the Chair and*  
1880 *Regional Minister(s).*

1881

1882 *d. The Regional Minister(s) and Chair (or designee) will advise the*  
1883 *accused of the complaint, giving him/her a copy of the complaint and a*  
1884 *copy of these Order of Ministry Policies. The accused will be invited to*  
1885 *submit a written, signed response which can be shared with the*  
1886 *complainant. The accused will be cautioned to have no direct contact*  
1887 *with the complainant during this process. The accused will also be*  
1888 *offered the appointment of a support person by the Regional*  
1889 *Minister(s).*

1890

1891 *e. As part of this initial review, concern and care for the welfare of the*  
1892 *complainant and the accused will be exhibited, and steps will be taken*  
1893 *to protect the community involved and other potential victims. Where*  
1894 *such reporting is required by law, suspected violations of the law will*

1895 *be reported to civil authorities. The innocence of the accused in regard*  
1896 *to the allegations will be presumed until unethical conduct is admitted*  
1897 *or sustained.*

1898  
1899 *f. By mutual agreement of complainant, accused, Chair of Recognition*  
1900 *and Standing, and Regional Minister(s) the above process (a through e)*  
1901 *may be modified by mutual agreement if and where appropriate to the*  
1902 *nature of the complaint.*

1903  
1904 *g. At the conclusion of the initial review, if the Chair of Recognition and*  
1905 *Standing (or designee) can resolve the complaint with satisfaction to*  
1906 *all parties involved, and if there is concurrence by the Regional*  
1907 *Minister(s), then the matter will be considered closed and a report of*  
1908 *the process and its disposition will be retained by the Regional*  
1909 *Minister(s) for the protection of all parties. In such an instance, the*  
1910 *clergy person will be understood not to have been subject to an*  
1911 *“Official Disciplinary Review” as the term is used in the Search and Call*  
1912 *processes (commonly referred to as “Relocation Papers”).*

1913  
1914 *h. The interest of the accused's employing congregation/agency in the*  
1915 *matter is affirmed. Upon counsel with the Regional Minister(s), the*  
1916 *Chair of Recognition and Standing will seek appropriate ways to*  
1917 *involve the congregation's or employer's leadership in the matter,*  
1918 *recognizing the complexity and sensitivity of the issues involved.*

1919  
1920 *3. Further Process: If, after the initial review is completed, the complaint cannot be*  
1921 *resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, a formal hearing shall be held as soon*  
1922 *as reasonably possible by the Recognition and Standing Committee concerning*  
1923 *the matter. Upon the invitation by the Chair to the accused to participate in*  
1924 *such a formal hearing, the accused shall be understood to be the subject of an*  
1925 *“Official Disciplinary Review.”*

1926  
1927 *At such a formal hearing, the accused and complainant will be invited to*  
1928 *appear, although not necessarily at the same time. The Chair will also*  
1929 *invite the Regional Minister(s) to attend and participate in the hearing.*  
1930 *The Chair will also seek to have any further written information that*  
1931 *he/she deems helpful to the Committee. Any written information to be*  
1932 *reviewed by the Committee — except that which is deemed confidential*  
1933 *by its writer, including reports from the initial response team — will be*  
1934 *made available to the accused. It is understood that the formal hearing is*  
1935 *not a legal proceeding. While the accused and complainant may bring*  
1936 *support person(s) to the hearing (with the permission of the Chair or*  
1937 *Regional Minister), legal counsel shall not participate in the hearing.*



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4. *During or at the conclusion of such a hearing, if the Recognition and Standing Committee sustains the complaint, it may take a variety of actions including:*

- a. *Continuing the hearing until a later date.*
- b. *Reprimanding the accused.*
- c. *Suspending ministerial standing for a stated period, with the understanding that re-application may thereupon be considered after further meeting with the Committee.*
- d. *Revoking ministerial standing, with no intention of entertaining any re-application.*
- e. *Mandating counseling (with the option of requiring a waiver from the accused allowing Committee communication to/from the counselor) regarding the accused.*
- f. *Other appropriate sanctions and growth programs.*
- g. *Per Section VII.2., above, the results of the hearing will be communicated to the Center for Leadership and Ministry.*

*At the conclusion of such a hearing, if the Recognition and Standing Committee does not sustain the complaint, it will offer assistance to the minister for counseling, and will work with the congregation or employer to report that the complaint was not sustained. Further, a report will be sent to the Center for Leadership and Ministry noting that the complaint was not sustained and asking that the report be made a part of the minister's permanent record. Moreover, the minister in response to the question on the Search and Call forms asking if he or she has ever been subject to an official disciplinary review, may answer "no" to that question.*

5. *In the event that the accused is a member of the Regional Ministerial Staff, all of the above procedures and process described in 1-4 will be followed, but with the following specific changes:*

- a. *Upon initial receipt of a signed, written complaint, the Chair of Recognition and Standing shall consult with the Regional Moderator. The Moderator shall name a person to be Consultant Staff to the Committee; the Consultant Staff will carry the responsibilities and duties outlined above that would ordinarily be carried out by the Regional Minister(s). The Consultant Staff will ordinarily be an Northern California-Nevada minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and who has no staff relationship to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Northern California-Nevada. The Moderator and Chair of Recognition and Standing shall insure that the Consultant Staff has necessary access to all persons and*

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documents that would be needed to carry out his/her work for the Committee. The Moderator may, at his/her discretion, grant a stipend to the Consultant Staff for this work and for support services if needed. The Moderator, Chair of the Committee, and Consultant Staff will consult with the Office of General Minister and President, the General Commission on Ministry, and other Regional Ministers as necessary and as desired. The Moderator will ordinarily serve as spokesperson regarding the handling of public communication in the region and beyond regarding this matter.

*b. If the complaint is not resolved at the initial review stage of this process (2, above), and is dealt with by the full Committee (3, above), the Recognition and Standing Committee shall, if the complaint is sustained, make a report and recommendation to the Regional Board Executive Committee concerning this matter. This recommendation shall be in addition to any actions taken by the Committee which shall affect ministerial standing. If the complaint is not sustained, the Moderator, the Regional Minister, the Chair of Recognition and Standing, and the accused staff person shall determine appropriate responses and statements to be made, and the accused staff person shall have the right to have a statement noting that the complaint was not sustained made a part of his/her regional personnel file.*

*6. Appeal: Any minister may appeal the Recognition and Standing Committee's decision to either the Regional Board Executive Committee or General Commission on Ministry, where the procedures outlined in the third paragraph of Section V.B.7, above, will be followed. Any such appeal must be initiated within one year of the Recognition and Standing Committee's judgment.*

*In the event of an appeal to the Executive Committee, the following procedures will be used:*

*A. The Executive Committee shall receive notice of an appeal in writing from the appellant. This notice should come via the office of the Regional Minister and/or Regional Moderator. The appellant shall supply a written waiver to the Committee via the Regional Minister allowing the Executive Committee access to all documents that were part of the original decision that is being appealed.*

*B. The Regional Moderator and/or Regional Minister shall convene the Executive Committee at a mutually agreeable time for an initial review of the matter.*

*C. For this initial review, the Regional Minister will make available to*

2026 the Executive Committee the important documents that will help  
2027 them make a decision on how to proceed or whether to accept the  
2028 appeal.

2029

2030 D. The Executive Committee and/or Regional Minister and/or Regional  
2031 Moderator may invite, at its/their discretion, the appropriate  
2032 committee chair to be a part of this initial review.

2033

2034 E. At this initial review the Executive Committee shall discuss this  
2035 matter with the intention of making a decision about whether to  
2036 accept the appeal for formal review. Any decision will be reached  
2037 by the Committee in executive session.

2038 F. While understanding that the distinction between "process" and  
2039 "fact" is not an absolute one, the Executive Committee at this initial  
2040 review shall focus primarily on the "process" question of whether  
2041 or not the committee whose decision is being appealed  
2042 substantially abided by the processes related to standing,  
2043 ordination, etc., as outlined by the Order of Ministry Policies and of  
2044 its own internal policies and practices, rather than the question of  
2045 whether the committee whose decision is being appealed  
2046 ascertained the facts correctly.

2047 G. At the conclusion of this initial review, the Executive Committee  
2048 may take the following actions: **a)** decline to accept the appeal for  
2049 formal review. (In this case the decision will be communicated to  
2050 the appellant and the chair of the appropriate committee), **b)**  
2051 sustain the findings of fact of the committee being appealed from  
2052 but change the response/punishment that was rendered (in this  
2053 case the decision will be communicated to the appellant and the  
2054 chair of the appropriate committee), **c)** accept the appeal for a  
2055 formal review (in this case the appellant and the chair of the  
2056 appropriate committee will be notified and the further process  
2057 outlined below will apply).

2058 H. In the event that the Executive Committee accepts the appeal for a  
2059 formal review, **a)** the Committee shall convene at a mutually  
2060 agreeable time, **b)** shall invite the appellant to meet personally with  
2061 the Committee at that time, **c)** invite the appellant to provide, if  
2062 desired and within reason, written statements from others who the  
2063 appellant believes have an interest in and important perspective on  
2064 the matter under appeal, **d)** invite the Chair and/or members of the  
2065 committee whose decision is being appealed to meet with the  
2066 Committee at that time, **e)** the Committee may request to receive

2067 any other materials or interview any other persons that it feels will  
2068 be helpful in deciding this matter. (NOTE: Because this is an  
2069 ecclesial, churchly matter, rather than a legal one, the appellant  
2070 may not have the presence of an attorney during his/her interviews  
2071 with the Executive Committee. If the appellant insists on this, then  
2072 the Committee can decide to indefinitely table the matter). In all of  
2073 the above, the Regional Minister will assist the Regional Moderator  
2074 in making these arrangements.

2075 I. The Executive Committee will deliberate in executive session and  
2076 make a decision concerning the appeal. It may at any time continue  
2077 its deliberations or investigations or interviews to subsequent  
2078 sessions. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Executive  
2079 Committee may **a)** reverse the decision (in whole or part) of the  
2080 committee whose decision is being appealed, **b)** sustain the action of  
2081 the committee whose decision is being appealed. The Executive  
2082 Committee's decision will be communicated to the appellant and to  
2083 the Office of Christian Vocations at the Division of Homeland  
2084 Ministries.

2085  
2086 J. In the event that during the course of the appeal process (at any  
2087 stage, either initial or subsequently) either the Regional Moderator  
2088 or Regional Minister or members of the Executive Committee should  
2089 change, the Moderator/Regional Minister/Executive Committee  
2090 members under whom the initial review began will be invited to sit in  
2091 on the Executive Committee's continuing/final discussions and  
2092 deliberations, although will have no vote after they have ceased to  
2093 hold office.

2094  
2095  
2096 7. In the event that a minister accused of ethical misconduct resigns his/her  
2097 ministerial standing or refuses to make him/herself available to the Committee's  
2098 at any stage of the processes outlined in this section, the Recognition and  
2099 Standing Committee may take any action it deems appropriate in the absence of  
2100 the minister's participation, and after reasonable effort to secure the accused  
2101 minister's participation. The Committee at its discretion may make a report to  
2102 the Center for Leadership and Ministry and to the minister's congregation or  
2103 employer about its action(s) in such a situation.

2104  
2105 **K. Right of Appeal**

2106  
2107 The General Commission on Ministry understands that the Right to Appeal extends to  
2108 persons who, at the time of their appeal, are subject to a decision with adverse effect  
2109 regarding Ordination, Commissioning, transfer of credentials, and/or Standing. The

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2111 Indianapolis General Assembly 2009  
2112 Section II.H. on Ministerial Search and Call amended General Board 2009  
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