

Commissioned Lay Pastors in the Presbyterian Church

A Handbook Provided By
Churchwide Personnel Services National Ministries Division

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We hope this latest edition of the Commissioned Lay Pastors Resource Manual provides guidance and information that builds on the fine work done previously. We are grateful to the many presbyteries and offices that provided samples of their work. We are greatly indebted to Mary Miller Currie. Her research and report provided the initial impetus for this publication. Section One, "Behold, We Are Doing a New Thing," of this manual contains the first half of her report and Section Two leans heavily on it. To members of the Evangelism/New Church Development Staff and to the "readers" who read the 2001 edition and suggested the revisions you will notice in this 2003 edition, a special thank you.

In our effort to have the manual current, we invite you to send us copies of information that might be helpful to others. Your comments are welcome. We will occasionally post new information and resources on the CLP web page. Check www.pcusa.org/clp frequently.

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PART ONE

Behold,
We Are
Doing a New
Thing . . .

*By Mary Miller Currie
December 2000
Revised by CPS 2003*

A. ONCE UPON A TIME.....

a preacher was sitting quietly at home and the phone rang. God and the Evangelism and Congregational Development Committee were calling: "We are in the process of beginning a Lay Academy for the training of Commissioned Lay Preachers for the presbytery and we are asking you to consider being the first director of this academy." Well, the preacher was flattered and excited to be asked to help establish a new ministry opportunity, even if the preacher was not entirely clear on the concept of a Commissioned Lay Preacher. What was a Commissioned Lay Preacher and what did such a person do in a church? The committee explained as best they could, but in those long ago days, not many had clarity on the concept—it was a developing idea.

The preacher accepted this call—on a volunteer basis. Because the preacher's spouse was in graduate school, the preacher knew that in about two years (the time projected for the first class to complete the proposed training program), they would be making moves and changes. The presbytery would have two full years to see how this Lay Academy idea worked. If it was good, a new director could be found if the preacher moved on when the spouse finished school. And if it did not work, then the idea could be laid to rest without much difficulty.

It was a time of learning for all concerned: The first thing the preacher learned was that there were no resources to help with the development of a Lay Academy for the training of Commissioned Lay Preachers. Every presbytery doing this work was inventing its own wheel. This of course ran against all Presbyterian preferences—shouldn't somebody be creating committees, doing research, suggesting training models, doing something to help in this endeavor? For two years the preacher poked and pried and discovered no one was doing anything about this problem while the program was growing and changing and developing in that pastor's presbytery. The program flourished—there were more participants than anyone could have anticipated. Some of those participating were members of small churches and interested in being commissioned when they finished. Others were active in their churches or presbyteries and were seeking to fulfill a personal need for more in depth information, a more formal study course, a way to enhance what they were doing in the church and presbytery. Time went by, graduate school ended and the pastor moved shortly before the end of the first two-year cycle of training.

After two years, the preacher happened to return to that presbytery. Now God works in mysterious ways, and approximately two minutes after phone service was established in the preacher's new house, the phone rang— it was God again: "God is calling you to direct this Lay Academy again – the one who was serving as the director has accepted a new call."

The preacher tried the top 10 excuses—none of which worked, not even the one about, "You can't go home again." So that preacher returned to the Lay Academy work, and discovered that even with the passing of 24 or 26 months, no research, no resources, no training models, no nothing had been developed nationally by anybody. No one had even invented a conference, convention or national norm for things pertaining to Commissioned Lay Preachers! It was each presbytery for itself—no one really knew what anyone else was doing because it was too much trouble to track.

Eventually that cry was heard, and in the mid-1990's the National Ministries Division created a resource that was a compilation of the programs that had been received by the office. That was before the possible powers of CLPs—now called Commissioned Lay Pastors—were expanded. And that resource simply listed what various presbyteries were doing—usually with volunteer leadership working on limited time and with limited resources. When the preacher tried to read that resource, it was not always clear which presbytery was doing what. But we were still training CLPs.

By 1998 this preacher realized that training CLPs was a job unto itself—it was taking 30-40 hours or more of volunteer time each month. Once again the presbytery was challenged to reconsider how this was done. Shouldn't it be an intentional and validated ministry—part of a real call for a real person? Perhaps someone should actually be paid to direct the CLP program and take it new places. And shouldn't someone be doing research that needed to be done?

There was another who was ready to take the program to the next level—to begin organizing to seek grants for research and training and developing the program—and so the preacher passed the leadership on to the next generation. But people kept whispering, “You've been complaining for almost 10 years now, shouldn't you put your energy where your mouth is and take care of that complaint?”

The last two years have been my repentance for complaining for so long. What I offer here is the result of those months of research and probing—and still this work is but an incomplete beginning. The programs for training Commissioned Lay Pastors are as varied as our presbyteries, and modeled to work in each one. The people and the programs are constantly changing. Most presbyteries have programs headed by a volunteer director—and most programs end up taking up more of that volunteer's time than can be appreciated by the unsuspecting. And yet there are some constants as we have grown and understood these training programs and their purpose over the last 10-12 years.

My thanks go to those who encouraged me to spend the time on research and writing. It is a scary thing to move from pastoral ministry to working on a strange project like this—but it needed to be done. My thanks also go to Union Seminary in Virginia which awarded me a research fellowship that validated the need for this work. My thanks to those who helped me by sending information, inviting me to conferences and other events where CLP training happened or was discussed. And my thanks to James Richard who put up with his mother running away to Virginia for a week each month through the 1999-2000 school year to hibernate and do research and writing.

B. AN APOLOGY FOR LAY MINISTRY

When the Presbytery of New Covenant began the work of developing a training program for those who might seek to become commissioned lay ministers, the words of Paul in Ephesians were used in the purpose statement: “...to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service in order to build up the body of Christ...” (Eph. 4:12)

How many times since those early days have Ministers of the Word and Sacrament failed to see how the ministry of Commissioned Lay Pastors builds up the body of Christ because they will serve where they cannot or will not serve? How often have ministers failed to see the value of Commission Lay Pastors because they dismiss it as being “a back door to ordination” or “a way for wannabe preachers to move into the church without proper training?”

As we consider the training and work of Commissioned Lay Pastors in the church today, we are challenged to remember our calling. Seeking to serve as a Commissioned Lay Pastor is not to seek “back door to ordination.” It is to be commissioned to perform a specific ministry in a specific place and time. Let us remember our polity and our heritage, The **Book of Order** reminds us that the “purpose and pattern of leadership in the church in all its forms of ministry shall be understood not in terms of power, but service...” (G-14.0103). Presbyterians do not ordain people into a hierarchy, but into a service. In our tradition, commissioning is to a specific work. (When we commission fraternal workers—both Ministers of the Word and those with special medical, agricultural, teaching, or other skills—we commission them to a specific work in a specific place for a specific time period. When we commission Lay Pastors, we commission ordained elders to a specific work in a specific place for a specific time period.)

As I have worked with this research and writing project, it has become clear to me that those presbyteries which are clear on the concept of Commissioned Lay Pastors being called to a specific work and calling—a three way process validated by the called person, the presbytery and the calling institution - the concept of lay pastors works. It has become clear that those presbyteries that see what happens in CLP training as a way of broadening ministry and mission, there has been an enormous benefit. Over and over I have heard from people who have gone through CLP training, not sure that they were called to preach, but sure they were called to increase their knowledge in the way this training could. Presbyteries have commented how one of the benefits of CLP training has been an enlarged cadre of well-trained elders more willing to accept leadership positions in presbytery, synod or general assembly, because of the training they have received.

We are not commissioning people as lay pastors to sneak into churches where ordained pastors have a right to go. We are training people to broaden the work we do—in small churches, in medium sized churches, and in large churches. We are training people to serve in rural and urban areas, for prison ministry, for college and hospital chaplaincy programs, for new and creative leadership all through our denomination. I have asked the same questions as many others have. I have wondered what in the world we are doing, how are we changing our church, and what will it mean for our future? I do not know the full answers to such questions. I sat in a recent presbytery meeting and considered the number of elders active in presbytery (most not commissioned as lay pastors) that had passed through our Lay Academy in the last 10 years. As elder after elder got up to make reports for committees, to help lead the worship service, who spoke of ministry and mission where their congregations are involved, I thought how we had stumbled into a good thing with the Lay Academy—for so many had been a part of that experiment. As a result of the Lay Academy, much creative ministry and mission led by elders is being done—on a congregational as well as a presbytery level. Yes, we are changing the church.

Do we need to be careful about what we are doing? Should Ministers of the Word feel threatened by someone seeking to be a Commissioned Lay Pastor? Certainly churches and presbyteries must be careful. It is just as wrong to endorse someone for this training because it is easier to say “yes”, as it would be to endorse someone for seminary training because a session or a presbytery does not want to hurt a person’s feelings (and hopes someone or something else will “weed the person out” before the end). Yes, we need to be careful about what we do because there are those who may be irresponsible. Yes, we need to be careful, but this is true whenever a presbytery, a session, or a pastor nominates or endorses anyone for a specific task, ministry or calling in the church.

As we consider the contributions of Commissioned Lay Pastors in our denomination, let’s be aware of some first generation immigrants from Africa and other lands where lay people are necessary to lead the daily life of the church. The situation today is similar to biblical times when Paul would plant and others would water, but the daily life of the church belonged to the *laos*, the people. I think about Ernest who joined the church I served in southwest Houston. As he spoke to the session, he warned that he could not be there every Sunday as he was helping train leaders in an evangelical church of his people not far away. He was Presbyterian and it was important for him to be a member of a Presbyterian congregation, but he was an elder who had been trained to train lay pastors in his homeland and he had spent time training lay leaders for the church there. He knew this lay leader training was still part of his call as a Christian in this new land. He knew he was being called to help preach and teach and lead a new congregation until they were ready to be on their own. As that new first-generation church grew and was able to operate on its own because of his time and training of others there, Ernest’s participation in the Presbyterian Church became more and more regular. He has served on the session of that church in southwest Houston. He brings his neighbors into the church—changing the face of the Presbyterian congregation—and he follows the call to serve as an elder. As

presbyteries train and commission lay pastors, as we train people who seek the knowledge but not a commission, as we train people who want to serve in the church in many quiet ways, we are changing the face of the church, we are changing the ministry we are able to do, we are growing through the wisdom and the spirit of these elders called to serve—and it could revitalize our congregations and our presbyteries, in ways we might never expect.

C. THE TRAINING OF COMMISSIONED LAY PASTORS

1. AN HISTORICAL NOTE

The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America allowed for both Commissioned Church Workers and Lay Preachers. Commissioned Church Workers were generally people doing educational ministry, health ministries, lay people involved in mission service, etc. There was a candidacy process for Commissioned Church Workers similar to the candidacy process for those studying for ordained ministry.¹ At the same time, Lay Preachers were recognized more simply as qualified men and women who were granted a local commission once the presbytery had satisfied itself “concerning the piety of the applicant for it, his knowledge of the Bible, his ability to teach and preach, and the motives which influenced him to seek a commission.”² The lay pastor could receive a local commission, not to exceed three years in length (per commissioning) to teach and preach. Presiding over either of the sacraments was not permitted.

The Joint Committee on Presbyterian Union did not provide for either commissioned church workers, lay pastors or Commissioned Lay Pastors in the final edition of *The Plan for Reunion* (1981). The first article of agreement provided that “any existing relationship as lay preacher or commissioned church worker shall be undisturbed by the formation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), but only for so long as the individual holding such relationship continues that relationship to the same particular congregation.”³ This plan and the **1983-85 Book of Order** did provide that “persons called to perform special services in the church or in the world may be commissioned by the appropriate governing body of the church through a service of dedication.”⁴

By the 1984 General Assembly in Phoenix, Arizona, both the Presbytery of Yukon and the Presbytery of Geneva had submitted overtures seeking amendments to the new *Form of Government* to allow for commissioned lay preachers. After referral to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Assembly Committee on Professional Church workers, the proposed amendments to the constitution expanded the office of the lay preacher beyond what it had

¹*The Book of Order: The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 1958. Part II. Chapter XXIII: Of Commissioned Church Workers.* Philadelphia: The Office of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1958.

²*Ibid.* Chapter XXIV: *Of Lay Pastors*, paragraph 1.

³Joint Committee on Presbyterian Union, *The Plan for Reunion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. A. Articles of Agreement: 1 Continuity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) With the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.* Atlanta, New York: Joint Committee on Presbyterian Reunion, 1981.

⁴*The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II: Book of Order, 1983-83. Chapter XIV: Ordination.* New York, Atlanta: Offices of the General Assembly, 1981.

been in the United Presbyterian Church. Differences included the fact that the lay preacher would be a commissioned lay preacher; broad basic training was specified - candidates for commissioned lay preachers should be instructed in Bible, Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching and teaching. An examination process focusing on personal faith, motives and areas of instruction was also suggested. The commission granted to a lay pastor could be valid for up to 3 years and could be renewed. The commissioned lay preacher would be required to make an annual report to presbytery. Further, other chapters of the **Book of Order** would be amended to give presbyteries the authority to select, train, examine, and commission lay preachers as well as allowing presbytery to authorize lay preachers to administer the Lord's Supper.⁵

Proposed amendments that were subsequently enacted by the 197th General Assembly (1985) included an amendment allowing elders to preside at the Lord's Supper (for 162, against 18, abstain 1, total 181)⁶, and the amendments dealing with the reinstatement of the office of commissioned lay preachers (3 of the 4 amendments passed with a vote of 140 for, 40 against, abstaining 0, while the amendment concerned with allowing commissioned lay preachers to be authorized to administer the Lord's Supper passed with 139 affirmative votes, 40 negative votes and no abstentions.)⁷

Later the question would arise as to whether commissioned lay preachers who were not elders could be authorized to preside at the Lord's Table.⁸ In addition there would be other questions as presbyteries began to train commissioned lay preachers to work among their congregations: Could a person be a commissioned lay preacher while pursuing ordination? (This question became important in some first generation racial ethnic churches where there were no pastors/preachers who could preside at the Lord's Table and speak the language of the congregation.) Could a person be commissioned to be a lay preacher who was doing campus ministry or nursing home ministry or some other form of ministry not within a church? If they were commissioned, could they be granted permission to preside at the Lord's Table? Some of these questions were still unanswered, as lay preachers became Commissioned Lay Pastors (amendments from the 1995 General Assembly, enacted in 1996).

Prior to 1983, a lay preacher was commissioned only to preach. With the enactment of amendments to the **Book of Order** in 1997, presbyteries were empowered to authorize CLPs to preside at the Lord's Table and Baptisms, to moderate a session, to have a voice and vote at presbytery meetings (Commissioned Lay Pastors are counted as elders for the sake of parity), and the authority to perform a marriage.⁹ These are historic changes in the Presbyterian understanding of ministry and service.

A unique feature of Commissioned Lay Pastor ministry is that it is a specific ministry for a particular place at a particular time. The proliferation of training programs and the growing number of Commissioned Lay Pastors serving in various ministries in the church (as chaplains

⁵*Journal of the General Assembly: Minutes 196th General Assembly, 1984 (May 29-June 6, 1984; Phoenix Arizona), Part I. Advisory Committee on the Constitution (pages 592-594); and Assembly Committee on Professional Church Workers (pages 70-71).*

⁶*Journal of the General Assembly: Minutes 197th General Assembly, 1985, Part I. Assembly Committee on Policy, Office of the Stated Clerk, page 36.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸*Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Annotated Edition, 1991-92.* Louisville, Office of the Stated Clerk. Office of the General Assembly, 1991.

⁹*Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1997-98.* Louisville, Office of the General Assembly, 1997.

in hospitals, nursing homes, jails, campus ministry programs, etc.) is providing an opportunity to reconsider and redefine our reformed understanding of “call” and ministry. The early reformers considered whether ordination to the office of minister was necessary for those who taught or served as chaplains or were involved in other special forms of ministry. Previous controversies surrounding ordination and a calling to serve a small congregation led to the formation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. And so we are reviewing our understanding of ministry once again. The **Book of Order** reminds that the meaning of our calling is never static and is a gift enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit working among us is once again applicable:

...When women and men, by God’s providence and gracious gifts, are called by the church to undertake particular forms of ministry, the church shall help them to interpret their call and to be sensitive to the judgments and needs of others. As persons discover the forms of ministry to which they are called, and as they are called to new forms, they and the church shall pray for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit upon them and upon the mission of the church.¹⁰

2. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING CREATING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR COMMISSIONED LAY PASTORS

Presbyteries with successful training and deployment programs have discovered benefits beyond their original expectations for Commissioned Lay Pastors. In describing their original CLP training program, (1992-1994) Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys discovered that there was a lower than expected drop-out rate and that “the greatest benefit to the presbytery has been the pool of people available for committee work and pulpit supply.”¹¹ Other presbyteries echo this positive experience with their original training programs. In many instances, CLP programs have greatly expanded a presbytery’s ministry within its congregations and also provided unexpected blessings.

Most presbyteries have redefined and changed their Commissioned Lay Pastor training program as the role of Commissioned Lay Pastors has grown and changed through the 1990's. The flexibility of a CLP program in that it arises from each presbytery’s mission to our rapidly changing culture is a continuing asset to the PCUSA. Even though each presbytery decides how to train and deploy its CLPs there are some questions that should be considered as part of any training process.

- 1) What ministry/mission opportunities within our presbytery might Commissioned Lay Pastors perform?
- 2) What type of training would equip CLPs to fulfill our strategy for mission in local congregations?
- 3) Should we have different admission requirements for people interested in the training but who do not intend to become CLPs?
- 4) What will be the standards for admitting people into the training program? And who will be responsible for oversight of those in the program?
- 5) To whom will the participants in the training program be responsible?
- 6) What evaluation process do we need during and at the end of the training process and who will conduct it?

¹⁰*Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1999-2000. Chapter VI. The Church and Its Officers, G-6.0105.* Louisville, Office of the General Assembly, 1999.

¹¹ Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys. *Leadership Development for Ministry Program.* Undated, ca 1994.

When these questions have been answered, the presbytery is in a good position to plan the many details about organizing and implementing a Commissioned Lay Pastor program.

3. SOME BROAD GENERALITIES

Localized Training

The General Assembly has resisted requests to establish national standards for the training and commissioning of lay pastors. A presbytery's strategy for mission in a local church shapes its Commissioned Lay Pastor program. And, a presbytery's strategy for mission determines the training its CLPs need to "live out" that mission strategy. In the early days of Commissioned Lay Pastor programs, many presbyteries conducted their own training programs. Some presbyteries continue to conduct their own training program. Individual presbytery training provides several benefits including close fellowship of the other participants.

In 2003 we discover that there is a tremendous variety of training experiences available for potential CLPs. On-going regional training programs are growing in number. Mid-Kentucky, Ohio Valley and Western Kentucky Presbyteries have joined together for CLP training. Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary provides faculty and other resources. Classes meet on Friday evenings and all day on Saturday. Other Presbyterian Seminaries have formed similar partnerships with clusters of presbyteries within reasonable travel distance.

University of Dubuque Presbyterian Theological Seminary offers an online learning program to train lay pastors, candidates, and other lay leaders. The program has worked with students from fifty-seven presbyteries since its introduction in January 2001. The program presents the core courses required of Presbyterian CLPs (Commissioned Lay Pastors) in the Presbyterian Church (USA) **Book of Order**. The content for the most part, however, is basic to many mainline denominations. Persons from the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church have also participated in these classes. Information about this program is available at www.udtslearning.net.

Synod of the Sun, through the Small Church Task Group, offers two online courses at www.thesmallschurch.org or links from both the Synod of the Sun and the Presbytery of New Covenant web sites. These courses are especially appropriate for Commissioned Lay Pastors.

A Flexible 2-year Time- Frame

Most CLP training programs consist of a two-year study process. One strength of this process is that it represents a manageable commitment of time. Many programs have also discovered the advantage to being flexible about when students can enter and leave the program. When participants are permitted to enter the training program every three or six months and begin the cycle of courses from that point, the program can be ongoing, with people entering and exiting at different times. Some presbyteries have discovered it is not always possible for a participant to attend all sessions and complete the training program in two years, and so allowances have been made for participants to take an additional amount of time to complete the program. Again if the courses are cyclic, it makes it easier to plan when courses can be taken or repeated.

The two-year cycle needs to be understood as a broad theme with many variations. Some presbyteries have monthly training for 8-10 months of the year. This monthly training is typically Friday night/Saturday, using about 8-12 hours of classroom work. One advantage of focusing on a single course through the weekend is that it is often easier to recruit teachers or leaders for the course. Others will use Friday night for reviewing the previous course or offering interest topics for 2-3 hours (e.g. a pastoral care issue, General Assembly issues, spirituality interests, etc.) and have the longer course on Saturday. Other presbyteries using this model divide Saturday into 2 courses - one in the morning and one in the afternoon. An advantage to having two courses per weekend (begun one month and completed the next) is that

assignments can be made during one session and be completed for the next session. However, making up work missed is more difficult when two courses are active at the same time.

Some programs have retreat/study weekends in a camp or conference setting. One benefit of this model is being able to conduct more than one class. The retreats are usually scheduled once a quarter and the time between retreats is to be used for completing course assignments for preparing for the next course. Following through on assignments between retreats by the teacher or program manager is vitally important when the retreat model is used.

Most programs have realized the need to be flexible about the training people can receive from other programs and institutions. Some people come to Commissioned Lay Pastor training with some seminary experience—many presbyteries have theological schools within their boundaries which provide acceptable courses on church history, Bible, or other topics. It is also possible for people to take advantage of courses at other denominational institutions: Montreat, Ghost Ranch, Cook College, seminary extension courses, etc. Course work taken apart from what is available in the presbytery program, needs to be individually evaluated as to the way they fit into lay pastor training. The committee with oversight of the training program should develop clear guidelines concerning acceptable courses from outside their program.

Some presbyteries use a mentoring program to train Commissioned Lay Pastor candidates—or have it available as an option. This requires a commitment on the part of one or a few pastors to work closely with a CLP candidate. Most presbyteries say this is not the first choice for training, one reason being reduced support, fellowship, opportunity for growth and valuable discussions experienced in small group settings. However, those same presbyteries say that when they have used this option, it has worked well because those who commit themselves to mentor within this program are exceptionally motivated people.

4. CONTENT OF COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR TRAINING

Commissioned Lay Pastor training programs must follow the broad **Book of Order** guidelines, which says Commissioned Lay Pastors shall be “instructed in Bible, Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching” (G-14.0800). Most presbyteries require 80-120 hours of classroom work, additional reading and writing, preaching experience, support of session and/or pastor. The **Book of Order** also requires an examination before commissioning, but each presbytery determines the manner and form of that examination.

Sample courses are described in the SAMPLE CURRICULA section of Part Two in this Handbook. CLP training programs are rapidly changing and/or being developed. Persons are encouraged to look at the web sites of nearby synods and presbyteries. Other web sites of particular interest that should be visited frequently are, www.udtslearning.net, www.thsmallchurch.org and www.ruralministry.com

5. SACRED COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE WORK

There are variations on how best to oversee a CLP program. Volunteers oversee most programs. A strong board or committee that supports the person in charge of the program is important since oversight often requires 8 or more hours a week. The committee planning and administering the actual training program should be separate from the one that examines candidates—yet there needs to be good communication between the two. There should also be good communication within the presbytery in order to keep the whole presbytery informed about the training and the work of the Commissioned Lay Pastors. My personal observation has been that the more that is shared about the training and work of these people, the more trust and appreciation there is for Commissioned Lay Pastors—and the more useful they become to life

and ministry of the larger church.

Remembering that the coming of the kingdom will undoubtedly be hastened by the formation of more Presbyterian committees, the following functions need to be assigned to new or existing committees when establishing a Commissioned Lay Pastor training program:

1) Oversight of Candidates/Screening of Applicants: What group of people is going to be responsible for screening applicants and continuing participants in the program? What will be the standards for admission, continuing in the program, and graduation?

2) A Dean or Director: Who is going to be responsible for the details and arrangements that need to be made for running a training program? Whose name is going to appear as the one to answer questions about the program? Will this person be volunteer or paid? Will this person be present at all training events?

3) A CLP Board or Committee: Who is going to do the recruiting of leaders for the courses? Who is going to define the curriculum—the courses that need to be offered and what those courses need to cover? Who is going to communicate with the other committees that sponsor training events in the presbytery? Does there need to be a liaison with the Committee on Ministry? What other committees need to be kept informed?

4) A Commissioning Committee: What group in presbytery will be charged with the oversight of the examinations process, the commissioning process, the follow-up contacts with churches (or other ministries) and Commissioned Lay Pastors after commissioning? Will this be assigned to one or more committees or sub-committees of the COM or some other group in presbytery? What kind of communication needs to be established between these committees and the person/committee over-seeing the educational program?

6. A FINAL THOUGHT: HOW CAN SEMINARIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS BE INVOLVED?

Because the training of Commissioned Lay Pastors is still an evolving process, it provides a creative opportunity for the involvement of the denomination's seminaries, conference centers, and other institutions.

Probably the way the seminaries have been most directly involved in the past—and perhaps will remain involved in the future—is providing leaders for some of the courses offered by CLP training programs within a reasonable distance of the seminary. It will be interesting to observe the progress of the online training program developed by Dubuque seminary in conjunction with the Lilly Foundation grant to see if it offers a feasible alternative for people in remote areas.

Most presbyteries require CLPs take part in continuing education events. It would be helpful for presbyteries to provide seminaries with the names and addresses of CLPs (or for seminaries to request the names of CLPs) to add to their mailing lists of continuing education events and lecture series. Presbyteries could encourage CLPs to take advantage of national training opportunities offered at conference centers such as Montreat, Ghost Ranch, Cook College and Theological School, etc. Regional training could focus on continuing education at synod conference centers, synod school, special synod events for CLPs or small church conferences.

In those presbyteries where seminaries have extension courses, the committee dealing with the training of Commissioned Lay Pastors could make sure the names of CLP candidates are included on the mailing list of seminary extension information. In the larger cities of most presbyteries there are additional educational opportunities: Hospitals sometimes offer short-term CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) courses for pastors (and others) who are working full-time. One-day events and regional events by interfaith groups or other denominations may be useful to some CLP candidates (or CLPs seeking continuing education opportunities).

D. THOSE NAGGING QUESTIONS

This chapter started out as constitutional questions, but I am not an expert in the matter—and not all the questions are based in our constitution. Many of the following questions and answers—constitutionally based or not—rely on common sense. Some questions come up because not all people attending CLP programs are elders—some are church people who seek the in depth learning experience offered there for various reasons. I have run across one or two people participating in CLP training in hope their congregations will one day elect them to be elders and they intend to be ready. That’s when the person or committee in charge of admissions to the program needs to begin asking why the church endorsed this person. Some of these questions arise out of the experience of putting programs together on the run—things committees and presbyteries forgot to consider, things that worked well, things that have had to be revised to deal with reality. Some of the questions arise because committees rotate and change. At any rate, the following questions are ones I have heard repeatedly, ones people have said “Don’t forget to speak to…” as I have shared the fact that I have been doing this research.

The traditional disclaimer: Do not take these answers as official pronouncements. The cases that have been referred to the General Assembly level so far do not cover most of these questions! They are answers from Sugar Land, TX – not Louisville – and should be considered as such.

QUESTION 1: WHAT IF SOMEONE WHO IS NOT AN ELDER WANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR TRAINING?

The **Book of Order** says simply that “The Commissioned Lay Pastor is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service.” (G-14.0800a) The constitutional requirements for training are then listed. The **Book of Order** does not say that a person must be an elder to participate in the training programs the various presbyteries have set up. Most presbyteries have recognized that not everyone who participates in CLP training is seeking commissioning, so some have set up several “tracks” for people to follow depending on their needs. All that follows assumes that there is the possibility for having people in a CLP training program that may not be seeking commissioning at the end.

Hopefully your presbytery has an admissions process. Most presbyteries require participants in CLP training be endorsed by their church Session, and often the pastor or moderator as well. What is the reason the Session gives for endorsing a person who is not an elder? If there is a time in your admissions process for an interview, what is the applicant’s reason for wanting to be a part of your program? Most CLP applications do ask some form of the question: Why are you seeking this training? Pay attention to the answer, whether or not the person is an elder, and whether the answer is written out or given in response to an interview question.

If the person is not an elder, the presbytery committee needs to be blunt about the fact that the **Book of Order** does not provide for people who are not elders to become commissioned as lay pastors. This was settled by an amendment proposed in the 1997 General Assembly and ratified by the 1998 General Assembly after it passed the required number of presbyteries, and eliminated the conflict in the **Book of Order** where it appeared that presbyteries, in some circumstances, had the discretion (by a 3/4 vote) to commission a “Presbyterian Person” as a lay pastor.

There may well be good and legitimate reasons for people who are not elders seeking CLPs training. There is nothing in the **Book of Order** that prohibits someone who is not an elder from going through the training program. A few of the reasons follow:

1. Someone who is considering seminary as a second career may seek this training as part of their personal inquiry process. Many CLP programs mirror the type of courses seminaries offer, and this opportunity has given some people considering seminary a brief taste of theological training, and an idea about their academic skills in regard to this work.

2. Church musicians, church educators, church secretaries and others who are seeking accreditation in their fields have often found that the CLP courses meet the requirements of their accreditation program.

3. Members of larger churches who are not elders and may not desire to serve as elders or lay pastors but desire more information about the Presbyterian Church and its beliefs, theology, history, etc.

Sometimes a person who is not an elder may complete the entire CLP training program. Can you utilize them in any way? The presbytery will have an informed and undoubtedly motivated person who could be a valuable addition to any committee whose membership does not require the person to be an elder. With a note of extreme caution, sometimes this person could be used to preach—either in their own congregation or elsewhere. If this is allowed, though, be very careful not to make the CLP training an endorsement for people to offer their services preaching wherever they can (whether they are an elder or not). Presbyteries maintain lists of supply preachers, many broken down into people who are ministers, elders and other lay people. The permission to preach should be at the discretion of presbytery and the invitation of the church, not automatic at the end of CLP training, and certainly not at the volunteering of the person.

When I returned to New Covenant Presbytery and accepted a stated supply preaching call to do conflict resolution and redevelopment work, there was an elder who had told the congregation he was a graduate of the Lay Academy. In reality he had finished the training program but had never completed any of the requirements or testing that would have led to being certified as able to be commissioned. My arrival meant he had to change his story to say he had finished the course work. He had transferred to that church after completing the Lay Academy courses, so the session had no easy way to validate what he was saying. He was not under care or supervision of presbytery in any way. He was representing himself to some of the small churches as a Lay Academy Graduate and offering his services to preach. As an elder, he maintained he should be ready to preach in small churches without regular pulpit supply, and if he had friends in such churches who invited him to preach, and if he was not on the Session of his current church (he considered his accountability was to the church who endorsed him), and if presbytery had never told him he could not preach, he did not see he was doing anything wrong. For me the question became more critical to answer when I knew he had preached at a small (15-20 members) church on World Communion Sunday. He had volunteered to preach for them that day. When questioned, he was carefully elusive about whether the Lord's Supper had been part of that service and whether he had presided at the Lord's Table. We were clear with the elder about his responsibilities and accountability in his current church. By working with the small churches where he tended to volunteer concerning pulpit supply, as to who in presbytery was on the pulpit list and why they needed to stay with that list, we were able to work through the situation. These situations are the worry and nightmare of every presbytery and program contemplating CLP training and leads to the next question.

QUESTION 2: WHAT PROMISES HAVE YOU MADE?

What kind of literature do you have describing your CLP program? Do you have publicity material or information that you send to churches? What does it say? Read it carefully and re-read it, then give it to someone who knows nothing about the program to read and interpret for you. In these litigious days you want to be sure you are not making any promises, explicit or implicit, that you do not intend to keep.

As presbyteries were creating CLP programs in the early 1990's, many of us had three-fold brochures or other information that stated what a Commissioned Lay Pastor is, what a CLP could do, and asking if people felt called to this new opportunity that could benefit the church. Sometimes that material we created simply quoted the **Book of Order**, but some people read it to imply that when a person finished the CLP training process, the presbytery would place them. South Louisiana Presbytery went through the heartbreak of a law suit because an elder who completed the program felt he was entitled to preach and that presbytery had promised him CLP-type work in its material describing the program. Many dollars and many court sessions and many hard feelings later, the issue was resolved. Be as clear possible—go over it in class sessions, in admission processes, in testing processes, in everyplace you can that completing the course of study is not a guarantee of service, commissioning, or employment as a CLP.

A parallel can be drawn to seminary students—going to seminary and passing ordination exams does not guarantee a call. This is a time to talk about the meaning of calling and a call in the Presbyterian Church being a three way covenant—the person called, the organization doing the calling, and the presbytery—all must affirm the call. Sometimes people are recommended to CLP training by a particular church or pastor which a specific situation in mind—or a church may send an elder to training in order to have someone who is commissioned to serve communion because they have no regular preaching, etc. Still the guarantees should not be built in, you come, you pass, you are automatically commissioned to go to such and such. You come, you finished, you pass, we will certify you as a lay preacher and find you weekly preaching. Make sure the concept of calling is clear. Make sure people understand you are not agreeing to help them find placement (unless you are) or guaranteeing that once they finish they will automatically be employed as lay pastors, or even certified as ready to be commissioned.

Many of us began lay pastor training not sure how many would want to participate and what we were going to do with people when we were finished. New Covenant Presbytery began planning to do lay pastor training because we had one person serving a small Asian language church who was also attending seminary part-time in order to be ordained. There were a lot of questions—if he were commissioned as a lay pastor, could he preside at communion? (The answer was clearly “NO” according to the **Book of Order**.) How would CLP training affect seminary course work, etc.? We never expected 25-30 people becoming part of the training from all sizes of churches—very small, small, medium, large. We never expected people to have in mind so many possibilities when they finished. They could be commissioned for visiting and doing worship in nursing homes, doing campus ministry and various other non-congregational ministries. There were no precedents. Some people were not commissioned who expected to be. Feelings were hurt. Some of these people were commissioned later. It was not until the very end of the training that COM formed an ad hoc committee to care for all who had completed the training program. All of a sudden the COM needed requirements and guidelines for commissioning.

If your program is new or if you are considering/reconsidering establishing a program, think through what you might be asked to commission people to do: Campus ministry? Hospital chaplaincy programs? (Some hospitals offer additional training to the CLP training.) Jail chaplaincy programs? Serving in small churches? Some of the chaplaincy type programs come into question because the institutions involved want some kind of credentialing from the presbytery/church certifying that this person is recognized by presbytery, or has some kind of training by an official body, and that the person is accountable to some church governing body. Sometime people seek training through the Commissioned Lay Pastor courses because they need training or credentialing to continue a ministry they are already doing. All this leads to the next question.

QUESTION 3: WHAT POWERS SHOULD YOU GRANT TO THOSE WHO ARE COMMISSIONED? Consider again what the *Book of Order* says:

The Commissioned Lay Pastor is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service. This commission is valid only in one or more congregations, new church development, or other validated ministries designated by the presbytery. (G-14.0801a)

When a presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission in a local church requires it, and after additional instruction deemed necessary by the presbytery has been provided, a presbytery may authorize a Commissioned Lay Pastor to perform any or all of the following functions described in (1)-(6) below.

- (1) Administer the Lord's Supper.
- (2) Administer the Sacrament of Baptism.
- (3) Moderate the session of the congregation under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery.
- (4) Have a voice in meetings of presbytery.
- (5) Have a vote in meetings of the presbytery (such vote to be counted as an elder commissioner for purposes of parity).
- (6) Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state. (G-14.0801c)

An organizing pastor is a minister or Commissioned Lay Pastor appointed by the presbytery to serve as pastor to a group of people who are in the process of organizing a new Presbyterian church. (G-14.0513f)

In Presbytery of New Covenant, we formed an *ad hoc* committee to consolidate all the information and forms we had about Commissioned Lay Pastors. We created new forms to deal with the possible new functions that could be granted to Commissioned Lay Pastors. We made it an all inclusive form, believing we could send it to sessions and committees that were responsible for the annual review of various Commissioned Lay Pastors and have them check off the appropriate powers that should be granted. The responsible sessions and committees received our carefully devised forms, scanned them, checked off every box almost every single time and returned them to us. Then we had to get serious and talk about which powers were appropriate for Commissioned Lay Pastors serving in various capacities.

We now have Commissioned Lay Pastors commissioned to serve as the pastors of small churches, commissioned to do nursing home visitation and worship in medium sized churches, commissioned to do campus ministers in several colleges and universities, commissioned to serve as jail chaplains or hospital chaplains, people commissioned to special ministries within their own medium or large sized churches—evangelism, preaching and/or presiding at the Lord's Table when there have been worship services added or the pastor has been sick for a time, and many other circumstances. Do all these varied ministries need all the possible powers that can be granted to Commissioned Lay Pastors? **NO.**

My prejudice in ascertaining which powers ought to be granted CLPs serving in validated ministries that are not directly related to pastoral service to a local congregation would be to err on the side of a narrow interpretation. The reason for this would be the *Book of Order* statement that these are powers related to the strategy for mission in a local church. There is a difference between pastoral work done in a local congregation and pastoral work done in various chaplaincies and other specialized ministries. A variety of ministries, a variety of needs, sometimes means not all powers need to be granted all people.

In deciding which powers to grant, ask (1) what is the need in the particular ministry situation in which the CLP is involved; (2) what ways could that need be met; (3) if the various powers that **can** be granted **need** to be granted in order for the CLP to do effective work.

What follows below are some steps that seem to have been taken by most presbyteries dealing with CLPs in defining how they will grant specific powers to Commissioned Lay Pastors.

Step 1: Training New Covenant's committees dealing with Commissioned Lay Pastors in 1996-1997 decided that no one would be granted further powers (beyond the original commission to preach and possibly to preside at the Lord's Supper) without further course-work or training. This included people already commissioned as well as those in the training process at that time. Courses were added and/or expanded on the meaning of the Sacraments (baptism in particular), church administration/small group dynamics/running meetings; weddings and funerals, etc. As I scanned the courses available in other presbyteries, comparing courses described in the 1996 resource book and the courses described in 1999-2000, most other presbyteries had obviously changed their programs to include courses dealing with the expanded powers possible.

Step 2: Need to preside at the sacraments What is the person doing and what powers do they logically need? If we commission people to do chaplaincy type work (on the basis of a recommendation by a responsible committee with oversight for that person's work), do they need to be able to preside at the Sacraments of the Lord's Supper and/or Baptism? The answer may vary from situation to situation. The committee granting commissions and powers may decide it is appropriate to grant the authority to preside at either sacrament, at both—or neither. A committee would be well cautioned that if the need is not clear to them, they should go back to the session or committee responsible for oversight of the Commissioned Lay Pastor and ask why this CLP needs to be able to administer the sacraments. Simply because the opportunity is there does not necessarily constitute a valid reason for granting the authority to do something.

Step 3: Need for voice and/or vote at presbytery Do elders who are serving in various validated ministries (usually on a volunteer basis) such as nursing home visitation and worship, jail chaplaincy, college chaplaincy need to be granted automatic voice and vote in presbytery? Voice and vote is not necessarily a right that goes with commissioning.

Step 4: Authority to moderate a session Do all CLPs need permission/authority to moderate the session? If they are not serving in a congregational setting where they are the pastor, they should not need this authority. The **Book of Order** has other ways to grant an elder on time permission/authority to moderate a session meeting in the absence of the regular moderator.

Step 5: Need to be able to perform a marriage service Do all CLPs need the authority to perform a service of Christian marriage (when allowed by the state law)? **NO**. Does the committee charged with the oversight of granting this power know what their state law says on this matter? Has anybody thought about having a copy of the latest statute on the matter available as part of the information to the committee with this responsibility? Some states have very clear laws about who may or may not perform a marriage. Some states require that anyone who wants to be entitled to perform a marriage register with the state. **Some states have more general laws that recognize as an ordained minister anyone whom the church authorizes to perform a wedding ceremony.** Some states have common law marriage laws that say if a couple presents themselves as a married couple, they are so considered—even if no wedding has ever taken place or even if there was a wedding performed by someone not legally entitled to officiate at a wedding.

The authority to perform a service of Christian marriage is not a power to be granted without thought. If I were on a committee looking at this particular power today, I would go back to the **Book of Order** that talks about the strategy for mission in the local church. I know several people involved in campus ministry in several presbyteries who say they should be allowed to perform a service of Christian marriage, but campus ministry is not a congregational setting. There are also times when presbyteries have given permission for a Commissioned Lay Pastor to participate in a particular wedding ceremony while not granting that person a general right to preside at weddings. Remember that a commission and the accompanying authorizations are granted by the presbytery for a specific time and place of service.

QUESTION 4: CAN THE COMMISSION COME AND GO?

Yes it can. The *Book of Order* says:

An elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in a particular congregation may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions of a Commissioned Lay Pastor until appointed again to a particular congregation by the presbytery. (G-14.0801a)

Following are three examples of how this may work drawn from New Covenant Presbytery because I am most familiar with it and its actions. Similar cases may be found in most presbyteries.

EXAMPLE 1: A small racial ethnic church had several members and the pastor as translator attend the Lay Academy sessions. Several of the church elders completed the course work. One elder sought commissioning with the recommendation of both the pastor and the session (the pastor was involved in General Assembly level committee work and the Lay Academy experience was seen as a way some of the church elders would be prepared to lead worship and preach when he was not available). After the initial 6 month commission (New Covenant's first commissioning period is always 6 months to determine if this is the right course for the church and the CLP to be following), the pastor suggested that this elder was not yet ready to lead the congregation. His background of leadership came from an experience where leadership was by quiet example, and not through using active leadership skills. The pastor believed the elder needed to grow more in his willingness to lead the people from a position of authority. There was no questioning the elder's faith, call, or anything else. It was a question of different cultural perceptions of leadership. When that pastor left to accept a call from the General Assembly, he came back to the committee charged with commissioning lay pastors and reported that the elder had grown both in faith and leadership abilities and he strongly urged them to again commission the elder to lead the church as a Commissioned Lay Pastor who spoke the language of the church and could be entrusted to lead the church into the future, who should be authorized to preside at the Lord's Table. This was done, and when the powers that could be granted to a Commissioned Lay Pastors were expanded, this elder took the additional courses needed to be authorized to be able to baptize, perform a service of Christian marriage, etc. His face glowed at a committee meeting when he reported that it was going to be his privilege to participate in the baptism of his own grandchild. His commission has been renewed each year as he continues to provide leadership to that small congregation.

EXAMPLE 2: Another elder has been associated with several small churches as a Commissioned Lay Pastor, usually with specific duties: Sometimes to preach and preside at the Lord's table in a period when the church concerned is without a pastor—once when the pastor was sick for a long period; sometimes as a parish associate kind of person to visit shut-ins or other people. He has also served as a Commissioned Lay Pastor in campus ministry positions associated with some of the community college systems in the Houston area as well as one of the University of Houston campuses. Serving as a Commissioned Lay Pastor in these situations has enabled the churches and institutions involved to fulfill their mission strategies. Sometimes the commission he has received has been for less than a year. Sometimes he has actually been commissioned to serve two places at once (in a small church and in campus ministry), with different powers granted in the different places.

EXAMPLE 3: An elder who had been commissioned to preach and preside at the Lord's Table in a mid-sized, growing church where it was not possible for one pastor to be available at all the worship services was asked to chair the pulpit nominating committee when the church's pastor retired. He properly asked that his commission be discontinued when that happened. He remains on the presbytery list of people who could be commissioned again in the future.

The purpose of a commission is to enable the work of the church or institution to be accomplished. A Commissioned Lay Pastor may complete his/her work in a particular situation (or the situation may change), whether or not that time coincides with the end of the commission, and so an elder serving as a CLP may ask that the commission be suspended. Whether that person remains eligible to again be commissioned should be subject to guidelines worked out by the committee charged with oversight and review of Commissioned Lay Pastors.

QUESTION 5: HOW LONG SHOULD THE INITIAL COMMISSION BE?

The first answer comes from the *Book of Order*.

The commission shall be valid for a period up to three years, as determined by the presbytery. It may be renewed at expiration or terminated at any time at the discretion of the presbytery...A review of the work of the Commissioned Lay Pastor shall be conducted annually... (G-14.0801b)

Many presbyteries have a shorter initial commissioning as a kind of probation period for both the Commissioned Lay Pastor and the institution served. Some compare this to an internship undertaken by seminary students in the course of their seminary work—or following seminary by candidates who have not completed the candidacy period or who need to pass ordination exams. Sometimes this initial 6-month period allows the committee responsible for Commissioned Lay Pastors to review the CLP's work by asking, (1) What has the CLP learned; (2) would some continuing education dealing with the area he/she is working with be helpful; (3) how is it going (this asked of both the CLP and the institution served); (4) should this commission continue; (5) has the CLP learned things that the presbytery should include in its basic training program?

Following this initial commissioning, if all is going well, the commission is renewed for a longer period of time. This pattern fits in well with the established pattern for contract ministries that COM's already deal with in working with stated supply and interim contracts. In my presbytery people have accepted a yearly commissioning as the norm for Commissioned Lay Pastors because it is the only pattern we have followed for this unique ministry. The shortened period of time does make the *Book of Order* mandated roles of oversight and review easier. An annual review and renewal can allow a win/win situation if there are problems. All parties can look for ways to fulfill their obligations for the time remaining in the commission instead of allowing conflict to grow. (If there is a real conflict management situation, presbytery has the right and the responsibility to end the commission immediately.)

QUESTION 6: WHAT IS THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY'S INVOLVEMENT?

What does the *Book of Order* say about COM's involvement? Expand that to the presbytery's implied committee role and the following advice is given:

The elder shall be examined by the appropriate committee of presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction mentioned previously. (G-14.0801a)

The Commissioned Lay Pastor shall work under the supervision of the presbytery through the moderator of the session being served or through Committee on Ministry. (G-14.0801d)

The COM "shall counsel with sessions regarding stated supplies, interim pastors, interim co-pastors, interim associate pastors, and temporary supplies when a church is without a pastor, and it shall provide lists of pastors, Commissioned Lay Pastors, and qualified lay persons who have been trained and commissioned by the presbytery to supply vacant pulpits. Concurrence of the presbytery through its committee on ministry is required when a session invites an interim pastor, interim co-pastor or interim associate pastor as provided for in G-14.0513b and c." (G-11.0503f)

A temporary supply may be a minister, a candidate, a Commissioned Lay Pastor, or an elder secured by the session to conduct services when there is no pastor or the pastor is unable to perform pastoral duties. The session shall seek the counsel of presbytery through its Committee on Ministry before

securing a temporary supply. A temporary supply may not be called to be a pastor or associate pastor of a church served as temporary supply unless 6 months have elapsed since the end of the temporary supply relationship. (G-14.0513d)

How is the COM involved in the process of training, examining, commissioning, supervising and reviewing the work of Commissioned Lay Pastors? There is a lot of latitude here. The **Book of Order** does not assign the training process to the COM or any other named presbytery committee. It says only that the appropriate committee of presbytery shall examine them. The COM has responsibility of maintaining lists of CLPs eligible to serve in churches, and supervising the work of CLPs (which could also be assigned to a mentoring pastor).

The COMs will vary from presbytery to presbytery as geography, the urban/rural mix, the number of Commissioned Lay Pastors, etc. all make a difference. What follows are few answers but many of the questions presbyteries with established Commissioned Lay Pastor programs have had to work through:

- 1) How many committees does your presbytery have working on the details concerned with the training, commissioning and oversight of Commissioned Lay Pastors, and how do they communicate?
- 2) Many presbyteries in beginning Commissioned Lay Pastor programs (or in restarting them) end with some type of committee that is in charge of the training program. What does this committee communicate to whatever committee examines and commissions CLPs? Are there liaisons between committees?
- 3) Some presbytery COMs have decided that CLPs deserve a sub-committee all to themselves because of the amount of work that is involved in training, supervising, advising, commissioning, etc. What should that subcommittee do? Should it oversee the entire process from accepting those who enter the program to examining, commissioning and overseeing those who finish the training?
- 4) Does your presbytery have a candidacy process for Commissioned Lay Pastor candidates? Is it through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry or through some other entity? Who examines these candidates? The committee charged with oversight of the training? A committee charged with a candidacy process? The Committee on Ministry? If more than one committee or group is involved, what is the communication between the committees/groups?

There are many models that work well in our various presbyteries. In some a Lay Academy type committee is in charge of the application process, the admission process, and the training program while another group is in charge of the examinations process (the examination sub-committee of the COM), and yet another on the actual commissioning/call, review and oversight. In other places one group of people is assigned the oversight of the whole process and works as a subcommittee of the COM. The important common factor seems to be that there be good communication of expectations among all the committees/groups involved with the training and commissioning of lay pastors.

QUESTION 7: WHAT IS YOUR APPLICATION PROCESS?

Many of the lay pastor training programs have been developed on the run. More than one has had an application that described a process that never happened in reality. Applicants were asked to fill out forms, have their session endorse them and fill out a form, have their pastor (or moderator of their session) endorse them and fill out a recommendation, and then all this was to be forwarded to the proper committee or the dean of the training program for review. And in the early days that's where the process sometimes broke down—the dean of the training program became the admissions committee. In creating an application form and process, each program needs to establish candidacy or oversight procedures for those in the Commissioned Lay Pastor training program. The process may be formal with each person coming before a committee (a lay pastor committee or the Committee on Preparation for Ministry) and entering a

candidacy process with reports and a mentor, etc. Or it may be an informal process—perhaps the person heading the training program also takes care of the admissions process and the sponsoring churches are put in charge of the candidacy process for any candidate they endorse. Perhaps it is something in between. **What is important is that the process you outline in your application information is the process you follow.** If the process changes, people need to know why, how and how it affects them.

QUESTION 8: HOW DO YOU DETERMINE WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE LEARNED DURING THE COURSE?

Sometimes in getting training programs up and running, there are so many details (applications, eligibility, schedules, sites, leaders, and more) that evaluation or accountability for the classes is overlooked. How the program is structured greatly affects the evaluation process. In programs that meet for an initial class time, have a space of time for reading and assignments (and perhaps small group discussion with other people in the program on a local basis), and then come together for a second class time, there is the opportunity to assign specific work to be done and handed in.

In programs that meet and have a 6-8 hour class that includes lecture and discussion time, readings are often assigned before the class, but whatever assignment/evaluation comes out of that class must be done without another full class session to review it. In programs that meet in a retreat setting several times a year—3 or 4 or even 6 months apart—and have several intensive courses over a weekend period, readings and assignments can be made prior to the classes, but follow-up evaluation is often on an independent study or project basis.

Because Commissioned Lay Pastor programs are dealing with busy, but motivated adults, many forms of evaluation will work. And a mixture of evaluative instruments—papers, tests, projects, sermons—are appropriate. Some examples follow:

1. **Objective tests** to cover Bible and Polity (possibly use old ordination exams in polity or Bible content exams that are made available to seminary students to study)
2. **Research papers** for English exegesis, theology and history
3. **Projects** carried out in the church to include Christian Education, pastoral care, sacraments, even history and theology:
 - a) A project that involves teaching a class where the project report includes a course outline, material prepared for the class sessions, an evaluation of the class, what went well, what the participant would change next time
 - b) A project that involves learning pastoral care skills—many hospitals (small and large) will offer limited time courses (and less intensive than CPE courses) on visitation for pastors
 - c) A project that involves planning and leading a retreat
 - d) A project that plans a special program for Advent or Lent (a one-day program or a series of Bible Studies, informal worship services, etc.)
4. **Sermons** on assigned texts where the exegetical work is shared, the sermon typed and shared, the sermon preached and critiqued
5. **Time lines** to show the flow of the Old or New Testament, church history, reformed history, etc.
6. **Small group discussions** in a follow up time, either at the next gathering or carried on with a local pastor/discussion leader in a central place where some of the participants come together
7. **Allowing the leader of the course to make an assignment** to the members of the class—and having that leader be responsible for grading that assignment as part of his/her teaching role
8. In addition to any other evaluations or examinations, some programs have suggested a **final integrating project or paper** asking the participant to integrate the knowledge gained in the training process, especially as it relates to some aspect of the work he/she might be doing as a

result (whether as a Commissioned Lay Pastor, educator, lay preacher who does not seek to be commissioned, member or a presbytery committee, etc.)

QUESTION 9: WHAT IS YOUR EXAM PROCESS?

The idea of a national set of examination materials has been debated on various levels over the last ten years. It came before the 212th (2000) General Assembly in the form of an overture (00-81) from Presbytery of Yellowstone which sought to require Commissioned Lay Pastors be tested by the same types of standardized examinations as those given to Ministers of the Word and Sacrament. The Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry disapproved the overture.

The motion to require that CLPs be tested by standardized exams was then presented as a substitute motion on the floor of the General Assembly by the commissioner from the Presbytery of Yellowstone. He argued that standardized exams would “ensure the highest quality possible” for CLPs who can be authorized “to do everything that Ministers of the Word and Sacrament do.” After debate, the substitute motion requiring standardized CLPS exams was defeated by the General Assembly 409 to 75, and the main motion (to disapprove the overture requiring the exams) was passed by a vote of 425 to 63.¹²

The **Book of Order** does not set forth an examinations process for Commissioned Lay Pastors beyond saying: “The elder shall be examined by the appropriate committee of presbytery as the personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction mentioned previously.” (G-14.0801a)

In general, presbyteries training Commissioned Lay Pastors have devised their own examinations processes that cover both the areas of study mandated by the **Book of Order** as well as the additional courses each presbytery may require to meet its own circumstances. The depth and formality of the examinations process depends to some extent on the work required from participants in the course work: Some presbyteries which require examinations and/or papers from each course taken may have an examination process that spends more effort on oral exams than on written work. Others rely on a process that combines recommendations from teachers, pastors and others who know the candidate, as well as their oral and written examinations. Some presbyteries which are still in the process of developing/redeveloping their programs have simply said they will leave it up to established committees—the committee dealing with training CLPs, the Committee on Ministry and/or the Committee on Preparation for Ministry—to work out the examinations process (which may vary candidate to candidate depending on circumstances).

Since a commission is a local commission and is not automatically transferable to another presbytery, it makes good sense that the responsibility for examination remain within the presbyteries. Because training programs vary greatly—depending on the geographic size, population, and the nature of the presbyteries doing the training—there are no national standards for training. Most CLP training is done with a view of the practical realities that exist in a presbytery and what training is needful in specific ministry situations in order to further the mission of the congregation/institution the CLP serves. Most examinations of CLPs are practical in nature—more so than the examination of ministers.

Right now if a person who has been trained as a CLP in one presbytery moves to another presbytery and desires to serve as a CLP in the new presbytery, he/she would need to go through the appropriate committee dealing with CLP training, prove what training has been done, perhaps receive additional training and be re-examined according to the standards of the new presbytery. Remember, a minister who moves from one presbytery to another is also re-examined by the proper committee of the new presbytery.

¹² Emily Enders Odom, “GA000146 Standardized exams not to be required for Commissioned Lay Pastors” in **NEWS BRIEFS – Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**; Issue No. 19, July 14, 2000, pages 14-15.

Each presbytery does establish its own examination process. This question is included as a reminder that a presbytery establishing a CLP program should establish its examination process prior to the beginning of the program. Review of several examinations processes reveals certain basic components of an examination process in addition to those areas required by the **Book of Order**. They are:

- A brief autobiography
- A Statement of Faith
- An Old Testament Exegesis Paper
- A New Testament Exegesis Paper
- A sermon the CLP has preached.

QUESTION 10: WHAT ARE YOUR CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS?

The need for continuing education by lay pastors is just as important as it is for ministers. Usually either the committee that is responsible for the training program or the committee in charge of the commissioning and annual review process is responsible for keeping up with the continuing education being done by CLPs. How does the presbytery ask for accountability for continuing education? Are your requirements for continuing education for CLPs clear? How flexible are those requirements? A person serving as the lay pastor of a small congregation might seek different continuing education courses than a person who is serving as a jail chaplain or in a campus ministry position. Does the cycle of courses offered in your lay pastor training include some elective courses that change in content and could be used for continuing education? (This allows for interaction between people serving as CLPs and people training to possibly serve as CLPs.) What opportunities lie within the presbytery (church officer training, an annual training event or leadership school, etc.)? What opportunities are provided in the synod (interim pastor training, conflict management training, synod school)? What opportunities are available from colleges, seminaries, hospitals, conference centers, etc.? Do you ask that people who do not have an active commission continue to take continuing education courses or to take some kind of review before re-activating a commission if a year or more has passed since that person has served as a CLP?

QUESTION 11: WHAT RECOGNITION DO YOU HAVE OF GRADUATES OF YOUR PROGRAM?

The guidance from the **Book of Order** comes in the form of the questions to be asked by the presbytery when it is satisfied regarding the qualifications of the applicant (G-14.0801c.) So where are these questions asked of the candidate? At a presbytery meeting? At the applicant's home church in the presence of the congregation, pastor and session that endorsed the applicant and supported him/her through the training process? At an installation service in the church or institution that is to be served? If you are a presbytery that has been training Commissioned Lay Pastors for a while, you've probably established a satisfactory procedure.

Some presbyteries recognize those who have completed the training by presenting a certificate of completion at a presbytery meeting regardless of whether that person seeks to serve as a Commissioned Lay Pastor. Some presbyteries will have a commissioning service for lay pastors being commissioned for the first time at a presbytery meeting. This time is often similar to the welcoming of those being accepted as candidates by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry where the members of the candidate's congregation and other support groups are asked to stand with the candidate, the constitutional questions are asked, a brief charge is made, and a prayer offered. Some presbyteries conduct a service at a presbytery meeting and in the congregation being served (or perhaps in the home congregation if the person is being commissioned for chaplaincy work in a hospital, jail, nursing home, etc.)

QUESTION 12: WILL YOU ACCEPT PEOPLE TRAINED BY OTHER PRESBYTERIES OR DENOMINATIONS?

I received a call in New Covenant about a woman who had been a communicant in the Presbyterian Church, had married a Lutheran, moved away from Texas and had now returned to a small town in Texas with no Lutheran Church. She had gone through the Lutheran Church's lay pastor training program, and upon joining and becoming active in the Presbyterian church in that small town wondered if she might use the training she had already received to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor in the Presbyterian Church.

Not too many months later I received another call from a woman who was a Presbyterian seminary student—or had been until she moved outside Houston with her husband who was completing medical training. She had been in contact with the Committee on Ministry and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and was calling me to ask about the possibilities of serving as a Commissioned Lay Pastor as she did not intend to immediately return to seminary or take advantage of Austin Seminary's extension program in Houston

Another aspect of this issue of deciding about commissioning people not trained by the presbytery—or trained by other denominations was raised by Scioto Valley Presbytery in 1998 with several questions presented to the Stated Clerk and the 210th (1998) General Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry for clarification.

Can a Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) of another denomination, over whom we have no jurisdiction, be granted the same rights and powers that the presbytery has the option of granting CLPs from within our denomination? No. The Constitution (g-14.0800 and following) defines Commissioned Lay Pastors as elders who have received a local commission from a presbytery. There is no provision for according permission for lay persons commissioned by other denominations to administer the sacraments, perform weddings, or moderate a session. However, in federated churches represented by more than one denomination, a plan of federation "...shall follow provisions of G-16.000 as clearly as is practicable, and it shall be subject to the constitutions (disciplines or other organic documents) of each church involved" (G-15.02004b)¹³

A presbytery is not required to accept the training offered by another presbytery for Commissioned Lay Pastors. Nor can a person who is not under the discipline and jurisdiction of our denomination be granted permission to serve as a Commissioned Lay Pastor or be granted any of the powers of Commissioned Lay Pastors in a Presbyterian congregation.

It seems that if a person who has been trained by another presbytery moves to a new presbytery and feels called to serve as a Commissioned Lay Pastor in that new presbytery, it is proper for that person to follow the new presbytery's requirements for commissioning. Many programs are flexible enough to recognize some, perhaps most, of the training of another presbytery, but there should be every expectation that evidence about that training be produced. Many presbyteries have specific courses or requirements for those who wish to serve as Commissioned Lay Pastors, and since the commission is a local commission, a person moving from one presbytery to another and wishing to serve as a CLP should be willing to fulfill the requirements and additional training that may be imposed by the new presbytery.

A person who has been trained as a lay pastor in another denomination and joins a Presbyterian Church may very well plead that he/she has had extensive training in that other denomination. If that person is a member of a union congregation (Presbyterian/Methodist; Presbyterian/United Church of Christ, etc.), or becomes a member of a Presbyterian

¹³ From 1998 General Assembly Minutes – Request for interpretation from Scioto Valley (Request 98-4 to the Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry) Committee Moderator: Rev. Carol McDonald; Vice Moderator: Elder Robert Gee; 16.0201-16.0203.

congregation ***and is an elder***, and the presbytery's committee dealing with Commissioned Lay Pastors is convinced that most of the training has been adequate in most areas, they may choose to ask for additional training before examining that person and making a decision about whether or not to commission him/her. Remember that in the case of union or federated congregations where more than one denomination's constitution must be followed, whichever one is more conservative or restrictive is the one that must be respected. Thus, even in a federated or union congregation, a person cannot be commissioned if he/she is not an elder and under the discipline and jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church.

QUESTION 13: WILL YOU OPEN YOUR CLASSES TO PEOPLE FROM OTHER PRESBYTERIES?

This issue may arise with a call from another presbytery office, the synod office, or an individual in another presbytery. It is a question that should be considered by those responsible for a presbytery lay pastor training program—preferably before it arises.

Sometimes this question arises from practical considerations: Some of our presbyteries cover huge geographic areas, and the training for Commissioned Lay Pastors in a neighboring presbytery may actually be closer than the training available in that person's own presbytery. Sometimes if presbyteries share what they are doing in CLP training (through synod's leadership/education/small church or other appropriate committee), there may be candidates or Commissioned Lay Pastors from another presbytery in the synod who would like to participate in one or more of another presbytery's courses because of the nature of the course(s) offered. Sometimes a person is interested in the training and is willing to travel back and forth from their home presbytery because that presbytery does not offer any training.

This is another area where there are no hard and fast answers—some presbyteries do open their programs to people from neighboring presbyteries (which have no programs of their own), and the involved presbyteries have worked out the necessary lines of communication, endorsements and accountability as they do this.¹⁴ Other presbyteries discourage people crossing presbytery lines for lay pastor training and choose not to get involved with anyone who is not from their own presbytery. And still others will allow elders from neighboring presbyteries to join in some of their courses when the reasons seem valid and there is some kind of endorsement/approval/communication with both the person's church and the other presbytery involved.

The rapid development of online courses makes the opportunities for training apart from individual presbytery programs more likely. Remembering that Commissioned Lay Pastors receive a local commission with their local presbytery which is responsible for the oversight of their training—and that an elder's accountability is within his/her session and presbytery, care does need to be taken to assure this person is seeking the class and/or training with the appropriate approval and endorsement of the church and presbytery.

QUESTION 14: ARE THERE ANY WORKING MODELS OF CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS?

In collecting information for this project, I read some wonderful proposals for several joint training programs. Developed cooperatively by a cluster of presbyteries or a synod, these programs were exciting to read about. None of them ever developed because when it came to attracting participants, the logistics and lack of flexibility of the programs seemed to doom them. That was a surprising development. I asked for the reasons why these programs did not seem

¹⁴ Northern and Southern Kansas Presbyteries have a cooperative training program; Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys' program also served three of its neighboring presbyteries when it began in 1992-93; "South Carolina Presbyteries" participate in a Lay School of Theology (information about the Spring 1999 Session shows the training to be at White Oak Conference Center). Presbytery of the Peaks reports they have one of the few CLP training programs in their area, and are often asked to accept candidates from neighboring presbyteries.

to work. It seemed logical to me to initiate some regular joint training in this synod. But, it also seemed unwise to invest time and money and energy in such an exercise if it had met with failure everywhere else it had been attempted. Repeatedly the answer came back that people cited the need for small cohesive groups from their own presbyteries—people sharing common concerns, geography, presbytery realities and identities as the main reason training does not seem to work long-term on a regional level (though in some places, as noted above, cooperation and joint training with one or more neighboring presbyteries has been successful). However, cooperative efforts between presbyteries and the continued development of online courses are becoming quite successful. Synods, conference centers, educational institutions are conducting continuing education courses, weekend seminars, and other options that would be helpful to those in training programs or seeking continuing education.

QUESTION 15: HOW MANY OPTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR TRAINING?

This question is actually touched upon in several of the other questions considered in this list. Rather than spend a great deal of time discussing it, consider some of the options offered by the various presbyteries (edited to make the options to make this list as parallel as possible in structure):

I am applying for the Commissioned Lay Pastor Program

I am applying for the Certified Pulpit Supply Program

I am applying for the Lay Studies Track

I am applying for the Educator Track

I am applying for personal enrichment purposes

I am applying to audit certain courses

I am applying to take courses for certification (as Director of Christian Education; as Office Administrator, as Church Musician, etc.)

QUESTION 16: WHAT ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN RACIAL/ETHNIC CONGREGATIONS?

In several of the General Assembly debates—and I am sure on the floor of more than one presbytery—the argument has been made by seminarians and ministers of the Word and Sacrament that they struggled to make it through seminary and pass ordination exams so they could serve the church, and to allow CLPs to serve the small racial ethnic congregations they feel called, is to dishonor what they have accomplished. Others have argued that to “foist off” CLPs on small racial ethnic congregations is to dishonor them. Sometimes small churches feel that they have to take whatever person is willing to serve them and are being asked to consider a CLP because a “real” minister is not available.

Perhaps this is the wrong attitude to take when considering leadership for small racial/ethnic churches or in considering leadership for small churches, no matter what their make-up. When was the last time the mission and ministry and purpose of the church considered? What is the future story of this church and how can the congregation live into that future? Where are the creative thinkers working with small and redeveloping congregation who are willing to work out future mission and ministry and purpose with the available resources of money, people, grants, etc. Perhaps this challenge is an opportunity, and not a put down—either of the congregation or those who have struggled to be ordained Ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Leadership in small congregations—no matter what the racial/ethnic make-up—is different from leadership in larger congregations, and needs to be taken into account in lay pastor training—sometimes we need to rely on common sense and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in doing what will build up congregations.

I have already spoken of the Lao congregation that was served by an ordained pastor and is now being led by a Commissioned Lay Pastor. This has proven to be an opportunity for that congregation to develop its leaders. There are other examples from this presbytery of small racial/ethnic churches seeing CLP leadership as an opportunity in times of change.

EXAMPLE 1: It became clear at one of our training weekends that, while we Ministers of the Word and Sacrament may feel threatened, there are potential Commissioned Lay Pastors who covet our calls. Most of those who have been trained and commissioned are much more focused and realistic concerning what they are about. We have in our presbytery a small African American congregation (now served by a designated pastor), that during their long pastoral search was having trouble securing pulpit supply and having communion on a regular basis (temporary or stated supply options were not a financial option). They approached the presbytery asking if one or two of their elders could be trained and authorized to serve communion according to the provisions of the **Book of Order** (G-6.0304; G-11.0103z and W3.3617d and e). Eventually the request made its way to the committee charged with Commissioned Lay Pastor training and I was asked if we could allow those elders to come to the next courses planned on worship and the sacraments.

That congregation had three strong women elders who had completed the full program of training for Commissioned Lay Pastors, and one of those had been commissioned as a lay pastor doing campus ministry. I made a few phone calls to see why the request was being made when there were already elders from that congregation who could be commissioned for the purpose of presiding at communion. I called the woman who had actually been commissioned, and was told very clearly that she did not feel called to preach—that was not her strength in ministry—and if she did not feel called to preach, she did not feel she should be presiding at the communion table since preaching and the sacrament had to go together. However, she continued, there were elders currently on the session who would often preach, and who also led Sunday School and who, therefore, should also be presiding at the Lord's Table as part of their leadership of the church. I took this word back to the appropriate committees and we went on from there.

The two elders from that congregation came to the next Lay Academy weekend, which happened to deal with baptism and communion. Presbytery had said these two elders could be authorized to serve communion if they took that course and several others that were coming up in the course rotation. The elders had last names that were familiar to me—they were the husbands of two of the women who had completed the Lay Academy. And they let me know that no matter what the presbytery had said about authorizing them to serve communion after taking certain courses, if they intended to preach and serve communion in their congregation, their wives expected them to complete the entire Lay Academy rotation of courses so they would be properly trained in church leadership for the times in the future their church might need to draw on them and their skills. The wives maintained they had successfully mastered the two year course work and requirements of the Lay Academy and they expected their husbands to do no less. As I handed them the proper forms, I could hear generations of students talking about how rough things had been when they were in school and how easy students have it now. I could hear the debate assertions: "I spent/sacrificed three years of my life to get through seminary and be ordained, why should they have the same opportunity without the hard work and training..." I could hear the concerns about lay pastors being wannabe preachers. I could appreciate a congregation that was serious enough about its work and worship and mission and purpose that they were willing to require of themselves and their elders the fullest possible training when it came to internal leadership and leadership development for times when they might be without a pastor. Note: I completed my work with the Lay Academy at the end of that year (1998) and do not believe these two elders completed the entire rotation of Lay Academy classes as the church was able to call the designated pastor and make use of some redevelopment grants and funding within a few months of this event. However, the intention of the church was and is clear—those who have been trained there as Commissioned Lay Pastors are going to work according to the call they feel, and they will ask others to show the same commitment in the future if they need to raise up worship leaders from among themselves for a

period of time. They see this call/commission as being for a specific purpose, time, and reason, and for the strengthening of the church.

EXAMPLE 2: We have a strong Native American congregation outside Livingston, Texas. It is a small, rural church that provides many leaders for our presbytery. When they have had installed pastors in recent years, those have been part-time, tent-making situations. And the search for a pastor willing and able to serve in that creative situation takes time. This congregation also decided it would be well to have within its membership at least one elder trained in the Lay Academy. As an active congregation in the presbytery they knew this would benefit both the church and the person and probably the presbytery too as they assumed the person receiving training would be active in presbytery. I was asked to come and speak to the congregation about the Lay Academy one Sunday during their evening worship service. They asked a man who had grown up in that church, who had been recently elected chief and newly elected an elder, to attend the Lay Academy. He filled out the applications, the session and moderator of the session endorsed him and he began attending faithfully every training weekend. And his wife came each time too, though she had not applied to be a part of the training program.

Now what do you do? Flexibility has long been the strength of most of the lay pastor training programs I know of—the flexibility to do what is right in a particular situation even if it does not quite fit into the rules. Sometimes exceptions need to be made to the rules, with those allowing a situation making it clear as you do that you are not necessarily setting an allowable precedent, you are recognizing a particular exception to your own rules and standards. Two former pastors of that congregation asked me if she were attending. Their assumption was that she was, and it was the right thing to happen, even if she attended the entire rotation of courses and never filled out any of the proper forms and paperwork.

What was at stake had nothing to do with the Lay Academy itself. It was a cultural and comfort thing—if we wanted one person from that congregation to participate in the Lay Academy, we needed to be prepared for a second person to come, even if only one enrolled in the program. What was important was the company on the drive into the training, the support during the training, the comfort of knowing there was always another person present who was a friend and companion. Both the husband and wife are elders—the wife had been an elder in the church for many years. She would listen and sometimes participate in the class. Mostly she just enjoyed being with us and receiving the blessing of being allowed to be part of us. We enjoyed and profited from the contributions she made—we enjoyed her company and fellowship during meal times and free times. She has no desire to be commissioned as a lay pastor in her congregation—she came to be the support and the companion. She is a leader in her own right in her church and on presbytery committees—her support role in coming to the Lay Academy every month was for the benefit of her husband as he came to the training to make it possible for the church to have the option of lay pastoral leadership during the times between pastors.

Note: This is not a male/female thing or a husband/wife thing or a liberation/chauvinist thing. This is a support thing. If a woman elder with a husband had been asked/chosen by that congregation to attend the Lay Academy, her husband would have come with her each weekend. If a single elder, male or female, had been the one asked, that elder, would probably have brought someone with him/her each time. In the beginning of the Lay Academy, when we thought we would be dealing almost entirely with small racial/ethnic congregations, we actively encouraged those congregations to send two or three or more people (even if those coming were not all elders, even if those coming did not desire to become Commissioned Lay Pastors, even if those coming came only to translate, even if those coming came to support those who were there for “real” training), because it seemed this would be a help, a support, and an encouragement for all involved—both those attending the training, and those leading the training.

QUESTION 17: WHAT ABOUT NEW CHURCH POSSIBILITIES?

In answering this question, consider first generation churches—people new to this country and perhaps new to the Presbyterian Church, though some have reformed backgrounds. These are people who bring with them the ways of their homelands—the culture, the language, the songs, the dress, and so on.

New Covenant is a presbytery that is rich in varied cultures and first generation immigrants. Some of these people come from places where the Presbyterian Church has a long history of mission/fraternal work—Asian and African nations, Central and South American countries, each group clustering together to preserve language and culture important to them and to their children. Some come from places where they know the Catholic church and the Pentecostal church and are looking for a way to worship that is neither Catholic nor Pentecostal and are open to the worship and theology of the Presbyterian Church. Where are we to find leaders for first generation churches whose primary language is not English?

Sometimes there are among the people in a fellowship/Bible Study/small new church development those who have received formal seminary training or lay leader training in their native land. This is not always clear because of language difficulties. In most of these congregation/fellowships there are those who are willing to be trained to help lead the people. Though many of these potential leaders may work more than one job to support their family, they also express a willingness to commit to the training needed to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor in the Presbyterian Church so they can serve their people and develop a new congregation.

In presbyteries where the need for native language speaking church leaders far outpaces the availability of seminary trained leaders, an accelerated program for Commissioned Lay Pastor training and intensive continuing education after the initial training period may be an option (and an opportunity) for evangelism and growth. It is an option that requires imagination and flexibility within the presbytery. It is a cooperative effort that requires several committees working supportively together—new church development (or church redevelopment), the committees concerned with training and overseeing CLPs, the Committee on Ministry, the racial ethnic committee, etc. The 210th General Assembly (1998) passed the amendment to the **Book of Order** that allowed Commissioned Lay Pastors to serve as the organizing pastor of a new church development—and these first generation churches can be a great opportunity for some presbyteries.

QUESTION 18: ARE YOUR COURSES OPEN OR CLOSED?

Most Commissioned Lay Pastor training programs have a regular cycle of courses that repeat approximately every two years. Are your courses open to people not regularly in the CLP program?

A case can be made for limiting participation in these courses to those who have gone through a formal admission process to the program: There is a closeness that develops among the participants. Smaller groups make it possible to do more discussion and dialogue during class periods. It is disruptive to have people coming and going and different standards for different kinds of students. Some fear having people pick and choose among classes without ever going through an application process can cause problems down the road if someone takes enough classes over a period of time to say they have completed all of the required CLP courses, etc. These concerns need to be addressed by the committee responsible for planning the training program.

Having said this, there are compelling reasons to open courses to people who are not regular participants in the CLP training program. The CLP training program could be a further service to the presbytery if certain courses are opened to those seeking accreditation in other professional programs: Church Administrators, Directors of Christian Education, etc., have certain course they must take to meet accreditation qualifications (church polity, Bible, theology,

etc.) If the courses the CLP training program offers meet the standards of these accreditation programs (including whatever papers, project, or demonstration of accountability is required of such participants), they can be of real benefit to church employees who do not have to travel great distances or take time off of work to attend the training. Some of the courses (church polity, Christian Education, small church dynamics, moderating meetings, etc.) may be of help and interest (to new pastors, moderators of committees, Presbyterian Women, new church school leaders or Christian Education committee members), and can enhance and build upon other training opportunities offered by the presbytery. Sometimes the CLP training is both geographically and time-wise more convenient than other presbytery training opportunities. While the first consideration of the CLP training should be upon those admitted to the training program, if some courses are also open to others, the CLP program could enhance and enlarge the presbytery's educational opportunities.

Several presbyteries have separate registration forms for people who may want to take one or more courses in the CLP training program. These registration forms usually make it clear that auditing or taking such courses does not constitute admission to the program, and if the person chooses to become a regular participant in the program, the regular application process must be completed for full admission.

PART TWO

THE PCUSA COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR

GOD ALSO CALLS MIRIAM AND AARON

GIFTS FOR RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH IN THIS TIME

A. INTRODUCTION

Albert Einstein is credited with saying, “You can’t get yourself out of a situation using the same thinking that got you into it.” This paper is meant to stretch your thinking about the ministry of Commissioned Lay Pastors and the marvelous richness they bring to a presbytery’s mission. **The CLP program is an expansion of the Church’s mission in a changing world.** It is not a compromise when a congregation cannot find a “real” pastor. It is not a cheap way to provide pastoral services to congregations. Commissioned Lay Pastors and Ministers of Word and Sacrament are partners in mission as we seek to bring the good news of Christ to an ever-changing culture.

Freda Gardner (previous moderator of the General Assembly and member of the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary) encourages us to realize that service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor is a calling, a vocation. CLPs provide context appropriate ministry where seminarians do not fit. CLPs have uncoupled ministry from the need to make a living.

Boyd Stockdale, Executive Presbyter for the Presbytery of Seattle, writes, “How do we take seriously our mission in a community that has 116 languages in it? How do we fulfill the mandate to provide effective evangelism to the end that the Presbyterian Church significantly increases its ethnic membership?” One answer can be to train and deploy Commissioned Lay Pastors.

B. COMMISSIONED LAY PASTORS REFLECT A PRESBYTERY’S MISSION STRATEGY

When a presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission in a local church requires it, and ***after additional instruction deemed necessary by the presbytery has been provided***, a presbytery may authorize a Commissioned Lay Pastor to perform ***any or all*** of the following functions described below.

1. Administer the Lord’s Supper.
2. Administer the Sacrament of Baptism.
3. Moderate the session of the congregation under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery. Whenever the CLP is serving as moderator of session, the “person assigned to the Commissioned Lay Pastor as mentor and supervisor shall also supervise his or her work as moderator.” (G-14.0801e)
4. Have a voice in meetings of presbytery.
5. Have a vote in meetings of the presbytery (such vote to be counted as an elder commissioner for purposes of parity). The vote of a CLP represents the vote of the minister for the congregation being served.
6. Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state.
7. A Commissioned Lay Pastor may also be appointed by the presbytery to serve as an organizing pastor of a new Presbyterian church and be subsequently commissioned as pastor of the newly organized congregation. (G-14-0514.f)

A statement for the Commissioned Lay Pastor program of Seattle Presbytery is to the point. “The object of a CLP program is not to provide lay leadership in lieu of qualified ordained clergy, nor to provide a second-track career opportunity for persons who want to circumvent the standard candidacy and seminary education requirements pursuant to ordained ministry... The CLP program is intended to honor these principles (priesthood and ministry of all believers) by

providing a temporary solution to the lack of available ministers of Word and Sacrament to carry out the Presbytery's ministry in a particular place.”

A presbytery's mission strategy determines the role a CLP program plays in its overall direction. A presbytery that intends to reach immigrant populations will design its CLP program to contribute to that goal. A thoughtfully designed CLP program can provide a way to reach into communities that our denomination is not equipped to reach at the present time. Indigenous Commissioned Lay Pastors can reach immigrating communities without the need to learn a new language or be sensitized to a different culture.

Most presbyteries are aware of congregations that have been without an installed pastor for years. These congregations invest a lot of energy into surviving. They spend a lot of energy trying to find someone to preach each Sunday. Even when they have the same Sunday-to-Sunday preacher, they often lack someone to provide others pastoral services. A Presbytery determined to provide pastoral care and preaching from our Reformed perspective to small churches unable to call ministers of Word and Sacrament will design its CLP program to meet those needs.

We live in a rapidly changing world. We face migration of populations among our citizens. Communities that used to be densely populated are declining. Previous rural areas are becoming urban or suburban. Immigration into our country is shifting away from Western culture and becoming more Asian or Hispanic. Commissioned Lay Pastors can provide a valuable ministry in our ever-changing society.

C. WHAT DO CLPS BRING TO MINISTRY AND HOW ARE THEY DOING?

Ken McFayden, Director and Professor of Ministry and Leadership Development at Union-PSCE says, “I have several general impressions of what they (CLPs) bring to ministry as Commissioned Lay Pastors:

- ❖ A deep and abiding history of the church;
- ❖ A history of active involvement in the life of their congregation, and often in the ‘wider’ church;
- ❖ The experience of significant relationships with other persons of faith;
- ❖ The encouragement of others to explore a call to Commissioned Lay Pastoral ministry;
- ❖ A desire to express their gifts, interests, values, life experiences, and faith commitments in meaningful and appropriate ways;
- ❖ A clear understanding of the ethos of the (or their) congregation;
- ❖ Gifts for leadership, often demonstrated in several leadership roles in the life of the church and community;
- ❖ A wealth of life experience to draw upon;
- ❖ A motivation to serve, out of their love for and commitment to the church – in my experience, they have not been motivated by the ‘career’ paradigm which has emerged in many circles of pastoral ministry during the past 50 years.”

Most Commissioned Lay Pastors serve as pastor of a specific congregation or group of congregations. Others serve as pulpit supply in various congregations or some non-parish setting, such as campus ministry. Some serve on the staff of congregations with installed pastors and extend the congregation's ministry into new communities. We know that the number of CLPs is increasing but up-to-date records are difficult to maintain, since CLP programs are presbytery specific and no national registration is required. The Office of the General Assembly depends upon the presbyteries to submit information about CLPs. Information about CLPs should be reported in the same manner as with ministers.

There are two General Assembly Occupation Codes for CLPs, 107 and 117. Commissioned Lay Pastors serving a particular church are designated 107. Those serving a larger parish or yoked field are 117. Only CLPs that have been authorized to moderate the session and/or administer the sacraments and are actively serving congregations are given one of the Occupation Codes. According to records for 2003, there are 374 CLPs designated with occupation code 107 (serving a particular church) and 23 designated 117 (serving a larger parish or yoked field).

Primary income for most CLPs comes from sources other than their church work. The majority are employed full-time in non-church occupations or are retired. The fact that the primary income for most CLPs comes from non-CLP related services is not an excuse for exploiting CLPs. The point is to provide the amount of pastoral services that a congregation can afford. Use of presbytery's minimum salary guidelines for pastors is a convenient way to determine adequate compensation for CLPs. Assign a number of hours (48 for instance) per week for a full time call. Divide the presbytery annual minimum salary into 52 weeks. Then divide the weekly minimum salary by that number of hours (48 for instance). Then multiply the hourly rate by the number of hours in the CLPs contract. This can become the beginning point for deciding appropriate CLP compensation.

The scope of training and deployment of Commissioned Lay Pastors is widening. They are being viewed as extensions of presbytery missions, especially into immigrant populations. Presbyteries that began CLP programs in order to provide preaching in settings without regular installed pastors are discovering that these dedicated people have the gifts and desire to serve in many new and creative ways. "Behold, We Are Doing A New Thing" truly is an appropriate title for current activities regarding CLPs in the PC (USA).

D. THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN CONSIDERING BECOMING A CLP

1. Each Presbytery decides how a CLP program will contribute to its mission and grants specific authority to each CLP according to the ministry they are to conduct.
2. Each Presbytery satisfies itself that applicants are sufficiently trained to minister in the location of their commission. The authority to perform those functions permissible in the Book of Order (G-14.0801) is granted by and at the presbytery's discretion. Those authorities are also limited in time and situation.
3. The IRS extends the clergy tax benefits to Commissioned Lay Pastor under certain circumstances. The Presbytery must have granted the CLP all of the authorities available through the Book of Order. Claiming this tax benefit changes the way a CLP must report income.
 - a. The CLP will be able to exclude the fair rental value of a church owned manse or housing allowances from federal income taxes. But, the CLP must pay Social Security taxes on the housing.
 - b. The CLP will have to pay both portions of the Social Security Tax.
 - c. The CLP will need to make quarterly payment for that income as Self Employed or adopt a voluntary withholding plan.
 - d. Congregations will need to vote the compensation for the CLP in order for her/him to receive the IRS benefits.

E. SAMPLE STRUCTURE FOR A CLP PROGRAM

The COM appoints a Commissioned Lay Pastors Oversight Committee (CLPOC) to oversee the presbytery's CLP program. The Chair of the CLPOC will be a member of the COM with additional members coming from the presbytery as deemed necessary by the COM. The CLPOC is accountable to the COM. The CLPOC will have three subcommittees: Recruitment, Training and Care.

The Subcommittee on Recruitment will:

1. Develop materials to attract elders of the presbytery into this ministry.
2. Establish an application process.
3. Develop criteria for acceptance of applicants into the program.
4. Develop the procedure for evaluation of applicants and the criteria for recommendation of candidates to the COM.
5. Collect ideas for training and care of CLPs and share them with the CLPOC.
6. Recruit and train Mentors to nurture the candidate during training and possibly continue upon commissioning.
7. Suggested guidelines for Mentors of Commissioned Lay Pastors are: (Adapted from the Presbytery of West Virginia, 1990 and updated 5/18/92)
 - a. The mentor should be a good role model for the CLP. The mentor should demonstrate the openness and caring that the CLP should develop.
 - b. The mentor should be an ordained minister of presbytery and preferably not the CLP's pastor.
 - c. The mentor should be accessible for meetings and phone conversations.
 - d. Mentors should be non-judgmental; they should listen before giving advice; and present negative comments in a positive way.
 - e. The CLP should attempt to contact the mentor at least monthly. They should provide a sermon tape at least quarterly seeking feedback from the mentor. If the CLP has not contacted the mentor in several months, the mentor should initiate contact. The Subcommittee on Care and Oversight should be contacted if this problem persists.
 - f. The mentor should encourage the CLP to pursue his or her own personal growth.
 - g. The mentor should report to the Subcommittee on Care and Oversight at least twice a year.
 - h. The mentor is appointed for one year and is selected by the Care and Oversight Subcommittee from the nominees submitted by the CLP/Candidate.
 - i. No mentor should have responsibility for more than one CLP.

The Subcommittee on Training will work collaboratively with Seminaries and other Lay Academies to:

1. Determine the areas of instruction needed in the training program including the **Book of Order** mandated training and other instructions specific to the services CLPs are expected to provide.
2. Develop learning objectives in each area of instruction and the time allotted for each.
3. Provide for the training in each area including recruitment of instructors.
4. Schedule the sequence, time and locations of training.
5. Determine how end-of-training evaluation will be accomplished and make recommendations for commission to the CLPOC for recommendation to the COM.
6. Consult with other portions of the presbytery for help in utilizing available cooperative training programs.

The Subcommittee on Care and Oversight will:

1. Supervise the CLPs as they serve churches of the presbytery.
2. Assist the CLP mentors as they relate supportively to their assigned CLPs.
3. Provide guidance and encouragement to CLPs and CLP mentors.
4. Maintain an ongoing evaluation of each CLPs ministry with reports from churches and their mentors. (Sample forms are provided in a later section of this Manual.)
5. Make recommendations to the CLPOC regarding re-commissioning of CLPs.
6. Maintain an ongoing evaluation of the CLP Mentor Guidelines.
7. Provide and require continuing education and growth opportunities for the CLPs and their mentors.
8. Promote the use of CLPs in Vacation Bible Schools, Church Schools, Bible studies and other congregational events in order to enhance the exposure of CLPs throughout the presbytery.
9. Provide opportunities for self-care. It is important to provide ways for CLPs to care for themselves and their families while serving.

F. SAMPLE CURRICULA

The courses listed below are collected into the seven categories required by the **Book of Order**. They are courses that seem to appear in a good majority of the presbytery training programs. Some of the courses will overlap in content because of the amount of material to be covered in general areas. Perhaps presbyteries in describing their CLP training courses would do well to consider all courses as “Introduction to...” and require continuing education courses to add depth to the minimum requirements. The courses are not meant to be final but are introductory. They are intended to open the way for further study.

Following each course listed below is a general description of the information for which participants are most usually held accountable. When writing specific course descriptions for a training program, a committee would be well advised to define what it expects participants to learn from a course and what the committee expects participants to know in a presbytery exam. By sharing this with both participants and leaders, the program can function more smoothly.

Most presbyteries require a minimum of 80 -120 hours of classroom time, though several require much more (up to 200 hours). Most presbyteries plan courses to be extended workshops, lasting between 6 and 9 hours. The descriptions below reflect that time limit. They do not reflect the varieties of additional options available—scheduling the class between two weekends, using other training events (leadership schools, synod schools, conferences, church officer training events, etc.), mentoring models, or the possibility of taking semester-long courses through a college or seminary program.

THE CONCEPT OF CALL, WHAT ARE WE ABOUT IN THIS PROGRAM? would be a good introductory course for new participants. It would help those entering the program look at some of the following questions:

1. Why do this? What do you want to do and why do you seek training?
2. What makes an effective lay pastor?
3. What are realistic hopes/expectations/goals to accomplish in specific settings?
4. How does one balance work/church—how are congregation/family/vocation all best served?
5. What does it mean to feel called to a particular service in the church?
6. **Plagiarism can be a problem. Each course should begin with training about plagiarism and forgery – preaching someone else’s sermon without crediting them.**

1. THE BIBLE

INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

This course can focus on what the church has said about the use of Scripture in worship and study, methods of exegesis, different models of interpretation, etc. It can give participants a chance to explore how teachers and preachers move from Scripture to lesson and sermon.

Evaluation

As it provides a chance for interpretive work with selected passages of Scripture, the follow-up or evaluation for this type of course is usually a paper, a sermon, or lesson plan using a new model of interpretation for the student.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT:

An introductory survey course on the Old Testament is normally intended to give students an idea of the flow of the history, geography, people, and theological development of the Old Testament. Time needs to be spent developing a sense of the historical background, and major themes of the Old Testament as well as a general overview of the contents of the books of the Old Testament. Most courses include a discussion of the theological importance of the Old Testament to the New as the Scriptures of the first centuries Jews and Christians. It should cover a basic understanding of the Old Testament's literary genre: history, poetry, prophetic literature, apocalyptic, etc., as well as basic hermeneutical/exegetical skills for interpretation (context, genre, historical setting of the book/passage, how the text has been interpreted in and used by the church). As time is available in this or additional Old Testament courses, attention can be given to study of particular books in more depth or developing exegetical and hermeneutical skills.

Evaluation

Accountability for an Introductory Old Testament Course usually includes one or more of the following:

- 1) Development of a time line of the history/ flow of the Old Testament;
- 2) Review of the sections of the Old Testament (Pentateuch, History, Wisdom Literature, Prophets, etc.) and their flow/contents;
- 3) An open book exam—using exegetical skills or content based;
- 4) Requiring the students to pass a Biblical Content Exam.

INTRODUCTION TO NEW TESTAMENT

An introductory survey course on the New Testament is normally expected to give students an overview of the development, time-line, geography, people and themes of the New Testament. Time needs to be spent developing a sense of the historical background of the New Testament and the order of its writing, the development of the literary genre there and the roles these played in the early church. In covering a general overview of the books of the New Testament, most survey courses also deal with exegetical and hermeneutical skills and a discussion of the critical and theological importance of the New Testament. As time is available in this or additional New Testament courses, more attention can be given to the study of a particular book or books and developing exegetical and hermeneutical skills, the development of the canon, or other related subjects.

Evaluation

Accountability for an Introductory New Testament course usually includes one or more of the following:

- 1) Development of a time line of the history/ flow of the New Testament;
- 2) Review of the sections of the New Testament and their development and their flow, contents, and major themes;

- 3) An open book exam—using exegetical skills or content based;
- 4) Requiring the students to pass a Biblical Content Exam.

STUDY OF A SPECIFIC BOOK OR TEXT

Many CLP training programs will add additional Bible courses, as time permits, or as a continuing education course option, using an individual book of the Old or New Testament, or focusing on one of the types of literature in one of the or focusing on lectionary texts for a specific church season. Such courses allow CLP candidates and CLPs to focus more on exegetical and interpretive skills in relating Biblical literature and passages to teaching and preaching.

Evaluation

The follow-up might require an exegesis paper, a sermon, a teaching outline, etc.

2. REFORMED THEOLOGY AND SACRAMENTS

A variety of courses are offered under this heading. No training program tries to cover all of reformed theology in one course. However, it is important that students learn the basic reformed theological concepts such as priesthood of believers, original sin, predestination, providence of God and justification by grace. What follows is a description of the basic courses that are used to cover these two requirements in the ***Book of Order***—theological/historical courses, then courses dealing with the sacraments.

THEOLOGY/CHURCH HISTORY

A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY

This is usually an introductory course that covers major periods of church history and traces the formation and growth of the church. Such a course often briefly covers the social/political setting as well as religious developments. A common breakdown of these broad periods is:

- ❖ Early Church—from about 30 AD through the Council of Nicea
- ❖ Council of Nicea through the beginning of the Reformation
- ❖ The Reformation, including the development of Lutheranism, Reformed Protestantism, the Anabaptists
- ❖ The church in England—Episcopal and Protestant
- ❖ A brief history of the church in the United States

Evaluation

The evaluation for historical survey classes is often a paper or a test. Papers often allow the participant to choose a subject or a period to cover. Another option: have participants develop a course in church history for a confirmation class or other class.

Presbyterian and Reformed History:

More narrowly defined courses on Presbyterian and Reformed history usually focus on the Protestant Reformation, the Westminster Assembly and the Presbyterian Church in America. Both the historical development of the church and basic theological developments are often taught. The courses usually cover the tenets of reformed thought, theology of the Westminster Assembly, the theological reasons behind the schisms and splits in the Presbyterian Church in this country and the unions/reunions that have brought some of those branches back together.

Evaluation

The evaluation is often a paper covering an issue, event, or theological idea or a time line showing the development of various protestant or Presbyterian Churches.

CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS OF THE CHURCH - AN HISTORICAL SURVEY:

This course becomes a broad survey of church history using the creeds and confessions of our church as the basis for understanding some of the major issues that have helped shape the church from the beginning. Looking at the issues and debates that lay behind the counsels, creeds and confessions of the church, helps put some of the debates of our day in perspective. By looking at what the church has called heresy through the years and seeing how those variant beliefs and opinions were dealt with through the belief statements of church counsels and various creedal statements, participants can gain insight on how the issues of a period of church history begin to shape the church and its theology, worship and activities.

Evaluation

The most common evaluation is to have each participant choose one of the creeds or confession and list some of the issues that led to its development as well as issues that creed or confession addresses today.

INTRODUCTION CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY:

The focus of this course is the essential theological heritage of Reformed Christians. The course seeks to help participants understand the sources of our authority and the specific doctrinal content of our faith. The emphasis will be on gaining a basic comprehension of the Christian theological tradition, as represented by a wide variety of major Christian figures. Many programs use Shirley Guthrie's ***Christian Doctrine (revised)*** for this course.

Evaluation

The evaluation or review for this course varies: Options include a paper covering a basic theological concept new to the participant; listing some of the basic theological concepts and giving a brief description of what these concepts mean; having an examination of people and ideas, and/or using some of the study guides in Guthrie's book.

REFORMED THEOLOGY:

This course is usually an introduction to Reformed Theology with emphasis on teachings of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, the Westminster Assembly and other reformers and reformed movements. It typically covers the tenets of the Reformed Faith as well as those beliefs that define the Reformed Faith compared to other systems of belief.

Evaluation for this course usually asks participants to list some of the basic theological concepts of Reformed Theology and giving a brief description of what these concepts mean. This is sometimes expanded by asking the participant to take one particular tenet or idea and reflect on the role of that idea in the life of the church (or the participant) today.

THEOLOGY - WHAT PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE:

This course will look at the doctrines and beliefs that make Presbyterians, "Presbyterian." It will use the series of videotapes narrated by Shirley Guthrie, the ***Westminster Confession***, Chapters 1-2 of ***The Form of Government***, confirmation materials, and other resources that help explain or define the beliefs of the Presbyterian Church.

SACRAMENTS

WORSHIP - THE SACRAMENTS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AND BAPTISM

This course explores the sacraments of our church through historical, theological and liturgical considerations. It looks at what Reformed Theology and ***The Directory for Worship*** say about these sacraments. The course covers the theological concepts and foundation of the sacraments and why we celebrate them. In looking at the historical background from Reformed church history and confessional documents, participants gain an

understanding of the meaning behind the various ways the sacraments may be celebrated. Some time may be spent looking at sacraments recognized by other denominations and why the Reformed church does not recognize more than two sacraments. The course will consider the theology and rationale behind each of the components of worship service as well as Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the context of the church year. The **Book of Common Worship** is an essential resource for this course.

Evaluation

Evaluation of this course tends to be creative: One method is to have the participants plan a worship service including baptism or the Lord's Supper using the **Book of Common Worship**, and giving reasons for the ordering and elements of the service. This is a course that can use a practical review with the participants getting experience presiding at the Lord's Table or at a baptism in a role-play. The reasons for what is done and said at the table or baptismal font can be part of the discussion/evaluation. Case studies using pastoral situations could be used for the participants to respond in a paper or discussion group: "Would you baptize...?" "Would you serve communion...?" A written report or test could also be used for evaluating objective information from this course.

3. PRESBYTERIAN POLITY

Presbyterian Polity

This course uses the **Book of Order** and actual case studies to delve into the connection between the spiritual character of the Church and its system of agreed-upon rules of government. It will cover the content of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the make-up of the **Book of Order** (*The Form of Government, The Directory of Worship, The Book of Discipline*), the structure and function of the governing bodies, the other governing bodies with which our General Assembly has relationships.

Evaluation

Evaluation for this course is often done by using case studies outlining specific situations that relate to the application of church polity. Case studies may be brought by participants, shared by the leader, or drawn from officer training and other resources.

POLITY: ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER AND HOW TO CONDUCT MEETINGS

This is a follow-up polity course that focuses on **Robert's Rules of Order** and meetings in a church setting—presbytery, small churches, committees, and/or larger congregations. It will also spend time looking at small group dynamics and strategies for keeping committees, sessions and other church meetings moving constructively.

4. PREACHING

Reformed Worship - Liturgy and Planning:

The church, when it is most truly the church of Jesus Christ, is grounded, centered in, and empowered by liturgical experience. This course will look at the essential elements of **The Directory for Worship**. Using **The Book of Common Worship**, it will look at the elements of worship and cover the skills needed in planning and leading worship, speaking, reading Scripture, choosing hymns, etc. It will also introduce some of the resources available in planning worship services.

Evaluation

Evaluation/accountability for this course usually includes planning (and leading, when possible) a specific worship service.

Worship - Sermon Preparation:

This course will focus on the many aspects of sermon preparation, resources for sermons, kinds of sermons and styles of preaching, the cycle of the Christian year, the lectionary (using it and diverging from it).

Evaluation

Evaluation usually involves writing and presenting a sermon before the class or a smaller group of class members.

Preaching from the Old Testament/New Testament:

Specific preaching courses that focus on the Old or New Testament give the participants an opportunity to consider the practical skills needed to develop a sermon from a text. Focus is usually on the lectionary texts from the Testament being considered.

Evaluation

Review/accountability usually comes in the form of a sermon in written and oral form (in person or by cassette).

5. LEADING WORSHIP

Weddings and Funerals

This course will consider funerals and weddings as worship services. Various resources will be used, including *The Directory for Worship*, *The Book of Common Worship*, funeral directors, etc. Time will also be spent on the pastoral care and counseling issues surrounding each event. "A Code of Ethics and Practice," boundary issues, and practical issues (such as wedding and funeral policies for the church) will also be explored in light of these occasions. Participants should bring a copy of the wedding and funeral policies for their congregation (if such exist).

Evaluation might include planning a funeral service and walking through a wedding rehearsal. Or, students might develop a strategy for establishing local church policies on weddings and funerals if none exist.

Reformed Worship - Liturgy and Planning:

The church, when it is most truly the church of Jesus Christ, is grounded, centered in, and empowered by liturgical experience. This course will look at the essential elements of *The Directory for Worship*. Using *The Book of Common Worship*, it will look at the elements of worship and cover the skills needed in planning and leading worship, speaking, reading Scripture, choosing hymns, etc. It will also introduce some of the resources available in planning worship services.

Evaluation

Evaluation/accountability for this course usually includes planning (and leading, when possible) a specific worship service.

Prayer Retreat

This will be a weekend time of prayer and reflection that also includes some learning time using *The Book of Common Worship* in looking at some of the services such as the service for renewal of baptismal vows, a service of healing, alternate forms of worship, retreats, etc. ***Evaluation*** might be to have the participant plan a prayer retreat for a session or youth group (it could be a mini-retreat, lasting a day or part of a day), keeping a prayer journal, or some other creative response.

6. PASTORAL CARE

Introduction to Pastoral Care:

In most presbyteries, an introductory course deals with the needs of both the care giver and the recipient, with strong emphasis on hospital visitation, boundary issues, ethical concerns, roles and issues, and referrals to other helping professionals. The Lay Pastor is taught how to distinguish between pastoral care and pastoral counseling.

Evaluation often includes case studies and role-playing. Some presbyteries have a paper concerning boundary issues.

Pastoral Care Issues

Follow up courses in pastoral care will often focus on particular pastoral care issues, such as: conducting pastoral visits, conducting hospital visits, grief counseling and planning for funerals, alcoholism in the church/rural setting/urban setting.

Evaluation of these courses often makes use of case studies or verbatims using a CPE (clinical pastoral education) model.

Ethics

This course is an introduction to ethics: What are ethics? What are the boundaries of ministry? How do the historic Presbyterian values growing out of the Reformed tradition speak to ministry today? What is the Social Witness policy of the PCUSA—and what does it mean when the General Assembly makes theological/ethical statements? What is the preacher's/pastor's responsibility in ethical proclamation and formation? What does our constitution mean when it says we cannot bind the conscience of another?

The 210th General Assembly (1998) approved a report submitted by the Special Committee on a Professional Code of Ethics. The report as approved, is titled "Standards of Ethical Conduct" and it is presented in three sections:

- 1) Life Together in the Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- 2) Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- 3) Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The Committee that produced this report was given the task of providing a resource to help the Presbyterian Church (USA) prevent harm to individuals and the community of faith and to provide an example of ethical conduct in the world. In this vein, the General Assembly recommended that these Standards be studied and used in congregations, sessions, new member classes, adult education classes, personnel committees, judicatory committees (local, presbytery, synod and general assembly), seminaries and in all places where the church is seeking to be a community of God's people.

We recommend that an "Ethical Behavior for CLPs" course utilizing this valuable resource be a requirement for all training programs. The booklet and a study guide is available at 800-524-2612. The booklet may also be downloaded from www.pcusa.org/oga/ethics/index.htm. We also recommend that this course contain training about appropriate boundaries regarding sexual harassment and misconduct. Most presbyteries have adopted sexual behavior policies which should be used. A sample Sexual Misconduct Policy published by the Office of the General Assembly is available at www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/sexual-misconduct-policy.pdf. A sample CLP Sexual Misconduct Self Certification Form is included in the Forms section of this Handbook.

Evaluation of this course could be a paper concerning current ethical/theological issues before the General Assembly, or other issue arising from the course.

Evangelism

An introductory course in evangelism looks at historical and practical help in personal and congregational evangelism, new member recruitment and assimilation as well as caring for and recovering inactive members.

Evaluation for this course could be to ask participants to plan an evangelism program (to create an evangelism committee, a plan for contacting new people in the community, a plan for doing mailing or leaving information in the neighborhood, etc.). If the congregation already has an active evangelism program, the student could consider new ways of reaching out.

Administration And Dynamics Of The Small Church

This course explores the unique dynamics of small churches regarding worship, business, stewardship, evangelism, etc. Some time will also be spent with the following subjects:

- 1) Small church life, organization, people structures;
- 2) Effective use of energies;
- 3) Polity in small churches;
- 4) Conflict and conflict management skills;
- 5) Recruiting, training and mobilizing lay people;
- 6) A Code of Ethics for Commissioned Lay Pastors.

Evaluation for these courses is usually discussion of case studies submitted by participants.

7. TEACHING AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

These courses should cover various aspects of Christian Education materials: the strengths and weaknesses of curricula available, types of classes, adapting curricula to a group, and small groups (formation and dynamics). Participants should become familiar with their Presbytery (and/or Synod) Resource Center, local religious bookstores and supply houses, presbytery events centered on education and training.

Evaluation

Evaluation for this course can vary: Some presbyteries/programs ask for a review of the Presbyterian resources currently available, assessing their strengths and weaknesses for the church where the participant worships or serves. Some presbyteries have asked participants to develop a Confirmation Commissioning class, discussing what resources they would use (and why) as well as considering the length of the course and leaders. Having the student design a strategy for gaining session approval to use Presbyterian Curriculum (in churches not presently using it) is an additional means of evaluating this course.

Spiritual Development/Prayer

Using the **Book of Order**, particularly "**The Directory for Worship**," participants learn to lead spiritual formation courses in local congregations according to the Reformed Tradition. Focus is on prayers and other disciplines of spiritual life. Exercises and techniques for teaching others the elements of spiritual formation will be employed.

Evaluation is often creative—perhaps asking participants to keep a prayer journal for a period of time—Advent, Lent, or a month.

G. CONTEXT SPECIFIC TRAINING

1. CONTEXTUAL MINISTRY/PERSPECTIVES IN TOWN AND COUNTRY MINISTRY

These courses are used by several CLP programs to look at ministry issues such as: Understanding the unique position of clergy in small towns; techniques for maintaining identity and privacy; “danger signals” and “fire drills” for a pastor in a rural setting; serving in an inner city setting; serving in a racial/ethnic congregation; etc.

The next two sections describe training programs that are especially tailored for special situations. The first is from Seattle Presbytery. They utilize CLPs for immigrant populations. The Book of Order mandated training is assumed and each course focuses on the particular culture a candidate is expected to serve. The courses included here are illustrative of the cultural features each course contains.

The second section provides information and guidance for training Commissioned Lay Pastors from the Native American community. Its wisdom is beneficial for any presbytery considering a training program that will serve Native American Communities.

2. SEATTLE PRESBYTERY - FOCUS ON IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS

Christian Nurture: Education, Spiritual Life And Discipleship – Minimum of 10 study hours plus directed experiential learning.

Education

Why is education a part of our ministry?

Human development and characteristics of different ages

A sampling of educational models used in the church

Criteria used in selecting materials for teaching

Constructing a lesson – develop a lesson plan, teach the lesson and critique the results

Other issues of importance in education

Spiritual life and discipleship

Introduction to a reformed understanding of spiritual life and discipleship

Conversation about the support for the candidate's own spiritual journey

Together with the candidate, evaluate which models of discipleship are best suited for his/her community

Resources

Selected articles from “Alert Magazine” and the “APCE Advocate”

The Teaching Church by Eugene C. Roehlkepartain

Soul Stories: African American Christian Education by Anne Streaty Wimberly

Teaching Teachers to Teach by Donald Griggs

Teaching for Faith (book and/or video) by Richard Osmer

Learning and Leading – selected videos from PCUSA

More than Glue and Glitter: A Class Room Guide for Volunteers by Debbie T. O’Neal

Help! I’m a Sunday School Teacher by Mary Duckert

A Climate for Learning: Educational Planning for your Congregation by June Holohan

Soul Feast by Marjorie Thompson

Reformed Spirituality by Howard Rice

Books by Henri Nouwen

REACHING OUT: EVANGELISM AND MISSION – minimum of 10 study hours plus directed experiential learning

Areas of Training

Dialogue about the history of evangelism and mission among the candidate's own ethnic/cultural group

Key Biblical texts relating to evangelism, faith-sharing and cross-cultural mission

Discussion of key issues in evangelism and mission facing the church

Candidate's interview of a missionary to a non-Christian community on topic areas including:

Dominant beliefs about God, salvation and the faith of people in that community

Major issues people face in living out their faith

Major issues the missionary being interviewed faces in living out their faith

Perceptions people have of Christianity, the United States, and the role and influence of Christian missionaries

Candidate participation with particular congregations in their evangelism and mission committee work and study

Reading and/or viewing videos with discussion from several materials as suggested, or others on the topic:

"Mission in the 1990s" by Clifton Kirkpatrick

"De-Westernizing the Gospel" by Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship

"Go Therefore: 150 Years of Presbyterians in Global Mission" by James Smylie

"Presbyterians in World Mission" by G. Thompson Brown

"Service Evangelism" Richard S. Armstrong

Translated materials from the American Bible Society and other ecumenical partners

8. NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRY COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR

Traditional Native American Indian leadership is an expression of the unity of Indian values. In Indian communities, spirituality and service to a community are the most basic qualities against which good leaders are judged. In traditional Indian culture, spirituality is a core element of leadership. Leaders are chosen for character, knowledge, experience and commitment to a community. Individuals do not seek leadership or exercise power by commanding authority over others. Leaders are chosen by consensus, based on the skills, knowledge, experience and commitment needed by a community at any given time. (American Indian Research and Policy Institute, 1999, pg. 35) In 1972, the term Native American was adopted when referring to American Indians or Indians because it would be a more inclusive term to include Eskimos and Aleut work.

Leaders historically have not been self-selected but carefully nurtured and nourished by the community. Who better knows their own needs and who from their own people could best serve their current and future needs than those elders and our ancestors. Potential leaders are taught that from early in their youth. A belief that the community had was that the selection process is an ongoing experience. Elders believed you are only selected after, observation, preparation, participation and finally validation. This is very compatible with those who enter the ministry either as clergy or as Commissioned Lay Pastors or, for that matter, in other disciplines, i.e., academic, medical or political.

The diversity within Native American communities located on and off reservations, recognized as Nations, Tribes or Bands, are unique societies with distinct values and cultures. Basic key principles to consider when developing partnerships for common goals is to remember:

- Respect is the beginning of value
- Build trust through action, not words only
- Engage in building relationship recognizing and respecting Indian styles of

communication

- Assure participation which defines working 'with' or working 'for'.

Another way of identifying and listing the American Indian Cultural Strengths is as follows:

Elders and Oral Tradition: Elders were the 'libraries' of Indian knowledge, history, and tradition. The traditional way of life was not explained, but lived and it included a way of looking at the world. In the traditional way younger folks did not question the elders and over time learned what they needed to know. This is difficult in contemporary times when youth is more highly valued.

Non-Interference: Communication styles are strongly influenced by this and silence is valued. Observation and non-competition interactions are the norm which leads to misunderstanding in instances where the dominate culture values direct aggressive leadership styles.

Family and Kinship: Traditionally these relationships of family, clans, tribes, and land base held the framework for one's sense of self. Today we see remnants of the extended family system in various forms.

Leadership: Effective leadership in Indian communities takes into account that leadership is shared by many; is not sought by the individual, but by the community; not administered by command or authority, but by example and through consensus; and elders are leaders because of their wisdom and experience.

DIFFERING VALUES

TRADITIONAL NATIVE VALUES

Cooperation
Group emphasis "we"
Consensus
Extended Family orientation
Non-interference
Listening
Informal courtesy
Sharing
Orientation to the present
Respect for aging
Self-directed humor (clown)
Shaming
Measured time unimportant
Harmony with nature
Human being is most needy of creation

Oral Tradition
No direct eye contact
Spirituality integrated into everyday life

DOMINATE SOCIETY VALUES

Competition
Individual emphasis "I"
Majority Rule
Nuclear family orientation
Interference
Speaking
Formal politeness
Saving
Orientation to the future
Desire for youthfulness
Other-directed humor (a roast)
Guilt
Time/schedules very important
Conquest of nature
Human being is above the rest of creation
Literacy (Writing, Publishing)
Direct eye contact
Political efforts to separate

The Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans by the Special General Assembly Native American Task Force contains a brief history of the Presbyterian church's historic relationship with Native American peoples, including more recent organizational changes in the Presbyterian church and the resultant impact on Native American

ministries. The report given and received at the 212th General Assembly in the year of 2000 suggested from the findings several strategies and challenges to address the issues and concerns identified in Native American Ministry. The full report is available at www.pcusa.org.

There is a clear appreciation for who Native peoples are and how the church has related to them theologically and historically. The Native American peoples are the indigenous peoples of the land now known as the Americas. They know that they have always been an integral part of the world; they did not come from anywhere else. Much of what is known about Native peoples has come from distorted views presented by a history tempered with blind assumption, and is reflective of social bias, with reinforcement provided by romantic novels, New Age thinking and portrayals by modern media.

Over the years there has been a decline in the influence, strength and effectiveness of the Presbyterian church's ministry with Native Americans. Part of this can be attributed to a history of paternalism that has belittled and thwarted the initiative of Native people, a people who are proud of their culture and traditions.

What caused severe problems in our communities and nations are the contradictions introduced by Western civilization, a professed belief in Christian teachings and yet actions that violated those beliefs. It is unfortunate and important to note that the conversion of Native peoples was to change a lifestyle, rather than provide affirmation for who they were as peoples, and an invitation to share the spiritual gifts they possessed.

There is great diversity in language, culture, geography, and history. There are commonalities among Native American churches in the PC(USA). These churches are located across the country, from Shinnecock Church on Long Island, New York, to Neah Bay, Washington and from Livingston, Texas, to Point Barrow, Alaska. Most of these churches were established prior to 1900; thus most Native American Presbyterians are fourth and fifth generation Presbyterians in communities with long historic ties to the Presbyterian Church. With the exception of the Utkeagvik Presbyterian Church in Barrow, Alaska, most are small membership churches. The great majority of Native American churches do not have full-time clergy. Native American churches are located on reservations and trust lands. Only one Native American urban church is identified and is located in Phoenix, Arizona.

There is a crisis in the availability of ordained Native American clergy. While Christian education is important, there is a lack of trained leadership, resources and education materials sensitive and relevant to their church size, language, and culture. There is a need for renewed hope, new vision, new vitality, and new direction based both on a mutual acknowledge of past errors, reconciliation, and a common claim of hope for the future.

As a result, lay clergy are heavily relied upon in the churches throughout the country. A significant number of churches stated that they cannot afford a full-time pastor, and, if they can, they cannot afford to pay pension and benefits. Prior to the 1950's, most Native American pastors were appointed to the field and compensated under the Board of National Missions. When the shift was made from board to middle governing bodies, Native American churches were expected to initiate the process of calling and replacing pastors without adequate preparation and training.

Native American ministry, by and large, is one of isolation. Geographic distances and location make it difficult for churches to fully participate who are physically isolated and culturally isolating to non-Native people. Native American ministry is also full time ministry to a community regardless of church location and membership. Still current Native American ministers faithfully struggle to meet the leadership needs of Native American communities by serving multiple churches and families. A full time minister responds not only to spiritual needs of Native families, but also social needs and justice issues.

The community-centered identity for many Native people is the core of existence and the source of healing and nurture. A truly mutual relationship between the non-native churches and Native American communities requires one to recognize and honor the styles of worship that

are common to Native Americans, which can and do bring healing, renewal and reconciliation with God and each other.

All Native American Presbyterians are challenged to make a concerted effort to identify, recruit, and encourage gifted candidates to be called to church vocations. Middle governing bodies must support the community process and engage in a relationship that is authentic and proactive in developing a curriculum that includes the cultural context.

A COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR TRAINING PROGRAM SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Prepare ministry candidates to be culturally competent in their ministry, including anti-racism training, values in multi-cultural community, and equal employment practices. In cases where cultural and language differences exist, presbyteries are encouraged to provide an advisor to guide and assist Native American candidates through the process.
2. Every presbytery and synod has been asked to study and evaluate the potential for Native American ministry in their geographic area in consultation with the Native American congregations and with NACC whenever possible. An intensive orientation for those called to serve NA congregations should become common practice, just as it has been the practice of the National Church to provide orientation to missionaries that serve foreign missions. Other elements that must be vested would be continuing education, vacations and sabbaticals, and career development.
3. Must work through existing indigenous structure in the community/congregation.
4. People resources from within the Native American community and outside would be considered.
5. There needs to be a set of affordable guidelines to help prepare a person to serve as a lay pastor; not a do it yourself kit but with supervision.
6. Should not take place only on one weekend but extend over a period of time with competent supervision being available in the time preparation leading to actual assessment.
7. Designate a Native American liaison, mentor or moderator to follow-up on how the continuing education is being used on a yearly base. This will not only improve the ministry but to expand the knowledge of our native CLPs who are faithful, committed and doing all they can to keep the ministry alive.
8. Build in a review every six months and include a Native American in the review team.
9. Assist local congregations in understanding and developing job descriptions, terms of call and compensation.
10. Remember the diversity of the Native American community, geographic location, tribal entity in the area or recognized Native American organization. Tribal Nations now have websites that offer helpful information.

4. ADDITIONAL TRAINING MODELS

While each presbytery approves the training program appropriate to its mission, there are a variety of styles and locations for the training. Salem Presbytery in North Carolina uses

pastors within its bounds to train its CLPs. The nine courses are taught in three terms. The classes meet in a central location, usually on Saturday. Three courses are taught on three successive Saturdays and there are assignments to be completed between class meetings. The fourth Saturday in each term is set aside for examinations. The students are examined by representatives from the COM and other appropriate committees prior to being presented to a subsequent meeting of Presbytery.

Kiskiminetas Presbytery trains its CLPs through an eight-presbytery consortium sponsored by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Examination is done by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry at the end of the second year. Students are examined again at the end of the third year. Those whose examination is sustained are certified as ready to receive a commission as lay pastors. The COM deploys those certified and brokers their contracts. The contracts are for one year. Kiskiminetas has many helpful CLP resources available online. Their URL is www.kiskipby.org.

New Covenant Presbytery in Texas sponsors a Lay Academy titled: "The Institute for Pastoral Studies" (TIPS). The Institute includes five academies.

1. The Lay Academy equips Laity and Commissioned Lay Pastors.
2. Academia Laica Presbiteriana equips Hispanic laity and Hispanic Commissioned Lay Pastors.
3. The Pastor Academy equips Pastors and Interim Pastors.
4. The Cross-Cultural Academy equips racial-ethnic laity.
5. The Research and Publication Academy provides practical resources.

Rev. Pam Morgan, Ph.D., is Dean of the Institute and can be contacted at the office of New Covenant Presbytery. Additional information is available at www.pbyofnewcovenant.org.

The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary offers a Lay Pastor Training program as part of its comprehensive Education for the Laity Curriculum. Much of the training is available online and utilizes the experience and skill of its faculty members. Additional information is available online at <http://www.udtslearning.net>. Some presbyteries are accepting completion of courses in this program as satisfying the training requirements for CLPs. Those presbyteries should adopt procedures for examination of students involved in this training program prior to their enrollment. This will help avoid confusion about which body gives final approval of the student's qualifications before having to make that decision on a case-to-case basis.

H. SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS FOR COMMISSIONED LAY PASTORS

Presbytery of New Covenant Written Examination

(drafted November 15, 1997, Commissioned Lay Pastors Committee meeting)

Personal Faith and Motives:

- ❖ Write a brief statement (1-2 pages) giving your personal faith beliefs, and a paragraph commenting on your sense of call to this ministry.

Theology:

- ❖ List and briefly explain five major tenets of Reformed Theology. In addition, choose one and write at least one paragraph explaining it, and then comment on how this doctrine works in your personal life and in the life of the church.

History:

- ❖ Pick one of the creeds or confession of the church:
- ❖ Name some of the issues that led to the original writing of the creed/confession.
- ❖ How does this creed/confession speak to issues in the church today?

Bible:

- ❖ What are four major messages of the Old Testament?
- ❖ What are four major themes found in the New Testament?
- ❖ Write briefly on one theme each from the Old and New Testaments, telling how this theme has been evident in your life.

Teaching:

- ❖ What Resources might you suggest for a study group?
- ❖ What events in Presbytery will help strengthen your Christian Education efforts?
- ❖ Design an outline for a confirmation class: include length of class and what would be covered in each class/retreat/event.

Polity:

- ❖ What are the parts of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?
- ❖ What are the three major sections of the **Book of Order** - what does each section address?
- ❖ Name the 4 governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church. What are some of the responsibilities of each?

Boundary Issues:

- ❖ There is great concern in our Church regarding boundary issues. Write a paragraph to reflect on each of the following boundary issues:
- ❖ Power/Relationships: what is the Commissioned Lay Pastor's role in dealing with the congregation, the Session, and leaders of the church? How might serving as a Commissioned Lay Pastor in your home congregation affect your position in the congregation?
- ❖ Reflect on a responsible use of time as a Commissioned Lay Pastor: What is a responsible use of your time as you balance work, family, leisure and other commitments? Availability is often a question pastors must deal with in seeking a balanced life - will you need to set limits on your availability?
- ❖ In 1994 New Covenant Presbytery adopted a sexual misconduct statement. What is your understanding of some of the issues involved - and how will these affect your work in the church - and particularly in pastoral care?
- ❖ Reflect on some of the jurisdictional issues involved in being a Commissioned Lay Pastor: Commissioning is for a specific place and for a period of time (which can be renewed upon review). Reflect on the role/relationship of a Commissioned Lay Pastor in a congregational (or other setting) when the commissioned term is over.

Worship:

- ❖ What is the purpose of the Worship Service?
- ❖ How do the various parts of the service carry out that purpose?
- ❖ Develop and outline a possible Worship Service, including what you consider the essential elements. Indicate time allotments for each part of the service.

Preaching:

- ❖ Choose a lectionary passage from one of the Sundays in the month of _____ on the basis of which you will preach an 8-12 minute sermon. Outline your steps of preparation for this sermon, citing the resources you used. Write a brief introduction for your sermon. Outline the main points of the sermon and write a brief conclusion for your sermon. Be prepared to preach your sermon to the group assembled for your examination.

Sacraments:

- ❖ What are the Sacraments of the Presbyterian Church?
- ❖ Briefly, what is the meaning of each of these sacraments?
- ❖ What is a person's identity in the light of these sacraments? OR:
- ❖ What do these sacraments say about who you are and your relationship to others?

Huntingdon Presbytery

1. Give a brief statement of what you believe about God.
2. What do Christians mean by “The Trinity”?
3. What does “Justification by Faith” mean?
4. State some of your beliefs about Resurrection and Eternal Life.
5. How does the Book of Order describe a faithful member?
6. What are the Sacraments and who may receive them?
7. If the session of your church wants to call a congregational meeting, what are the steps to be taken? What can be discussed there?
8. How are Elders elected to office?
9. What are some of the responsibilities of the session?
10. Who decides how often the Lord’s Supper will be celebrated in a local congregation?
11. What book of the Bible tells about the beginning of the Church and tells of its extension by missionary activity?
12. What Bible passage might you use to preach on the following subjects?

Subject	Book, Chapter and Verses
A Godly Leader	
Stewardship	
The need for Christian growth	
Salvation	
The Holy Spirit	
Forgiveness of Sin	
How God calls a person	
Temptation	
The last judgment	

Situational Examinations

Some examinations are situational. Students are expected to translate the content of a course into a pastoral setting. Examination for a course on the sacraments might ask students to respond to a request for re-baptism by a person baptized in infancy. Or, a student might be asked to discuss their response to a couples’ request to be served the Lord’s Supper during their wedding. Examination for a course in the Book of Order might ask the student to describe their response to a request for a congregational meeting during the announcement portion of a worship service. These examinations follow the format of Standard Ordination Examinations in that they expect the student to supply their knowledge of a subject but also apply it in pastoral settings.

I. SAMPLE FORMS AND SERVICES

1. APPLICATIONS

APPLICATION FOR COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery

PART 1: (to be completed by the applicant)

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Sex: Male Female

Church Membership

Name of Congregation: _____

City: _____, Oklahoma

Date received into Membership: _____

Date of Baptism: _____

How many years have you been a Presbyterian? _____. Please list previous religions affiliations if applicable.

Family Information

a. Married Single If married, name of spouse: _____

If married with children, names and ages of children living at home: _____

Educational History:

High School Name of School: _____

Location of School (City/State): _____

Years attended: from 19____ to 19____

Did you Graduate? Yes No

If "No", do you now have a GED Diploma? Yes No

College/University Name of School: _____

Location of School (City/State): _____

Years attended: from 19____ to 19____

Did you Graduate? Yes No

Major Area of Study: _____

Post-Graduate School Name of School:
 Location of School (City/State):
 Years attended: from 19____ to 19____
 Did you Graduate? () Yes () No
 Major Area of Study:

Community College
 Name of School:
 Location of School (City/State):
 Years attended: from 19____ to 19____
 Did you Graduate? () Yes () No
 Major Area of Study:

Work/Military History (List current or most recent position first)

Dates From/To	Employer (Name/City/State)	Part-time (PT) Full-time (FT)	Title or type of work
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Church Service

Officer
 Elder (Date and Church Ordained)
 Deacon (Date and Church Ordained)
 Trustee (Date and Church Ordained)
 Clerk of Session (Dates of Service)
 Treasurer (Dates of Service)

Teacher/Worship Leader
 Church School Service (Dates of Service)
 Lay Leader in Worship (How Frequently)

List any Church Committees on which you have served (indicate whether a member or moderator, and years served)

Service to the Larger Church (Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly) List any Departments, Committees, Task Forces on which you have served (indicate whether a member or moderator and years served)

References
 (Please list the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two persons, not immediate family members, who know you and can comment on your gifts for the ministry of a commissioned lay preacher)

- a. Name _____
 Address _____

Phone _____

- b. Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____

Authorization to Contact References:

(Please sign): I hereby authorize those inquiring into my suitability to be a Commissioned Lay Pastor candidate to contact the persons listed above.

Applicant's signature: _____

Brief Essay

Please answer: Why are you interested in becoming a Commissioned Lay Pastor?

Applicant's Statement:

I hereby apply to be accepted as an applicant by Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery's Committee on Commissioned Lay Preachers for selection, training and commissioning into that ministry. I promise in reliance upon the grace of God to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for my chosen special ministry. I also promise to submit myself to the care of the Presbytery in matters that pertain to preparation.

Applicant's Signature: _____

**APPLICATION FOR COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR
Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery**

PART 2: (to be completed by the Clerk of Session)

Name of Applicant: _____

The above applicant is an active member of _____ Presbyterian Church in _____, Oklahoma.

On _____, 20____, the Session met with the above named applicant and examined him/her about becoming a Commissioned Lay Preacher candidate of Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery. The Session voted to recommend this person, with the following comments on his/her sense of call and particular gifts for this work:

(Please comment on the candidate's sense of Call and particular Gifts for this ministry)

Signatures:

Clerk of Session: _____

Moderator of Session: _____

Person commenting if not Clerk or Moderator _____

If accepted, I understand I will be undertaking a commitment of both academic and practical nature. I am also willing to commit myself to continuing education after completing the program. This will be in consultation with the Commissioned Lay Pastor Committee.

Signature _____

Date _____

Date of Endorsement by Session of Local Church _____

Signature of Clerk of Session _____

References (Please give name, address and telephone number of each person)

1. A Pastor _____

2. A Church friend _____

3. Another _____

2. COVENANT FOR A COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR

Committee on Ministry Handbook, 2001

NAME OF CHURCH: _____

NAME OF C.L.P.: _____

SERVICE FROM _____ TO _____

Review of this covenant prior to renewal or termination will be by the session and the Committee on Ministry.

This relationship may be terminated prior to expiration with _____ days notice by either party and the concurrence of the Committee on Ministry:

RESPONSIBILITIES OF C.L.P. (check those that apply to your situation) :

- Lead worship and preach _____ times each month
- Administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (presbytery permission must be granted)
- Administer the Sacrament of Baptism (presbytery permission must be granted)
- Moderate session meetings under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery (presbytery permission must be granted).
- Perform marriages (state law must allow and presbytery permission must be granted)
- Other duties: _____

TIME EXPECTATIONS (per week) _____

SPECIFIC DAYS IN MINISTRY if applicable

Use of presbytery's minimum salary guidelines for pastors is a convenient way to determine adequate compensation for a CLP. Assign a number of hours (48 for instance) per week for a full time call. Divide the presbytery minimum by that number of hours. Then multiply the hourly rate by the number of hours in the CLPs contract. This can become the beginning point for deciding appropriate CLP compensation.

COMPENSATION as applicable:

Cash salary: _____ /week, month (circle)

Medical coverage

Social security withheld

Travel reimbursement @ \$0._____ per mile

Other ministry cost reimbursement (telephone calls, etc.) _____

Continuing education or book allowance _____

Other: _____

Housing arrangements in the community _____

Vacation time _____

Continuing education time _____

Commissioned Lay Pastor

Clerk of Session _____ Date: _____

3. COMMISSIONING OF A LAY PASTOR - A SERVICE OF WORSHIP

Committee on Ministry Handbook 2001

When persons are presented for commissioning as lay pastors, it is appropriate that the presbytery in which they are to serve use this liturgy within a complete Service for the Lord's Day or as a separate service. When included in a complete service, this liturgy should follow the sermon and precede celebration of Eucharist.

The moderator and those whose who are to be commissioned
may gather at the baptismal font or pool.

SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

The moderator leads the people:

We, who are many, are one body in Christ,

Romans 12:5-8

and individually we are members one of another.

We have gifts that differ
according to the grace given to us:
prophecy, in proportion to faith;
ministry, in ministering,
the teacher, in teaching;
the exhorter, in exhortation,
the giver, in generosity;
the leader, in diligence;
the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

**Lead a life worthy of the calling
to which you have been called,
making every effort to maintain
the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
There is one body and one Spirit,
just as we were called to the one hope of our calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.**

Ephesians 4:1-6

The moderator continues:

The Presbytery of N. is satisfied that N. has met all requirements
and completed all preparations prescribed in the Constitution
of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

We now commission N. as a lay pastor to serve in and for _____.

[CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS]

The Commissioned Lay Pastor answers the questions required by the
Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and
Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son and
Holy Spirit?

I do.

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?

I do.

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

I do and I will.

Will you fulfill your commission in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

I will.

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

I will.

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

I will.

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

I do.

Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

I will.

Will you be a faithful Commissioned Lay Pastor, watching over the people, providing for their worship? In your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

I will, with God's help.

PRAYER

Almighty God,
in every age You have chosen servants
to speak your Word and lead your loyal people.
We thank you for N.
whom you have called to serve you
as Commissioned Lay Pastor

in and for N.
Give *him/her* gifts to do *his/her* particular work.
Fill *him/her* with your Holy Spirit,
so that *he/she* may have the same mind
that was in Christ Jesus,
and be a faithful disciple throughout life.

All may pray together:

**God of grace,
in baptism you have called us
to a common ministry
as ambassadors of Christ,
trusting us with the message of reconciliation.
Give us courage and discipline
to follow where your servants rightly lead us,
that together we may declare your wonderful deeds
and show your love to the world;
through Jesus Christ the Lord of all.
Amen.**

The moderator greets the lay pastor:

On behalf of the Presbytery of N.,
I welcome you to this ministry.
May God's Holy Spirit empower you
in the ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

**To initiate the relationship between a lay pastor and a Church the liturgy for
Commissioning to Ministry Within a Congregation may be adapted.**

4. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

RECRUITMENT/ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE WORKSHEET PRESBYTERY OF WEST VIRGINIA

Name of Applicant _____

Positive considerations

Negative Considerations

Personal Recommendation:

Accept
 Not Accept

WORSHIP LEADERSHIP AND SERMON FEEDBACK
PRESBYTERY OF WEST VIRGINIA

Name of Preacher _____

Church in which sermon was preached _____

Name of Evaluator _____ Date _____

Sermon Title _____

Bible Text _____

A. STRUCTURE AND MESSAGE

1. What was the primary message of the sermon?

2. What were some of the features of the sermon that helped clarify the message?

3. List your suggestions for strengthening the content of this sermon.

4. Were you readily able to follow the preacher's line of thought?

5. In your judgment, was the sermon a faithful exposition of scripture? Why or why not?

B. DELIVERY AND PRESENCE OF THE COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR

1. How would you describe the strengths of the CLP's manner and style of delivering the sermon?

2. What was it about the delivery that helped you listen and be a part of the sermon?

3. What suggestions do you have for strengthening sermon delivery?

4. Was the total worship service presented well? Suggestions?

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE FORMS to TWO evaluators (preferably with stamped addressed envelope) so they might return this completed form within five days to:

If you have any questions, please call the office of Presbytery...

A copy of this form will be shared with the Mentor and with the Presbytery Committee on Ministry.

(Revised 6/00)

MENTOR EVALUATION
PRESBYTERY OF WEST VIRGINIA

Mentor's Name _____ Home Phone _____
Work Phone _____

Mentor's Address _____

ALP/CLP's Name _____ Phone _____

1. How long have you been mentor to the above named ALP/CLP? _____

2. How often since his/her re-commissioning have you been in contact? _____

3. What are the major strengths of your ALP/CLP? _____

4. What are the major areas of growth for your ALP/CLP? _____

5. Have you discussed worship leadership and sermons with your CLP? Yes ___ No ___

Have you provided constructive criticism? Yes ___ No ___

6. Do you believe that your CLP is successful at leading worship and preaching? Yes ___ No ___

7. Do you think your CLP is growing spiritually in this experience? Yes ___ No ___

8. What suggestions would you make in regard to your CLP? _____

9. What suggestions do you have for the Mentor/ALP/CLP relationship structure? _____

10. Any other suggestions? _____

11. Do you have any thoughts to share about the entire ALP/CLP program? _____

Thank you again. Your signature _____ Date _____

Sexual Misconduct Self Certification: Commissioned Lay Pastor

The following information related to sexual misconduct was mandated by the Sexual Misconduct Policy, its Procedures adopted by the 203rd General Assembly (1991), and was revised by the 205th General Assembly (1993). It has been modified for use by Commissioned Lay Pastors (2003).

Please check one of the following:

 I certify below that no civil, criminal, ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained or is pending* against me for sexual misconduct; and I have never resigned or been terminated from a position for reasons related to sexual misconduct.*

 I am unable to make the above certification. I offer, instead, the following description of the complaint, termination, or the outcome of the situation with explanatory comments.

The above is accurate to the best of my knowledge and may be verified by the calling and employing entity. I hereby authorize entities considering me for employment as a Commissioned Lay Pastor to inquire concerning any civil or criminal records, or any judicial or proceeding involving me as a defendant, related to sexual misconduct. By means of this release I also authorize any previous employer, and any law enforcement agencies or judicial authorities or ecclesiastical governing bodies to release any and all requested relevant information related to sexual misconduct to any entity considering me for employment as a Commissioned Lay Pastor.

 I have read this certification and release form and fully understand that the information obtained may be used to deny my employment or any other type of position from the employing entity. I also agree that I will hold harmless the employing or judicial authority or any other entity from any and all claims, liabilities, and causes of action for the legitimate release of any information related to sexual misconduct.

Signature _____ Print Name _____ Date _____

- * **Sustained**
- In a criminal court, "sustained" means that there has been a guilty plea, a guilty verdict or a plea bargain.
 - In a civil court, "sustained" means that there has been a judgment against the defendant.
 - In an ecclesiastical case, "sustained" means that there has been a guilty plea and censure imposed, a finding of guilty with censure imposed, or an Alternative Form of Resolution Agreement approved by a permanent judicial commission in the Presbyterian Church (USA) or an equivalent body of another church.
- * **Pending**
- In a criminal court, "pending" means a criminal charge before a grand jury, in the process of being prosecuted, or in a case in which there is not yet a verdict.
 - In a civil court, "pending" means a case in which there has not been a decision or judgment,
 - In an ecclesiastical case, "pending" means that an investigating committee is inquiring into an allegation or charges have been filed but have not been decided by a permanent judicial commission; or an allegation or charges are in an equivalent state or process in a church other than the PC (USA).

(The following is taken from definitions in the General Assembly Sexual Misconduct Policy and its Procedures, Pg.13)

"Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy and its procedures to include: 1) Child sexual abuse, as defined above [refers to Policy]; 2) Sexual harassment, as defined above [refers to Policy]; 3) Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation; 4) Sexual conduct (such as offensive, obscene or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling) that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another; 5) Sexual Malfeasance defined as sexual conduct within a ministerial (e.g. clergy with a member of the congregation) or professional relationship (e.g. counselor with a client, lay employee with a church member, presbytery executive with a committee member who may be a layperson, a minister, or an elder). Sexual conduct includes unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition is not meant to cover relationships between spouses, nor is it meant to restrict church professionals from having normal, social, intimate, or marital relationships; 6) Sexual Abuse as found in Book of Order D-10.0401b (see Accuser/Victim)

PART THREE

BOOKS AND RESOURCES USEFUL IN CLP TRAINING and MINISTRY

The resources below are broken into categories according to the courses usually offered in Commissioned Lay Pastor training. The list is intentionally limited in each category and represents books often listed in CLP training information. Many of these resources may be available in church libraries, presbytery and synod resource centers, etc. Where possible prices and choice of hardback or paper editions is noted.

Something to look for: Beginning in Fall 2000, the first volumes of a new initiative in theology for a lay audience with a working series title *Foundations of Christian Faith* will begin to appear. Similar to the Layman's Theological Library of the 1950's it will consist of 12 volumes, written for lay people and dealing with Presbyterian beliefs and worship. It is a collaborative effort between the authors, the office of Theology and Worship, and Geneva Press. Each book is intended to integrate theology, ethics and worship (including the sacraments) into the topic.

A. BIBLE

1. GENERAL RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Ackroyd, P.R. and C. F. Evans, eds. *The Cambridge History of the Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963-70.

House, H. Wayne. *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Available from Cokesbury. \$18.99

Metzger, Bruce M. and Michael David Coogan. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available from Cokesbury. \$63 hardcover

Severance, W. Murray. *That's Easy for You to Say: Your Quick Guide to Pronouncing Biblical Names*. Holman. Available from Cokesbury. \$14.95 (paperback and CD-ROM)

Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Available from Cokesbury. \$19.99

Witherup, Ronald D. *The Bible Companion: A Handbook for Beginners*. Crossroads. (New) Available from Cokesbury. \$12.95, paper

DICTIONARIES:

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. 5 volumes Nashville/New York: Abingdon Press, 1976. Available from Cokesbury. \$35 per volume, hardcover \$135 for 5 volume set.

The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible. This is not currently in print, but is available in many church libraries, presbytery resource centers, pastor libraries, perhaps even in a local college or public library.

COMMENTARIES:

The Interpreter's Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956. This is currently being revised. Many church libraries, public libraries, and presbytery resource centers will have the original editions.

The New Interpreter's Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990+ Cokesbury offers discounts to people who subscribe to receiving the volumes of the *NIB* as they become available. They are available in both print and electronic form. Print volumes are \$60-70 each (there will be 12 total when completed). The CD-

ROM containing the latest volumes is \$130; it also contains copies of earlier volumes that can be “unlocked” by calling Cokesbury and opening an account or a subscription.

OTHER MULTI-VOLUME COMMENTARIES:

The Anchor Bible. David Noel Freedman, general editor. New York: Doubleday.

\$28-\$55 per volume

The Communicator’s Commentary. Lloyd John Ogilvie, general editor. Waco: Word Books.

Interpretation; edited by James L. Mays, Patrick D. Miller and Paul Achtenmeier.

Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press. \$21-\$32 per volume.

Westminster Bible Companion. Patrick D. Miller and David L. Bartlett, editors. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press. \$14-21 per volume, paper

CONCORDANCES: Look for one that matches the version of the Bible you most use for preaching, teaching and study purposes.

2. OLD TESTAMENT

Anderson, Bernard W. **Understanding the Old Testament.** 4th edition. Old Tappan, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986. \$69.00 (Abridged paperback edition, 1997, \$42.00)

Bright, John. **A History of Israel,** 3rd edition. Louisville: The Westminster Press, 1981. \$38.95 (4th edition upcoming)

Brueggemann, Walter. **The Prophetic Imagination.** Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press, 1978. \$14.00 paperback

Brueggemann, Walter. **Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy.** Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press, 1978. Available from Cokesbury. \$48.

Heschel, Abraham. **The Prophets.** 2 volumes. New York: Harper-Collins (Torch) 1969; 1971. Paperback. \$15 each

Lawrence, Jerome. **Inherit the Wind.** Bantam Books, 1982

Mowinckel, Sigmund. **The Psalms in Israel’s Worship.** Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1962, 1992

3. NEW TESTAMENT

A Course of Study Outlines for Bible Class Leaders. New York: Gordon Press, 1973. \$59.95

Ehrman, Bart D. **The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings.** New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Available from Cokesbury. \$36.95 paperback.

Green, Joel B. **Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation.** Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995. Available from Cokesbury. \$25.00 paperback.

Throckmorton, B. H. **Gospel Parallels, 5th revised edition.** Nashville: Nelson Communications, 1992. \$19.95

B. REFORMED THEOLOGY

1. THEOLOGY

Barth, Karl. **A Karl Barth Reader,** ed. By Rolf J. Eerler and Reiner Marquard; ed. and trans. By Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988. \$19.95 paperback

Barth, Karl. *The Theology of the Reformed Confessions*. Translated and Annotated by Darrell and Judith Gruder. Westminster John Knox Press. 2002

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. Riverside, NJ: Simon & Schuster, 1995.
\$11.00 paperback

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Westminster John Knox Press. 1960

Cone, James. *God of the Oppressed*. Westminster John Knox Press. 1997.

Guthrie, Shirley C., Jr. *Christian Doctrine*, (revised edition) Louisville, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.
Available form: Cokesbury, PDS. \$22 paperback

Kung, Hans. *On Being a Christian*. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1984. Reprint \$24.95.

Leith, John. *Basic Christian Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.
Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$26.95

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. Westminster John Knox Press. 1997.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973-76.
Vol 1: \$14; Vol 2: \$10.95; Vol. 3: \$20.00

The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1983. Available form Cokesbury, PDS. \$34.95

2. CREEDS

Leith, John H. *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*.
Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1982. \$26.95

Rogers, Jack. *Presbyterian Creeds: A Guide to the Book of Confessions*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1985. Cokesbury, PDS. \$15.95 paperback

Schaff, Phillip, editor. *Creeds of Christendom, revised edition*. 3 volumes. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990.
\$125

3. CHURCH HISTORY

Ahlstrom, Sydney. *A Religious History of the American People*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 1974.
\$27.00 paperback

Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of Christianity*. 2 volumes. New York: Harper and Row, 1975. \$24.00 each

Lingle, Walter L. and John W. Kuykendall. *Presbyterians: Their History and Beliefs*. Louisville:
Westminster/John Knox Press. Reprint of 1958 ed. \$12.95 paperback

Marty, Martin E. *A Short History of Christianity*. 2nd revised edition. Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 1987.
\$23.00

Mead, Frank S. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*. Abingdon Press, Cokesbury. \$15.95
paperback.

Smylie, James H. *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996. \$12.95 paperback

C. SACRAMENTS

1. GENERAL

Byers, Ronald. *Christian Worship*. Geneva Press. 2002.

Hansen-Tice, Lisa. *Meaning of Mystery: Baptism and Communion* (Videotape with Leader's Guide) Louisville: PCUSA

White, James F. *The Sacraments as God's Self Giving*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983. Available from Cokesbury. \$9.95 paperback

White, James F. *The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999. Available from Cokesbury. \$17.00 paperback

2. BAPTISM

Fishburn, Janet F. *Parenting Is for Everyone: Living Out Our Baptismal Covenant*. Louisville: PCUSA. paperback 70 pages

Fogle, Jeanne S. *Signs of God's Love*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1984. \$11.95

Stookey, Laurence Hull. *Baptism: Christ's Act in the Church*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1982. Available from Cokesbury. \$18.00 paperback.

3. THE LORD'S SUPPER

Gerrish, Brian. *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin*. Fortress. 1993. This book is out of print. Contact the Office of Theology and Worship for a copy www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship.

Gonzalez, Catherine G. *Theology of The Lord's Supper*. Louisville: PCUSA. Available from PDS. Paperback 23 pages.

Ng, David. *Welcoming Children to the Lord's Table*. Louisville: PCUSA

Stookey, Laurence Hull. *Eucharist: Christ's Feast With the Church*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993. Available from Cokesbury. \$18.00 paperback.

D. PRESBYTERIAN POLITY

Beattie, Frank A. *Companion to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Polity for the Local Church*. Louisville: Geneva Press, 1996. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$9.00 paperback

Gray, Joan S. and Joyce C. Tucker. *Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers (Third Edition)*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$16.75 paperback

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part I: Book of Confessions. Louisville: The Office of the General Assembly, 1999. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$7.50 paper; \$7.50 LARGE PRINT; \$29.95 Software (Mac or Windows editions)

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II: Book of Order. Louisville: The Office of the General Assembly, 1999. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$7.50, paper; \$7.50 LARGE PRINT, \$29.95 Software (Mac or Windows editions)
(Available in English, Spanish, Korean, Taiwanese)
Annotated Edition: \$10.50

E. PREACHING

Allen, Ronald. ***Preaching: An Essential Guide.*** Abigon Press. 2002

Brooks, Phillips. ***Lectures on Preaching.*** Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishing, 1989. \$10.99 paperback

Buechner, Frederick. ***Telling the Truth, The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy and Fairy Tale.*** San Francisco: Harper-Collins (Harper Religious Books), 1977. \$18.00 paperback

Childers, Jana. ***Birthing the Sermon: Women Preachers on the Creative Process.*** Chalice Press. 2001

Cox, James W. ***Handbook of Themes for Preaching.*** Louisville: Westminster Available from Cokesbury, PDS

Dykstra, Robert. ***Discovering a Sermon: Personal Pastoral Preaching.*** Chalice Press. 2001

Long, Thomas G. ***The Witness of Preaching.*** Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989. \$19.95, paperback

Mitchell, Henry H. ***Black Preaching: The Recovery of A Powerful Act.*** Abigon Press. 1990

Schlafer, David J. ***Surviving the Sermon: A Guide to Preaching for Those who Have to Listen.*** Boston: Cowley Press, 1992. \$10.95 paperback

Smith, Christine M. ***Weaving the Sermon: Preaching in a Feminist Perspective.*** Westminster John Knox Press. 1995.

Texts For Preaching. Westminster John Knox.

F. TEACHING

Belonging to God: A First Catechism. Louisville: PCUSA, 1999+ Available from Cokesbury, PDS

Deluxe Starter Kit (has samples of all the available materials) \$43

Packets of 10 copies of the following teaching questions:

Belonging to God: A First Catechism 60 questions for children and young people 10 copies, \$4.50

The Study of Catechism: Full Version 134 questions for older teens 10 copies, \$9.00

The Study Catechism, Confirmation Version 106 questions for confirmation classes 10 copies, \$7.00

Book of Catechisms. Geneva Press, 2000

Dykstra, Craig. ***Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices.*** Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999. Available from Cokesbury. \$18.00 paperback

Harris, Maria and Gabriel Moran. *Reshaping Religious Education: Conversations on Contemporary Practice*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998. Available from Cokesbury \$18.95 paperback

Juengst, Sara Covin. *Equipping the Saints: Teacher Training in the Church*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$14.95 paperback.

G. WORSHIP

1. GENERAL WORSHIP RESOURCES

The Book of Common Worship. Prepared by the Theology and Worship Ministry Unit of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.
Cokesbury; PDS Hardcover \$32; Imitation Leather \$26; Daily Prayer Edition \$21;
Gift Edition (leather) \$50; Macintosh or Windows Software Edition: \$70

Byers, Ronald. *Christian Worship*. Geneva Press. 2000.

Erickson, Craig Douglas. *Participating in Worship*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$17.95 paperback.

Exploring Presbyterian Worship. Louisville: PCUSA. Available through PDS. paperback

Office of Theology and Worship. *The Great Ends of The Church/worship Resources For Congregations*
Louisville: Witherspoon Press. Available from PDS.

Kline, Benton C. *Directory for Worship-Study Guide* Louisville: PCUSA . Available through PDS paperback
76 pages

Long, Tom. *Beyond the Worship Wars*. Geneva Press. 2001.

Noren, Carol. *What Happens Sunday Morning*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992. Available from Cokesbury. \$10.00 paperback.

The Presbyterian Hymnal. Westminster John Knox Press. 1991.

The Great Ends of the Church/Worship Resources for Congregations. Office of Theology and Worship.
Witherspoon Press 2003.

White, James F. *Documents of Christian Worship* Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992. Available from PDS. \$27.95 paperback

2. LECTIONARY LITURGICAL YEAR RESOURCES:

Biddle, Perry H., Jr. *Preaching the Lectionary (Years A, B, Cs separate volumes)* Louisville: Westminster Press Available from Cokesbury, PDS. paperback

Bower, Peter C., editor *Handbook for the Common Lectionary*. Louisville: PCUSA Paperback, Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$17.95 paperback

Fogle, Jeanne S. *Seasons of God's Love: The Church Year*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1988.
\$18.95

Hickman, Hoyt L. *The New Handbook of the Christian Year*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992. Available from

Cokesbury. \$22.95, spiral bound

3. HYMNS AND MUSIC

Auld, William D., editor. *Sing and Rejoice-Favorite Hymns in Large Print with Lower Keys* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997. Paperback.

McKim, LindaJo H. *Presbyterian Hymnal Companion*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$25.00, paperback

Muck, Judith L. *Presbyterian Hymnal-Complete Concordance and Indexes*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press. Available from PDS. paperback 340 pages

Osbeck, Kenneth M. *Amazing Grace*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990. \$13.99 paperback (Osbeck has also written several other collections of hymn stories including *101 Hymn Stories* and *101 More Hymn Stories* each about \$13.00)

The Psalter: Psalms And Canticles For Singing. Louisville: PCUSA. Available from PDS. Paperback 410 pages

Smith, Judy Gattis. *Teaching with Music Through the Church Year*. Nashville: Abingdon Press (Griggs) New?, paperback

4. CHILDREN AND YOUTH RESOURCES

Bailey, Betty Jane. *Youth Plan Worship*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press. Paperback 214 pages

Boling, Ruth. *Children's Guide to Worship*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$6.95

Love, Jean Floyd. **Get Ready! Get Set! Worship!** SharTree Notebook format (check your resource center for ordering information)

H. PASTORAL CARE

Fowler, James W. *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*. Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 1987. \$14.00 paperback

Fowler, James W. *Stages of Faith*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1995. \$16.00 paperback

Friedman, Edwin H. *Friedman's Fables*. New York: Guilford Publishing, 1990. \$21.95

I. EVANGELISM AND CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Building Your Own Model For Cooperative Ministry Available from the Presbyterian Marketplace www.pcusa.org/marketplace or 1-800-524-2612. The PDS number is 305-93-923 and the cost is \$3.00.

Church Loan Program - applications are available from the Investment and Loan Program. Call 1-800-903-7457, ext. 5245

Cooperative Parish Manual - Available from the Presbyterian Marketplace

www.pcusa.org/marketplace or 1-800-524-2612. The PDS number is 305-93-921 and the cost is \$3.00.

Good News – quarterly newsletter. For a free subscription call 1-888-728-7228, ext. 5227. This newsletter contains news and information about upcoming Small Church events.

Living the Vision. A series of resources published by Mission Interpretation and Promotion for Evangelism and Church Development Ministries of the General Assembly Council. Visit the website at www.pcusa.org/ecd. Some subjects covered are:

- Rural Ministry: Church & Community
- New Church Development
- Small Church Ministry
- Commitment to Evangelism

Mission Program Grants This office in ECD responds to the grant needs of the Presbyterian Church by providing funding for new congregations, transforming congregations, and specialized ministries that reflect the denomination's commitment to inclusiveness, diversity and ecumenicalism. **Grant Writing 101, A Guide to Writing General Assembly Mission Program Grant Proposals** provides specific instruction on how to apply for available funds and provides insights into the grant process. For more information, please call 1-888-728-7228, Ext 5251. Visit www.pcusa.org/evangelism/churchdevelopment/mpgrants to obtain the application forms and related resources.

New Times New Call, A Manual of Pastoral Options - This is one of the newest ECD Resources and is developed to guide presbyteries and small membership churches as they explore together ways of stepping out in faith and being open to various kinds of leadership. For more information, please call 1-888-728-7228, Ext 5244.

Tentmakers Manual – Available from the Presbyterian Marketplace www.pcusa.org/marketplace or 1-800-524-2612. The PDS number is 305-92-950 and the cost is \$3.00.

J. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Calian, Carnegie Samuel. *Survival or Revival: 10 keys to Church Vitality*. Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1999. Available from Cokesbury, PDS. \$16.95 paperback

Clements, C. Justin. *The Shepherd's Way: A Spirituality of Stewardship*. Franklin, WI: Sheed and Ward, 1997. \$13.95 paperback

Crandall, Ronald. *Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. Available from Cokesbury. \$12.95 paperback

Fox, Susan E. and Kurtis C. Hess. *Here I am, Lord. Now What? Transition and Survival in the First Parish*. South Charleston, WV: Taste of Ministry, Inc., 1995.

Halverstadt, Hugh. *Managing Church Conflict*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991. \$18.95 paperback.

Peterson, Eugene. *Reversed Thunder and Working the Angels: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*.

San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1991. \$13.00 paperback

Schaller, Lyle E. *Growing Plans*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983. \$12.95 paperback. (Check for different books by Schaller on different topics most are concise; see below under software)

Stewardship Resource Packets. Louisville: PDS. Available for the current and previous years to help with stewardship season and year-round stewardship planning.

Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995. \$19.95 paperback

K. SPIRITUALITY

Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1973. \$3.95 (reprint)
(Many editions, many prices to choose form with this classic)

Kempis, Thomas A. *The Imitation of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983. Reprinted.
\$6.95, paperback. (Many editions, many prices to choose form with this classic)

Nouwen, Henri. *Making All Things New*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1981. \$16.00, paperback.

Rice, Howard. *The Pastor as Spiritual Guide*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998. \$16.95.

Rice, Howard. *Reformed Spirituality*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991. \$19.95.

Rice, Howard with Lamar Williamson. *Book of Reformed Prayers*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997. \$15.95, paperback.

Shenk, Sara Wenger. *Why Not Celebrate* Harrisonburg, VA: Good Books, 1989. \$9.95, paperback.

L. MISCELANEOUS INFORMATION

1. SOFTWARE

The Abingdon Preaching Annual: 2000 Edition on CD-Rom. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
For Windows 3.1 or higher. Available from Cokesbury, \$32

The Book of Common Worship. Prepared by the Theology and Worship Ministry Unit of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.
Macintosh or Windows Software Edition: \$70

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part I: Book of Confessions. Louisville: The Office of the General Assembly, 1999. Available from Cokesbury, PDS
\$29.95 (Mac or Windows editions)

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II: Book of Order. Louisville: The Office of the General Assembly, 1999. Available from Cokesbury, PDS
\$29.95 (Mac or Windows editions)

The Church Consultant: The Collected Works of Lyle E. Schaller on CD-ROM. Include 46 books, 300 editions of *The Parish Paper*, 500 Friar Tuck cartoons (can be used in desktop publishing). CD ROM for Windows. Available from Cokesbury: \$125

The Interpreter's Bible & The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible on CD-ROM. (The text is the original

Interpreter's Bible, now being revised). CD ROM for Windows.
Available from Cokesbury: \$250.

LabOra Worship Software. A full worship planning software program, including the Presbyterian Hymnal, Book of Common Worship, Book of Occasional Services, the Bible in three translations, the Directory for Worship, the Book of Confessions, Call to Worship journal, and music writing software. It is available from the Presbyterian Association of Musicians at www.pam.pcusa.org.

The New Interpreter's Bible: Electronic Edition (CD-ROM for Windows 3.x; Windows 95)

Disk Four includes *Volume II* (Numbers - Samuel; Narrative Literature) and *Volume XII* (Hebrews-Revelation), plus "locked" volumes I, IV, VII, VIII, IX (volumes can be unlocked by calling Cokesbury). These are on a subscription basis which allows for a 30% discount when a person subscribes to the Electronic Edition. Some volumes are still in process.

The Preaching Library: Based on the Revised Common Lectionary for the Years A, B, & C.

Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Resources included: *Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary* (Years A, B, C) 12 volumes; *The Preaching Annual* (Years A, B, C); *Children's Sermons for the Revised Common Lectionary* (Years A, B, C); *The Sermon Illustrator*; and *Forbid Them Not* (Years A, B, C). Windows 95 or higher Available from Cokesbury; \$250

Presbyterian Worship Planner CD-ROM. Available from Cokesbury, PDS \$199.

From the catalogue: Create bulletins, worship programs, inserts and other services materials with just a few clicks of the mouse. Search by keyword or by lectionary text to find suitable prayers, creeds, Scriptures passages, biblical insights, and hymn titles and numbers. (Does not specify Macintosh or Windows or both)

2. WEBSITES

Cokesbury: www.cokesbury.com If you do not have a Cokesbury catalogue or live near a Cokesbury store, you can use this website to find and order books

The Commissioned Lay Pastor website – www.pcusa.org/clp

Dubuque Theological Seminary: www.udtslearning.net. Dubuque has received a grant to develop interactive broadcast courses for Commissioned Lay Pastor training. Check here to see what information on current courses is available. John P. Jewell and Ann Hoch West are contact people for more information.

Presbyterian Church, USA: www.pcusa.org (This can also link you to Presbynet)

Presbyterian Distribution Services, Geneva Press, Westminster/John Knox Press, Presbyterian Publishing Corp.; *Presbyterian Curriculum, Bridge Resources, Denominational Magazines:* www.pcusa.org/marketplace.

Synod of the Sun Small Church Website: www.thsmallchurc.org. This website has information about a new series of on-line interactive courses that will be offered to pastors, Commissioned Lay Pastors and others who are interested.

3. MAGAZINES

Church & Society (bimonthly)
PCUSA, National Ministries Division
100 Witherspoon
Louisville, KY 40202-1396
502-569-5819; 800-524-2612
\$12/year \$30/3 years

Horizons: Women's bi-monthly magazine; annual Bible study published in March issue
Horizons
100 Witherspoon St.
Louisville, KY 40202 - 1396
800-524-2612
\$15/year \$28/2 years \$41/3 years

Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology (January, April, July, October)
UTS and PSCE
3401 Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23227
804-278-4297
www.interpretation.org
\$23/year \$42/2 years \$56/3 years single copies/back issues: \$6

The Presbyterian Outlook
The Presbyterian Outlook Foundation
P.O. Box 85623
Richmond, VA 23285-5623
Published weekly \$31.50/year \$59.20/2 years \$85.95/3 years
www.pres-outlook.com

Presbyterian Today (10 issues/year; news magazine of the PCUSA)
100 Witherspoon
Louisville, KY 40202-1936
\$12.95/year \$22.00/2 years \$29.00/3 years
Large Print edition available; every home and bulk church subscriptions also available
www.pcusa.org/today

4. OTHER PERIODICALS

Biblical Archaeological Review
BAR
P.O. Box 7026
Red Oak, IA 51591
800-678-5555
www.bib-arch.org
\$27/year

Biblical Preaching Journal (Exegesis and Sermons) (January, April, July, October)
Biblical Preaching Institute
695 Craigs Creek Road
Versailles, KY 40383-8909
\$35/year Back copies/single copies \$11
related to the Disciples of Christ

Christianity Today (14 issues a year general news)

P.O. Box 37060
Boone, IA 50037-0060
800-999-1704
www.xytoday.com
\$24.95/year

Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture

American Society of Church History (March, June, September, December)
P.O. Box 8517
Red Bank, NJ 07701-8517
dues/subscription: \$40 year; single issues/back issues: \$15
www.churchhistory.org

Congregations: The Alban Journal

The Alban Institute
7315 Wisconsin Ave. 1250W
Bethesda, MD 20814-3211
301-718-4407
sent bi-monthly to members. Write for information on categories of membership
www.alban.org

Leadership (January, April, July, October) (By the editors of Christianity Today)

P.O. Box 37060
Boone, IA 50037-0060
800-777-3136
www.leadershipjournal.com
\$24.95/year \$44.95/2 years \$59.95/3 years

The Living Pulpit (January, April, July, October)

5000 Independence Ave.
Bronx, NY 10471
718-549-6113
Membership: \$39/year Back issues: \$10

Pulpit Digest (quarterly)

Logos Productions, Inc.
6160 Carmen Ave, NE
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076-4422
800-328-0200
print edition: \$29.95/year \$55.95/2 years
IBM 3.5 diskette \$59.95/year \$105.50/2 years

Reformed Worship (quarterly--resources for planning and leading worship)

2850 Kalamazoo Ave., SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49560
800-777-7270
www.info@reformedworship.org
\$23.95/year back issues: \$8.00