

SOME MAJOR EVENTS IN THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS

I. ESTABLISHING A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP between the Presbytery Preparation for Ministry Committee and the Inquirer/Candidate at the beginning of the Inquiry and Candidacy phases. This involves:

- Agreement regarding procedure, mutual responsibilities, and relationships.
- Discussion of at least the following:
 - Plans for education
 - Courses of study
 - Choice of educational institutions
 - Familiarity with Bible and Confessions
 - Practical training and inquirer/candidate's service to the church
 - Inquirer/candidate's financial need
 - See Form No. 4

II. THE INQUIRY PHASE

Book of Order 14.0302-.0303

Preparation for Ministry manual pp. 14-16

III. THE CANDIDACY PHASE

Book of Order 14.0305a-j

Preparation for Ministry manual pp. 17-19

IV. ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS with presbytery committee are held at least once a year throughout the Inquiry and Candidacy Phases.

Book of Order 14.0309a

Preparation for Ministry manual p. 11

- Procedures:

Written report to be submitted by inquiry/candidate 14 days before the consultation.

Consultation “may be held by the entire committee or may be carried out by persons appointed by the committee either from its own membership or with similar responsibilities in a presbytery within which the inquirer or candidate is pursuing a course of study or engaged in other approved service.” (G-14.0309a)

Consultation will focus on providing nurture and evaluation in five key areas:

- + **Education for Ministry**, which includes evaluation of the individual's academic potential and progress and reflection on the purpose of educational experiences and on their relation to preparation for ministry of the Word.
- + **Spiritual Development**, which provides a framework in which individuals can reflect on their personal faith journeys.
- + **Interpersonal Relations**, which provide opportunities to reflect on how an individual relates to others and what this means in terms of the ministry of the Word.
- + **Personal Growth**, through which persons reflect on who they are, what areas they need to develop, how to understand their call, and how to develop personal stewardship.
- + **Professional Development**, to help persons develop specific skills that will enhance their effectiveness as ministers of the Word and as presbyters.

Specific Content in Successive Years:

“...shall include, but need not be limited to, the following in the appropriate years”:

- a. **In the years prior to entering theological education**, discussion of the inquirer's or candidate's preparation for theological education and for personal growth.
- b. **In the first year of theological education**, a general assessment of her or his experiences and the implications this has for future professional ministry.

Request for exceptions to requirements for ordination may be presented.

- c. **In the second year of theological education**, an assessment of the inquirer's or candidate's experience similar to that held in previous year (s), a discussion of progress in preparation for ordination, including a preliminary statement of faith, a review of all grades, field education reports, and other appropriate evaluation reports, and other appropriate evaluations. The presbytery also shall satisfy itself of the individual's thorough knowledge of the Bible, as evidenced by passing grades in the Bible Content Cooperative Examination.
- d. **In the final year of seminary** and before a candidate may accept a call, **a final assessment** of the candidate's readiness in all respects to receive a call

This consultation shall focus on the outcomes of inquiry (G-14.0305j) and shall include each of the requirements of certification set forth in G-14.0310. A summary of this assessment shall be transmitted to a calling presbytery when requested.

Written Report:

“There shall be a written report of each annual consultation, including a statement of the individual’s strengths and areas of needed growth, prepared jointly by the committee or its representative and the inquirer or candidate. These reports shall be submitted to the presbytery, the individual’s sponsoring session, and the theological institution.” (G-14.0309).

IN NO CASE SHALL AN INQUIRER OR CANDIDATE BE EXCUSED FROM THESE ANNUAL CONSULATATIONS (G-14.0309).

V. EXAMINATION AND ORDINATION

Location of (G-14.0314):

When a candidate has been assessed by the presbytery as ready to receive a call in accord with G-14.0310 and G-14.0305j and has been extended a call within the jurisdiction of another presbytery, the calling presbytery ordinarily examines the candidate as provided for in G-11.0402 and G-14.0402. However either the calling presbytery or the candidate’s presbytery may request that either presbytery conduct the examination or ordination of both. Permission can be granted when the two presbyteries and the candidate agree to this procedure. (Preparation for Ministry manual, p. 12)

Examination and Ordination (G-14.0401, G-14.0402):

Ordination to the office of minister of the Word and Sacrament is an act of the whole church carried out by the presbytery. The candidate appears before the calling presbytery and makes a brief statement of personal faith and commitment to the ministry of the Word (except as provided for in G-14.0314). The presbytery, having requested and received the final summary assessment of the candidate’s presbytery, having received certification of a diploma from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and acceptable to the presbytery, having heard the candidate and his or her sermon preached before the presbytery or a committee thereof (G-14.0305 j (6), and having received the recommendation of its responsible committee (G-11.0402), conduct

any further examination it deems necessary regarding the candidate's Christian faith and views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). If the presbytery is fully satisfied regarding the candidate's qualifications, it votes to proceed to her or his ordination by the presbytery of care or by the presbytery of call if both presbyteries agree to this procedure.

(Preparation for Ministry manual, p. 12)

Note: For schedule of Roles and Responsibilities of Inquirers and Candidates, see Preparation for Ministry manual pp. 14-19.

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