

No. 8540

DEFINITION OF POLICY CONCERNING REVISION OF "MINISTERIAL PLACEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES"

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

Background Information:

Resolution 8142 on the Revision of Ministerial Placement Principles and Procedures, approved by the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Anaheim, California, July 31 - August 5, 1981, instructed the Task Force on the Ministry of the General Board to:

- Examine and revise the document, Ministerial Placement Principles and Procedures;
- Enlist the participation of Regional Clergy Associations, the Congress of Disciples Clergy, Regional Commissions on the Ministry, the Conference of Regional Ministers and Moderators, and the Department of Ministry of the Division of Homeland Ministries to assist in the examination and revision of the document;
- Present a progress report on its work to the General Board at its 1982 meeting; and
- Prepare a policy statement on ministerial relocation for presentation and action at the 1983 General Assembly.

The Task Force on the Ministry, in beginning its work of examining and revising the document, *Ministerial Placement Principles and Procedures*, proceeded through a number of steps.

1. Listed the Concerns

In addition to the problems and concerns stated specifically in Resolution 8142, Dr. Thomas E. Wood, Executive Secretary of the Department of Ministry, was asked to detail other concerns that have been raised as well as other changes that would make the document more effective.

2. Enlisted Representatives of Groups Involved in Ministry

While most of the constituency groups listed in the resolution were already represented on the Task Force, several other persons were enlisted to insure representation of each constituency.

3. Reviewed and Revised the Document

The document was revised by the Task Force on the basis of concerns raised in the Assembly Resolution (8142). This section "Ministerial Relocation," if approved, would become Section VI of the "Policies and Criteria" statement.

4. Sought Counsel from Regional Ministers and Regional Commissions on the Ministry

The revised document was mailed to regional ministers and regional commissions for evaluation and suggested changes. They made a number of helpful suggestions.

5. Prepared Policy Statement and Resolution for 1983 General Assembly.

The Revised document was presented to the Administrative Committee of the General Board, January 31 - February 2, 1983. The Administrative Committee raised several questions and suggested wider circulation of the proposed changes before presentation to the General Assembly. There was a concern that local congregational leaders be included among those reviewing and evaluating the document.

6. A progress report to the General Assembly was presented in San Antonio as business item No. 8360, describing the process being followed in the revision of "Ministerial Placement Principles and Procedures."

7. After receiving further responses from congregational leaders, ministerial groups, regional ministers and regional commissions, a proposed "Section VI, Ministerial Relocation," for the "Policies and Criteria for The Order of the Ministry" was completed to present to the 1985 General Assembly.

8. The text of the proposed "Section VI, Ministerial Relocation" was presented to the Administrative Committee meeting January 27-29, 1985. The Administrative referred the text back to the Task Force on the Ministry with suggestions for further revision of section C. Responsibilities, 2. Regions, K; The Division of Homeland Ministries, C. and 1.; and 8. Ministers, a. The text has been revised by the Task Force and is presented below.

VI MINISTERIAL RELOCATION

A. The General Principle. Ministerial relocation is the term applied to the process developed to facilitate the employment of ordained and licensed ministers who hold standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It provides a covenantal framework within which ministers and the general, regional and congregational manifestations of the church can serve to upbuild the whole church of Jesus Christ.

Freedom and responsibility are inherent in the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). General, regional and congregational manifestations of the church are accorded full freedom to issue ministerial calls within their own established or constitutional provisions. Ministers, likewise, are accorded full freedom to accept or reject a call to any particular service. All, however, covenant to work within these policies in the interest of assuring an orderly and responsible system of ministerial relocation.

B. Operating Principles.

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

C. Responsibilities.

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

- f. Congregations may talk with a number of ministers concurrently, but will negotiate with only one minister at a time. A search committee and candidate are in negotiation when both agree that they will not discuss relocation with any other candidate or search committee until the expiration of a mutually agreed upon date. It is the obligation of the search committee to be specific with the minister about its degree of interest.
 - g. Congregations will issue a written call providing copies of the call for the congregation, the minister, and the region.
 - h. Congregations will provide a fair salary (including parsonage provision) within the capabilities of the congregation, as well as adequate benefits (pension, health insurance, continuing education and Social Security offset).
 - i. Congregations will provide for the reimbursement of church-related expenses to cover actual expenses of accomplishing ministry.
 - j. Congregations will stay in communication with candidates whom the search committee has contacted, especially informing candidates who are no longer being considered for the position.
2. **Regions.** Regions bear the primary responsibility for providing advice and counsel to both congregations and ministers in matters of ministerial relocation. Regions may delegate or share this responsibility with their subdivisions, e.g., areas or districts. In the ministerial relocation process regions will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. Each region will provide advice and counsel to congregations either at the request of the congregation or at the initiation of the region when it is known that new ministerial leadership is being or will be sought.
 - b. Each region will receive and review all ministerial relocation materials from the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, giving special attention to those persons who have indicated an interest in their region.
 - c. Each region will refer all ministers within the region who wish to seek relocation outside the region to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry for entry into the relocation process.
 - d. Each region will share with search committees biographical and reference materials on candidates who appear to meet the requirements of the congregations and institutions with whom the region is working.
 - e. Each region will encourage congregations to give fair and equal consideration to candidates regardless of their race, ethnic origin, sex, age or physical disability.
 - f. Each region will share with specific search committees biographical and reference materials on any minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who requests consideration in that congregation.
 - g. Each region will maintain a list of churches seeking ministerial leadership in the region and make it available upon request to ministers who are seeking relocation.
 - h. Each region will secure permission from any minister not actively seeking relocation before releasing references to a search committee. The minister has the right to know the name and location of the interested congregation.
 - i. Each region will provide, upon request of ministers seeking relocation, a list of congregations which have received their biographical and reference material.
 - j. Each region will treat with confidentiality all material on the Regional Ministers Reference Form and confidential material reported on page one of the Relocation Assistance Form.
 - k. Each region will communicate to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, and to other regions any official action by their commissions on the ministry concerning the conduct of a minister. The minister shall be informed and given a copy of the report which will also be placed in the minister's file.
 - l. Each region will refer all requests for assistance from congregations outside the region to the appropriate regional office.
 - m. Each region will notify the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry monthly of all relocation occurring within, to, or from the region.
 - n. Each region will grant provisional standing, for the purpose of entering the relocation process, to senior theological students whose ordinations have been authorized in their region and to ordained ministers from other denominations who have been given temporary recognition and are in the process of transferring standing to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

- o. Each region will make information available about vacancies to be filled on the regional staff through such channels as *The Disciple*, regional publications and the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
3. **Educational Institutions.** The undergraduate departments of religion and the theological educational institutions have unique responsibilities with respect to the relocation process of the church. Each relates to a limited number of congregations in which pre-theological and theological students may be employed. The theological institutions have responsibility for relating their graduating students who are candidates for standing as ordained ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to the relocation processes of the church. In the ministerial relocation process educational institutions will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
 - a. Educational institutions will relate to congregations served by students upon approval of the region in matters pertaining to the employment of students during their pre-theological and theological education.
 - b. Educational institutions will refer requests from congregations for relocation assistance to the appropriate regional office, when the congregation is one that is not a student congregation.
 - c. Educational institutions will cooperate with regions seeking candidates by announcing position vacancies when received. Any nominations or applications for such positions shall be made through the appropriate regional office.
 - d. Educational institutions will cooperate with regions in orienting seminary students to the relocation process of the church.
 4. **General Units.** Except for those units with assigned responsibilities, i.e., the Pension Fund, the Division of Higher Education, and the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, general units and their staffs will not engage in programs or practices related to ministerial relocation. In the ministerial relocation process general units will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
 - a. General units will call their own staffs, establish the terms of employment, undergird their staffs and effect terminations within their own procedures.
 - b. General units will refer all requests for relocation assistance to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
 - c. General units will refrain from making nominations to congregations for ministerial vacancies. Refer requests for candidates' names to the appropriate region.
 - d. General units will make information available about vacancies to be filled within the general units through such channels as *The Disciple*, regional publications and the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
 - e. General units will notify the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry, of vacancies in ecumenical and experimental ministries, when known, so the information can be made available to clergy seeking relocation for such positions.
 5. **The Pension Fund.** The Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is charged with responsibility for coordinating the employment of retired clergy in interim and supply ministries. In the ministerial relocation process the Pension Fund will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
 - a. The Pension Fund will maintain current lists and appropriate biographical data on clergy with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who desire to be considered for interim or supply work and periodically make such lists available to the regions.
 - b. The Pension Fund will refer requests from congregations seeking interim or supply leadership to the regions.
 - c. The Pension Fund will refer requests from ministers seeking relocation assistance to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
 6. **The Division of Higher Education.** The Division of Higher Education is charged with responsibility for coordinating a referral system of both academic and administrative leadership in institutions of higher education related to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and notification of openings in campus ministries in related institutions and in United Campus Ministries. In the ministerial relocation process the Division of Higher Education will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
 - a. The Division of Higher Education will compile and maintain appropriate personnel and academic dossiers on persons who desire employment in higher education ministries.

- b. The Division of Higher Education will refer all requests from congregations for candidates' names to appropriate regions.
 - c. The Division of Higher Education will refer all clergy seeking relocation assistance in ministries other than higher education to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry.
7. **The Division of Homeland Ministries.** The Department of Ministry is the primary locus of the ministerial records of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and is responsible for coordinating the relocation process of the church. In the ministerial relocation process the Division of Homeland Ministries will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. The Division of Homeland Ministries will maintain the personnel files of all ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - b. The Division of Homeland Ministries will maintain the Ministers Directory of the Year Book and Directory reflecting the current listing of ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), as reported to the department by the regions.
 - c. The Division of Homeland Ministries will receive, reproduce and make available relocation assistance materials of ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to regions and general units. The Ministerial Record Form will be reproduced as prepared and submitted by the minister.
 - d. The Division of Homeland Ministries will collect and release reference material to regions, congregational search committees or general units upon permission of the minister applying for relocation assistance.
 - e. The Division of Homeland Ministries will protect the confidentiality of references when confidentiality has been promised.
 - f. The Division of Homeland Ministries will secure permission from any minister not actively seeking relocation before releasing references to a search committee. The minister has the right to know the name and location of the interested congregation. Permission need not be secured for the release of the Ministerial Record Forms or biographical information.
 - g. The Division of Homeland Ministries will secure, maintain, and release to regions, and on request, to ministers who have applied for relocation assistance a list of staff vacancies in regions, general units of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ecumenical organizations.
 - h. The Division of Homeland Ministries will make available educational and informational materials regarding the relocation system to congregations, regions, institutions, and general units.
 - i. The Division of Homeland Ministries will refer all requests from congregations for names of potential candidates to the appropriate regions.
 - j. The Division of Homeland Ministries will refer all theological students seeking student preaching/pastoral positions to the field education office of the appropriate institution or to the region in the case of students in non-related institutions of higher education.
 - k. The Division of Homeland Ministries will refer all persons seeking academic appointments to the Division of Higher Education, and all persons seeking interim/supply positions to the Pension Fund of the Christian Church.
 - l. The Division of Homeland Ministries will share with regions, and where appropriate, general units, the record of any official action by a region's commission on the ministry concerning conduct of a minister who is entering the relocation process.
8. **Ministers.** Ordained and licensed ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have both freedom and responsibility within these policies and criteria. They have the freedom to accept or reject any call offered to them, to negotiate whatever contracts of employment or service seem appropriate, and to have access to the relocation process of the church. In the ministerial relocation process the Ministers will function within the covenantal relationship of the whole church.
- a. Ministers will provide information for a personnel file to the Division of Homeland Ministries, Department of Ministry upon entry into the ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and maintain current data in that file. For purposes of relocation, the Ministerial Record Form will be reproduced as prepared and submitted by the minister. A brief supplemental resume or statement may be included.

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