

## **Summary of Guidelines for the Transfer and Employment of Ministers of Other Christian Churches**

- I. Use of internet-based referral system by Ministers of Other Christian Churches**
- II. Ministers from Other Christian Churches (G-2.0505)**
- III. Formula Partners and Ministers from 'Churches in Correspondence'**
- IV. Transfer of membership to Presbyterian Church U.S.A.**
- V. New Immigrant Fellowship and Congregations**

### **I. Use of internet-based referral system by Ministers of Other Christian Churches**

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. Internet-based referral system "Church Leadership Connection" is available for Presbyterian Church U.S.A. ministers only. Ministers of other Christian Churches including our Formula Partners, (ELCA, RCA, and UCC) are encouraged to contact presbyteries in which they seek to serve in temporary positions. Ministers in the process of transferring to the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. must meet requirements including ordination exams before they may use Church Leadership Connection.

### **II. Ministers from Other Christian Churches (G-2.0505)**

Ministers from other Christian Churches may only serve Presbyterian Church U.S.A. churches at the discretion of the Presbytery and under certain circumstances.

- A. Only Presbyterian Church U.S.A. ministers and Formula Partner ministers,** (Reformed Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the United Church of Christ) may serve as installed pastors of Presbyterian Church U.S.A. congregations. (G-2.0506)
- B. Ministers of other Christian churches may serve in temporary positions.
- C. Presbyteries have no obligation to allow other Christian churches ministers (including those of churches in full communion or in correspondence with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. to serve their churches. Thorough examination and reference checking is essential.
- D. Ministers of other Christian churches who wish to become Presbyterian Church U.S.A. ministers must meet the *Book of Order* requirements in G-2.0505 Transfer of Ministers of Other Christian churches.** Waiver to ministers of other Reformed churches ordained for 5 or more years need a 2/3 vote.

### **III. Formula Partners and Ministers from 'Churches in Correspondence'**

Formula Partner Ministers (**G-5.0202**) Ordained ministers in one member Church of the Formula of Agreement may be invited or may express their desire to serve in another Church; they do not have the right to serve in the other Church.

- A. Formula Partner Ministers** (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, United Church of Christ, and Reformed Church in America) may be installed and serve Presbyterian Churches while remaining members of their home Christian churches. Reference checking and examination by the C.O.M. would take place just as it would for any Presbyterian minister seeking a call within the presbytery. The minister is installed (if home Christian Church allows) and is enrolled as a member of the presbytery with all rights and privileges.
- B. Accountability** - Formula Partner ministers remains accountable to the sending body for continuation of ministerial status. The inviting and sending bodies share responsibility for pastoral care of ordained ministers. They are accountable to the presbytery of call for their ministry with the church. It is hoped that when such relationships are established, the governing body representatives would partner in supporting the minister.
- C. Financial Arrangements** – Formula Partner ministries will remain members of their denomination's medical and pension plans. Presbyterian congregations will pay dues to the insuring entity. It is expected that salaries will be the same as would be paid to a Presbyterian minister.

#### **IV. Transfer of membership to Presbyterian Church U.S.A**

- A. In order to become a Presbyterian Church U.S.A. minister, a minister of another Christian Church (including Formula Partners) must:
- Be an ordained minister
  - Have a Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and a Theological degree from an institution acceptable to the presbytery of call. (G-2.0607b-c)
  - Pass Presbyterian Church U.S.A. standard ordination exams

By a three-fourths vote, a presbytery may waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-quarters vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. (G-2.0610)

A presbytery can accept a minister of another Christian churches after the constitutional conditions have been met. They will be required to provide attestation of “good standing” from an authorized official of his or her present governing body. The Ecumenical Relations office will request in behalf of the presbyteries the required “good standing” letter.

- B. To complete the transfer they must:
- Have a call to appropriate work in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.
  - Be examined and approved by the presbytery of call (usually by the Committee on Ministry)
  - They will be examined on their Christian faith, in theology, and in the system of government of this church, and at the discretion of the presbytery in other subjects
  - Answer the ordination questions in the affirmative
  - Furnish evidence that they have been officially removed from the roll of the other Christian Churches

#### **V. New Immigrant Fellowship and Congregations**

In the case of ministers for immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery may, if it determines that its strategy for mission with that group requires it, recognize the ordination and receive as a member of presbytery a new immigrant minister who furnishes evidence of good standing in a Christian Church, even though at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required of candidates, and provide such educational opportunities as seem necessary and prudent for that minister’s successful ministry in the presbytery. *Book of Order* G-2.0505a(1)

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It is essential that the Committee on Ministry meet with each non-Presbyterian minister to assess theology and practice of ministry, understandings of Presbyterian government, and their intentions as well as to explain the presbytery’s goals for the church and resources available to the minister. It is wise for C.O.M. to get involved early in a relationship between a congregation and a non-Presbyterian pastor rather than to be faced with the unpleasant task of telling a church the pastor with whom they have built a relationship cannot serve them.

The Office of the General Assembly website maintains the list of churches that are “in correspondence” <http://oga.pcusa.org/ecumenicalrelations/relationships.htm#correspondence>. A confirmation of a church “in correspondence” status can be requested from the Associate for Ecumenical and Agency Relationships at (888) 728-7228 ext.5444 or email [carlos.malave@pcusa.org](mailto:carlos.malave@pcusa.org).