

(Rev. 8-9-05)

**Policy for Committee on Ministry  
Handling of requests from Ministers of Other Denominations  
Wishing to transfer membership to PCUSA**

**A. Requests from Ministers of Churches Participating in a Formula Agreement with PCUSA (See G-11.0405b and Appendix C, Book of Order.)**

- 1. Follow procedure outlined in Office of General Assembly document, "The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament."**

**B. Requests from ministers other than those covered by the above document.**

- 1. The Committee on Ministry shall first determine the reason for the minister's request and make a decision as to whether or not to continue with the process.**
- 2. The Minister shall be required to become affiliated with a Presbyterian Church and be approved by that session as a candidate for Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**
- 3. If the process is to be continued, each request will be handled in accordance with G-11.0404 a - f.**
  - a. If the minister's theological degree is from an institution not acceptable to the Committee on Ministry as having taught reformed theology and or the government of our church, the following may be required.**
    - (1) A polity course taught by a professor in an institution acceptable to the Committee on Ministry or tutoring by a qualified individual.**
- 4. Before being received into the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley, the minister must have a call to a validated ministry in accordance with G-11.0408-11.0411.**

## Summary of Guidelines for the Employment of Ministers of Other Denominations

- I. Use of Internet-based referral system by Ministers of Other Denominations
- II. Ministers from Other Denominations
- III. Formula Partners & Ministers from Churches in Correspondence
- IV. Transfer of membership to PC (USA)
- V. New Immigrant Fellowship and Congregations

### I. Use of Internet-based referral system by Ministers of Other Denominations

The PC (USA) Internet-based referral system "Church Leadership Connection" is available for PC (USA) ministers only. Ministers of denominations, 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 PC (USA) must meet requirements including ordination exams before they may use Church Leadership Connection.

### II. Ministers from Other Denominations (G-11.0404)

**Ministers from other denominations may only serve Presbyterian (USA) churches at the discretion of the Presbytery and under certain circumstances.**

A. **Only PC (USA) ministers and Formula Partner ministers** (Reformed Church in American, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the United Church of Christ) **may serve as installed pastors of PCUSA congregations.** This includes the positions of Pastor, Associate Pastor, Co-Pastor, Designated and Designated Associate Pastor.

B. Ministers of other denominations may serve in **temporary positions** such as Sunday-to-Sunday supply, as Stated Supply, or Interim Pastor.

C. Presbyteries have no obligation to allow other denomination ministers (including those of churches in full communion or in correspondence with the PC (USA)) to serve their churches. Thorough examination and reference checking is essential.

D. **Ministers of other denominations who wish to become PC (USA) ministers must meet the Book of Order requirements in G-11.0404.** Any waiver of those requirements is in "extraordinary circumstances" and can be made only by the calling presbytery with a 3/4 vote. Ministers of other Reformed churches ordained for 5 or more years only need a 2/3 vote. *\* Pertains only to exceptions*

*(1) Ministers of Formula Agreement Ordained 5+ Years  
(2) G-14.0313-Candidates having failed an exam twice.*

### III. Ministers from Churches in Correspondence

#### A. Formula Partner Ministers (G-11.0405b)

Ordained ministers in a 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.

*present governing body. Our office will request, on behalf of the presbyteries, the required "good standing" letter*

**B. To complete the transfer they must:**

- Have a call to appropriate work in the PCUSA
- 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 denomination

**C. Waiver of requirements (see G.14.0313 and G-11.0404b.)**

*The presbytery shall not waive any of the foregoing requirements except in extraordinary cases. It shall make an exception only by three-fourths vote of the members of the presbytery present.*

Ministers of other Reformed denominations (such as Reformed Church in America or United Church of Christ) may be exempted from taking standard ordination exams if they have been ordained for five or more years and if the presbytery approves by a two-thirds vote as above.

**V. New Immigrant Fellowship and Congregations**

In order to meet the pastoral needs of new immigrants, calling presbyteries may, by a 3/4 vote, enroll a new immigrant minister who does not meet the educational requirements. The presbytery must develop a plan to provide the minister with the educational opportunities necessary to support successful ministry.

Book of Order G-11.0404f.

*In the case of ministers for new immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery may, if it determines that its strategy for mission with that constituency requires it, recognize the ordination of (G-15.0202) and enroll a new immigrant minister furnishing evidence of good standing in a denomination in correspondence with the General Assembly as a member of the presbytery, even though at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required by G-14.0310b-d. In the case of such a minister lacking such preparation, the presbytery shall undertake an evaluation of the minister's understanding of and proficiency in Bible, Reformed Theology, Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching. If the presbytery is satisfied as to the minister's preparation in and understanding of those areas, the presbytery may, by a three-quarters vote of those present, enroll that minister as a minister of the presbytery. Any presbytery taking such an action shall provide that minister with educational opportunities as seem necessary and prudent to the presbytery for that minister's successful ministry within the bounds of that presbytery. This section, when utilized, may result in exceptions to the procedures and requirements described in G-11.0403c, G-14.0310b-d and G-14.0313a-c.*

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Note: A minister called to a work that will not be under the jurisdiction of the presbytery where the work is situated must follow G-11.0401. Both the presbytery of membership and the presbytery in which the work is done must give the minister permission to labor in that locale.

## Orderly Exchange with Formula Partner Churches

The "Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament" process implemented by the Formula of Agreement churches in 1997. These churches are the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, and United Church of Christ.**

Through adoption of A *Formula of Agreement*, our four churches have been able to provide for the exchange of ordained ministers so that our common ministry and mission are enhanced and strengthened. Within each of our churches, congregations have been able to utilize the gifts that ordained ministers from other full-communion partner churches.

*Orderly exchange (provisions for availability) of ordained ministers is for the sake of participation by the four churches in the mission of God, and can be an important sign of our unity in Christ. This particular provision of full communion seeks to allow and encourage the more effective use and deployment of our churches' ordained leaders in order to enhance our shared ministry mission. It encourages those in our churches who are responsible for the deployment of ordained ministers to draw on the available ministers of the other participating churches to meet mission needs.*

### Highlights of the Agreement and Orderly Exchange Process:

- The orderly exchange process begins with the identification of a ministry need by the appropriate regional body of the "inviting" church and the identification of an ordained minister from a Formula of Agreement partner church who may serve in that ministry setting.
- The judicatory of the "inviting" church initiates the process of the orderly exchange between the congregation to be served and the ordained minister. The ordained minister does not initiate the process of exchange.
- The "inviting" church then should consult with the appropriate regional body of the ordained minister to determine the suitability of the potential service and to receive the concurrence of the "sending" body – presbytery, classis, conference and association or synod. The ordained minister remains accountable to the sending church for continuation of ministerial status.
- A ministry in a congregation of another church is not intended for a "first call" candidate; experience in and knowledge of one's own tradition is seen as necessary before serving in a different tradition.
- This agreement applies only to persons who are ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament and does not apply to persons who are locally trained and authorized ministers – commissioned pastors (RCA), commissioned lay pastors (PCUSA), licensed ministers (UCC), synodically authorized ministers (ELCA).
- These ministries are intended for a designated extended period of time. Should an ordained minister of one church intend to serve permanently in another church then the process of the transfer of ministerial status should be followed.

- Should a disciplinary process be necessary, the ordained minister remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, but the inviting body may be asked to participate as necessary.
- Pension and medical coverage is through the denomination of membership.

The complete policy and process document, "A Formula of Agreement – The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament," is available on the Web at:  
<http://archive.elca.org/ministry/pdf/formula.pdf>

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