

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

ORIENTATION FOR NON-BRETHREN MINISTERS

I. INTRODUCTION

Ministers who are ordained in a denomination other than the Church of the Brethren and wish to bring their membership to and have their ordination recognized by the Brethren will find the polity for such action in the 1999 Annual Conference paper on “Ministerial Leadership.” One of the recommended procedures for such ministers is the acceptance of a discipline of study and orientation to the Church of the Brethren with the guidance and support of a district-appointed counselor. The format for such discipline is available from the Office of Ministry of the General Board. The minister will be asked to complete such study and orientation prior to being received as an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. If the minister has been asked to serve before the orientation is complete, approval can be based on present ordination (recognized ordination for a term of service).

The District Ministry Commission carries the responsibility for overseeing the orientation of non-Brethren ministers and recommends action to the District Board. Districts are free to add to or modify the suggested expectations to meet particular district needs, *but the outline below is intended to be basic or minimum for an adequate orientation.*

II. ORIENTATION

- A. The District Ministry Commission, the candidate, and the recommending congregation (if there is one) are all in agreement about the length of the orientation, the expectations of the candidate, and the satisfactory fulfillment of those expectations.
- B. The District Ministry Commission assigns a counselor to work with the candidate throughout the period of orientation. The counselor should be familiar with and supportive of the beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren, should have supervisory skills, and should be geographically accessible to the candidate.
 - 1. The candidate and the counselor assume responsibility for the initial contact after which regular monthly meeting times are established between them for the duration of the orientation.
 - 2. The counselor acts in a consultative, advisory, supervisory, and mentoring role for all of the expectations of the candidate.
 - 3. The counselor gives the District Ministry Commission and the District

Executive/Minister periodic progress reports throughout the orientation and a full report when the orientation period is completed.

C. The district will have certain expectations of the candidate. *The following are suggested as minimum expectations* for those seeking a ministry in the Church of the Brethren. District Boards and Ministry Commissions may wish to develop their own particular and/or additional expectations, including written materials.

1. *Church of the Brethren Belief and Practices Materials.* The candidate and counselor agree upon a discipline of reading, reflection, and sharing on the following:

- a. *The Church of the Brethren: Yesterday and Today*, edited by Donald Durnbaugh
- b. *The Manual of Organization and Polity*
- c. The Church of the Brethren *Ministerial Leadership Manual*
- d. Church of the Brethren membership materials, including the pamphlet packet on beliefs and ordinances
- e. Other or additional materials recommended by the District Board, commission, or counselor

2. *Formation in Ministry Involvements.* The candidate participates in the following activities and reflects with the counselor on learnings and questions:

- a. Annual and district conferences
- b. District-sponsored learning opportunities, such as special courses and workshops and Bethany Theological Seminary extension schools
- c. District Ministry Commission support groups and retreats

3. *Ministry Skills.*

- a. If the candidate is presently employed, he or she brings to the consultations with the counselor representative resources from his or her ministry for reflection and feedback. These resources may include tapes or texts of sermons and worship series, bulletins, newsletters, etc.
- b. If the candidate is not presently employed, the counselor and candidate agree on ministry opportunities on which reflection and feedback are possible.

D. Satisfactory progress and completion of expectations will be the basis of a favorable recommendation to the District Board.

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Revised as directed by the 1999 Annual Conference paper on "Ministerial Leadership."

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