

Recommendations from the Task Force on Examinations
(Debbie Freeman, Carl McCormack, Bill Branch, Bill Galbraith and Toney D. McMillan)
to Committee on Ministry
November 7, 2006

The Task Force on Examinations makes the following report/recommendations to the Committee on Ministry:

- I. Committee on Ministry representatives, upon receiving a request for initial clearance from a PNC, shall do the following:
 - A. Obtain the PIF of the candidate for whom clearance is sought.
 - B. Get the PIF to the General Presbyter for reference check.
 - C. The COM rep is to do his/her own reference check with the candidate's Presbytery COM Moderator, or other contacts that he/she may have. You may ask our COM Moderator for help if you need it.
 - D. Make sure the PNC has done its own reference checks by calling all the references listed on PIF and others if possible.
 - E. Once the COM rep has done his/her reference checks, and the PNC has done its reference checks, the COM rep is to meet with the PNC and the two are to summarize their findings and draft a report (known as Report No. 1) to the COM as to:
 1. What each did (i.e. - studied the PIF, heard sermons, made phone calls to whom, etc.).
 2. The results of the reference checks (i.e. - who talked to whom, what was said, etc.).
 3. Why this person would be a good fit for the particular church.
 - F. Email the PIF and written Report No. 1 to COM members at least one week prior to the COM meeting at which clearance is being sought.
 - G. The General Presbyter is to also send a written report of his findings via email prior to the Committee on Ministry meeting where clearance is sought (Report No. 2).
- II. That the Moderator appoint a small group for east Arkansas, central Arkansas, and west Arkansas to do the "small group examination of prospective ministers." This would be a "permanent" committee for each geographical section of the Presbytery, consisting of four to five people. They would be trained at the November retreat in the following areas:
 - A. Journey of Faith, review the Statement of Faith, and Theology.
 - B. Fit issues - review CIF, PIF. Review background reports...talk thoroughly with minister about his/her views as to fit.
 - C. Scruples/Behavior questions.
 - D. Loyalty to PCUSA.

- E. Let them know what the examination before the full COM will be like.
- F. Worship issues.
- G. Leadership issues.
- H. Suggest questions candidate may want to ask the PNC.
- I. Have they talked with former pastors - i.e. the purpose is to tell the truth and get the truth.

The small group folk should have, at least one week to ten days prior to the small group examination meeting, the following documents:

- A. The Statement of Faith of the candidate.
- B. The PIF of the candidate.
- C. The CIF of the church.
- D. The sample examination questions.
- E. Report of background check from General Presbyter and COM reps.

The small group committee shall write a synopsis of their meeting and get it to the chair of the examination subcommittee (now Carl McCormack) in plenty of time for the COM meeting/examination.

III. The COM examination of ministers to be received into the Presbytery shall function as follows (Carl McCormack is at this time chairman of the examination subcommittee - a one person committee). In preparation for the COM examination, the examiners in the various areas will be lined up before hand, and they will have in their possession and will have read the PIF of the candidate, the CIF of the church, the candidate's Statement of Faith, and the synopsis from the small group examination. The examiners are to use the general examination questions, and then follow up, or rely on other members of the COM to follow up as needed. Therefore:

1. Carl will line up individuals to examine in the area of polity, theology, sacraments, and statement of faith/faith journey, and have them prepared to ask their questions before the date of the examination.
2. The COM will introduce themselves to the candidate. The examination is to be treated as a serious event, and not something to joke about such as "welcome to the hot seat."
3. When talking to the PNC about fit, the candidate is to be excused from the room.
4. If we are examining clergy couple, we will examine them separately.
5. We shall ask the following two questions:
 - A. As a member of Arkansas Presbytery, will you uphold your ordination vows as a minister of Word and Sacrament, living faithfully as a follower of Jesus Christ?

- B. If for any reason you feel the need to withdraw (renounce jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.) from the denomination, do you promise not to encourage or instigate a congregation or others to do likewise?
6. The PIF, the CIF, the Statement of Faith of the folk to be examined should be sent out by Leslie when she sends out the agenda. Thus, it is the responsibility of the PNC and the COM liaisons to set up the small group examination, and have all documents to the small group examination group and to Leslie a good deal of time prior to the COM meeting. Examinations will not be able to be done on a short notice basis.

With regard to the “Wooley motion” (which was referred to the COM by Presbytery at its recent meeting), the Moderator of the COM is to appoint the now existing Task Force on Examinations (Bill Galbraith, Carl McCormack, Toney McMillan) to work with Tom Ulrich and the Committee on Preparations to deal with the Wooley paper and other examination issues. This task force will have three people from the COM, three people from the COP, the Stated Clerk, and then the Moderator of the COM, the Moderator of the COP, and Bill Branch as ex-officio members.

IV. The task force recommends the adoption of all of these items.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Ministry Task Force on Examinations