

**Title: Candidacy Review Report**  
**Origin: Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry**

## The Candidacy Pathway

### Executive Summary

The Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry received the work of the Candidacy Review Working Group and proposes that the Executive of the General Council approve the Working Group's Report and direct the General Secretary, General Council to implement the policy directions outlined in the report.

(Designated Lay Ministry is acknowledged but not addressed in this report. Please see other General Council documents and policies.)

The report builds on key values and outcomes identified in the mandate and draws on extensive research and consultation. *Key changes in policy* are proposed in this report, in some cases requiring amendments to the Basis of Union and/or changes to the *Manual*.

A Candidacy Pathway involving seven primary elements is proposed. The purpose of the Pathway is:  
to call forth, identify, accompany, equip, assess, authorize, and celebrate those persons whom God calls to and endows for the Order of Ministry, offering diaconal and ordained leadership in Christ's diverse ministries contributing to God's mission in creation.

### 1. Call

Policy change:

- a. a person is not required to be a member of The United Church of Canada to be eligible for consideration as a potential candidate for ordered ministry (currently a two-year membership requirement).
- b. call is understood to occur in a variety of settings, not only in a congregational setting and the role of local ministry companions is affirmed.

### 2. Identify

Policy Change:

- a. Conferences establish a Candidacy and Admissions Board. The Board will be representative of diverse constituencies (ethnic, diaconal and ordained), trained, skilled, and racial and gender sensitive as it identifies and assesses individuals who i. have promise for ordered ministry, ii. who are ready for leadership in an ministry setting, and iii who have demonstrated effective leadership necessary for admission to the order of ministry.
- b. The Candidacy and Admissions Board replaces the Conference Interview Board, the Educational and Students Committee, and the Internship & Educational Supervision Committee of Conference; the role of the presbytery/district Education and Students Committee is revised.

### 3. Accompany

Policy Change:

- a. Discernment is understood as an ongoing process throughout the Pathway and not a beginning stage. One

year of discernment is no longer required before one can be considered as a potential candidate for ordered ministry.

- b. The role of presbytery/district changes from testing, examining and recommending a person to an educational institution and the Conference to one of listening, walking with and supporting individuals on the Pathway, as well as inviting (calling forth) people to consider ministry leadership roles in the church.

#### 4. Equip

##### Policy Change

- a. The national internship program for candidates in campus-based educational programs is replaced with a 2 year Supervised Ministry Experience upon completion of the academic program. The presbytery/district through the pastoral relations system appoints a Candidate Minister, who must be member of the United Church to be eligible for appointment.
- b. Candidates in community-based educational programs continue in these programs and related appointments.

#### 5. Assess

- a. the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board engages in ongoing assessment of the candidate's journey on the entire Pathway and discerns next steps. Educational institutions provide input to the candidate's assessment until they grant degree/diploma and *testamur*. The Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership of the General Council Executive serve as benchmarks for assessing the readiness of candidates for ordination or commissioning.

#### 6. Celebrate and Authorize

- a. Opportunities for celebration recur frequently on the Pathway – giving thanks to God for the call and increasing readiness of the Candidate.
- b. Authorization happens at several steps along the Pathway as the church entrusts the Candidate with additional responsibility in ministry.
- c. Authorization and celebration coincide finally in the ordination or commissioning of Candidates by the Conference.

A review and appeals process is proposed to ensure that the Pathway remains effective and fair.

Ongoing evaluation of the Pathway ensures it responds to the needs of participants and the church as a whole.

#### Report of the Candidacy Review Working Group

Reflections, Policy Directions, and Proposal

#### The Candidacy Pathway

##### 1. Key Aspects of the Mandate (see Appendix A for full Terms of Reference)

In May 2008, the Executive of the General Council (GCE) directed the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry (PC PMM)

- to review the candidacy system - the current process by which members of the church become members of the Order of Ministry (ordained and diaconal ministers), and,
- to take into account other processes that could have impact on any proposed new system, including internships,

leadership outcomes project, recruitment plans, :Meaning of Ministry” project, admissions review, transfer and settlement review, and funding of educational institutions project. A report was requested for consideration at the spring 2009 meeting of the Executive of the General Council.

On June 3, 2008, PC PMM approved the mandate for the Candidacy Review Working Group (CRWG) and authorized the Chair of the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry to appoint the membership of the Working Group. The Working Group undertook its work with the aid of staff of the Congregational, Educational, and Community Ministries Unit (CECM) and the services of a contract researcher, Abigail Johnson.

In the research phase, over 60 people experienced in various aspects of the candidacy/education process were interviewed and over 40 on-line contributions were welcomed (see Appendix B). Historical documents relevant to the candidacy process were reviewed (see Appendix C). The work of several consultations involving members of both the education and vocations networks and a “think tank” were also reviewed.

Values and outcomes expected in the report were identified as follows:

### Values

- acknowledges and is grateful for God’s gift of leaders to strengthen the church’s participation in God’s mission.

- recognizes the growing diversity of contexts, situations, and cultural backgrounds of candidates, with attention to aboriginal, francophone, and intercultural ministries.
- processes that are simple, streamlined and effective
- a system people can understand and trust
- less regulatory culture

### Outcomes

- enhances candidates’ experiences of self-direction with support and accompaniment.
- improves efficient use of resources, people, money, energy, and time.
- strengthens the supervised ministry learning experience before ordination and commissioning
- contributes to and celebrates increased numbers of ordered leaders representative of diverse cultural heritages.
- contributes to increased numbers of ready and effective ordered leaders.
- enhances the intercultural church’s joy in identifying and affirming new ordered leaders.

### 2. Scriptural Resources:

Throughout the ages, God has blessed faith communities, by encountering and transforming people in their being and doing. “God accepts us as we are, but never leaves us as we are!” Calling women and men, girls and boys from diverse socio-cultural experiences and backgrounds to exercise their gifts and talents in faithful response to God’s grace is part of God’s unending relationship with people of faith and of God’s mission to heal and bless Creation.

God's call to specific ministries – ordered or lay leadership – is set in the context of the faith community, which itself is called to faithfully respond to God's grace and generosity. The scriptures teach us that God is able to recognize gifts that at times the persons called or their family or neighbours might not even recognize. The church affirms the person's call and seeks to help the person to respond to the call they experience. Hence the processes whereby the faith community explores a person's call are to be undertaken carefully, humbly, appreciatively, and joyfully.

Biblical narratives abound to provide food for thought and opportunity for further illumination as the church reflects on the Candidacy Pathway. They do not usually speak of "ordered ministry," but of God's call to serve in many ways. Some of these stories of amazing grace include:

**a) Instrument of God's plan - Joseph** (Genesis 37 – 45; especially 45:7-8): The brother despised by his siblings for God-given gifts of interpretation (immodestly used at times, admittedly) is chosen by God to lead both the Egyptian people and his own extended family through times of plenty and the life-threatening years of famine.

**b) God calls Moses at the burning bush not consumed** (Exodus 3 – 4:20): In a natural setting, God encounters Moses and challenges to be the leader to guide the suffering and oppressed people from the "house of bondage" to the land of promise. Notwithstanding Moses' resistance and presumed lack of ability, God persists with the energy of impatience to prod Moses, supported by Aaron and Miriam, to lead the people.

**c) God calls Samuel in the temple at Shiloh** (1 Samuel 3: 1-18): In the middle of the night, God speaks to the child Samuel, who thinks it is the voice of the priest and mentor Eli addressing him. Finally, Eli helps Samuel understand that God is calling him to hear and, then in fear and trembling, to speak God's Word of judgement and grace to the temple leadership.

**d) God chooses David to be king of Israel** (1 Samuel 16:1-13): From among Jesse's brood of seven strong sons, God tells Samuel not to regard "as mortals see" but to "look on the heart." So the youngest **eighth son**, regarded as least likely and hence left to tend the sheep, is brought into the line-up and anointed to be Israel's next king.

**e) God calls Jeremiah to prophetic witness** (Jeremiah 1:1-13): God calls the "boy" Jeremiah, who "does not know how to speak." But God "touched [Jeremiah's] mouth" to speak God's Word and address the nation's social and political circumstances.

**f) God calls Mary** (Luke 1:26-38): God sends the messenger Gabriel to call Mary to the vocation of birthing and nurturing Jesus, "Son of the Most High" and inheritor of "the throne of his ancestor David." "How can this be?" is Mary's incredulous response. But with the assurance of the present power of the Holy Spirit, Mary is able to respond, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

**g) Jesus calls and accompanies disciples** (Matthew 4: 18-22; Luke 8:1-3): Along the way of life, Jesus calls folk from diverse backgrounds and experiences to become companions –

the leadership circle – sharing in the ministry Jesus carries out to welcome the reign of God. The circle of “the twelve” is acknowledged for their symbolic connection to the tribes of Israel and their leadership roles in the early Christian community, but Luke testifies to the larger circle involving the crucial contribution of leading women in strengthening the Jesus community.

**h) The Spirit leads the community to choose deacons** (Acts 6:1-6): Faced by a growing need to ensure that all in the community share in the abundance of God, the apostles invite the community to identify *diakonoi* (deacons), who both serve food at tables and teach/preach the Word of God.

**i) The Spirit Chooses an Exceptional “Outsider”** (Acts 8: 26-40): The boundaries of the early post-Easter Jesus community are extended as Philip is instructed to engage the Ethiopian court official. By the inherited standards of the faith community, the eunuch is not eligible for inclusion “in the assembly of God” (Deuteronomy 23:1). Philip roots the meaning of Christ in the witness of Isaiah the prophet. Through Philip’s teaching ministry and the leading of the Spirit, the eunuch responds to the call in Scripture and Philip responds with baptism, initiating the “outsider” into the community of Christ.

**j) The risen Christ confronts Paul (Saul) on the Damascus road** (Acts 9:1-31): Confronting Saul on the way, the risen Christ transforms Saul from enemy to apostle. The conversion is confirmed by Ananias laying hands on Saul and Saul’s subsequent baptism. Saul “regains sight,” and being “filled with the Holy Spirit,” the new Paul undertakes a ministry of

proclamation and education throughout the Mediterranean world. In the first letter to Timothy, the apostle confesses that he “had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” The aim of his instruction is “love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.” (1 Timothy 1:5 and 13-14)

**k) Lydia responds to the call** (Acts 16:11-15): Hearing Paul’s witness, Lydia experiences God’s call to a ministry of hospitality and service. She offers her home as a place of refuge and there gathers seekers, God-fearers, and the newly baptized for learning and worship.

**l) The Spirit moves Prisca and her husband Aquila** (Acts 18): Paul recruits Prisca and Aquila – tentmakers like Paul – to “work together” both at making their living and at sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ, as well as at hosting the gathered church in Corinth (1Corinthians 16:19). The book of Acts also records them involved in an educational ministry, as when they took Apollos aside to explain “the Way of God to him more accurately.” (vs. 26)

**m) God’s call to “so great a cloud of witnesses.”** Hebrews 11 – 12:2): “Time would fail ... to tell of...” all the known and unknown saints who by faith responded to God’s call to faithful ministry and witness as part of God’s mission in Christ to redeem the world.

#### **4. Theological Resources**

Much has been written to help the church grapple with its understandings of ministry and the place and role of members

of the Order of Ministry (ordained and diaconal) in the ministry of Jesus Christ, to which all the church's members are called. The current "Meaning of Ministry" project will, we hope, shed further light on the matter.

Many reports to the General Council have revealed the church's ongoing desire to understand better how God is guiding the Church to contribute more intentionally to the ministry of Jesus Christ. These reports grapple with the place of the Order of Ministry in the overall ministry of all the people, and with the place of lay paid accountable ministry-personnel. Fundamental to this desire to clarify "ministry" is the Church's awareness that God is calling all believers to participate in God's mission of transforming and blessing the earth and its peoples.

Although there are many United Church studies on ministry, in this report, theological grounding is rooted in pertinent passages of two key documents: "A Song of Faith" approved by the 39th General Council 2006 (Thunder Bay) and in the Basis of Union (1925).

**a) A Song of Faith**

*We sing of a church  
Seeking to continue the story of Jesus  
By embodying Christ's presence in the world.  
We are called together by Christ  
As a community of broken but hopeful believers,  
Loving what he loved,  
Living what he taught,  
Striving to be faithful servants of God  
In our time and place.*

*Our ancestors in faith  
Bequeath to us experiences of their faithful living;  
Upon their lives our lives are build.  
Our living of the gospel makes us a part of this communion  
of saints,  
Experiencing the fulfillment of God's reign  
Even as we actively anticipate a new heaven and a new  
earth.*

*The church has not always lived up to its vision.  
It requires the Spirit to reorient it,  
Helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring  
tradition,  
Challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement,  
For we are called to be a blessing to the earth.*

*We sing of God's good news lived out,  
A church with purpose:  
Faith nurtured and hearts comforted,  
Gifts shared for the good of all,  
Resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize,  
Fierce love in the face of violence,  
Human dignity defended,  
Members of a community held and inspired by God,  
Corrected and comforted,  
Instrument of the loving Spirit of Christ,  
Creation's mending.  
We sing of God's mission.*

*We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit,  
For the sake of the world,  
God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry.*

*In the church,  
Some are called to specific ministries of leadership,  
Both lay and ordered,  
Some witness to the good news;  
Some uphold the art of worship;  
Some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering;  
Some build up the community of wisdom;  
Some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.  
To embody God's love in the world,  
The work of the church requires the ministry and  
discipleship  
Of all believers.*

*In grateful response to God's abundant love,  
We bear in mind our integral connection  
To the earth and one another;  
We participate in God's work of healing and minding  
creation.  
To point to the presence of the holy in the world,  
The church receives, consecrates, and shares  
Visible signs of the grace of God. ...*

*Before conscious thought or action on our part,  
We are born into the brokenness of this world.  
Before conscious thought or action on our part,  
We are surrounded by God's redeeming love.  
Baptism by water in the name of the Holy Trinity  
Is the means by which we are received, at any age,  
Into the covenanted community of the church.  
It is the ritual that signifies our rebirth in faith  
And cleansing by the power of God.  
Baptism signifies the nurturing, sustaining,*

*And transforming power of God's love  
And our grateful response to that grace.*

**b) Basis of Union – Doctrine**

**Article XVII. Of the Ministry**

*We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein an ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care and a diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and calls men and women to these ministries;  
and that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom [God] calls, and should thereupon duly ordain or commission them to the work of ministry.*

**Article XVIII. Of Church Order and Fellowship**

*We believe that the Supreme and only Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ; that its worship, teaching, discipline, and government should be administered according to [God's] will by persons chosen for their fitness and duly set apart to their office; ....*

**c) Plans toward 2010:** The Executive of the General Council (June 2007), rooting its work in “The Call to Purpose” of the 39th General Council 2006, reiterated in its “Plans toward 2010” the importance of ministry personnel as “leaders throughout the church who inspire congregations and foster denominational identity, uniting the church beyond regional and congregational interests.”

The Candidacy Process is a key aspect of the overall effort to ensure that the church has suitable and equipped members of

the Order of Ministry to offer leadership for the church's varied ministries.

#### **4. Revising or Renewing the Candidacy System**

The Candidacy Review Working Group has concluded that the current candidacy system is "broken." Although aspects of the system continue to have value and many people currently invest much of themselves in maintaining the system, the time is ripe and urgent for a new system – as so many other church understandings and systems are being re-thought and re-formed by the leading of the Spirit.

In part, this process of renewing the candidacy system is driven by the significant paradigm shifts the church has been experiencing in the late 20th and 21st century. We are leaving behind the church of Christendom (and some would say, the Christian era) and moving into the post-Christendom era, characterized by measured de-institutionalization and recovery of the sense of movement – the Christian movement.

The United Church is transitioning from the modern era, with its clear cut dividing lines, fixed truths, and technological solutions, to the post-modern era, characterized by appreciation of mystery, welcoming of diversity, and greater sense of humility about espoused truths.

The post-colonial reality is leading the church to intentionally move away from paternalistic systems of control towards patterns that cultivate relationships, enhance participation, share responsibility, and celebrate diversity.

And as if that is not enough, the church is coming to the realization that God's mission has not simply been "delegated" to the church as the sole or even primary vehicle of mission, but that God's mission by far transcends what the church is able to carry out. In many and diverse ways God is carrying out God's mission for the healing of God's beloved creation. Nonetheless, God continues to graciously call the church, as beloved community and as body of Christ, to participate faithfully in God's ongoing global and local mission.

These changes and other developments, including the significant shortage of ordered ministers, press the church to re-think its ways of being and doing, not least of which are the processes related to strengthening the Order of Ministry. The following sections outline the Working Group's informed considerations on how the church can best do this. The Candidacy Pathway is the name the Working Group has given to the proposed process.

#### **5. The Candidacy Pathway – an Introduction to the Vision**

**a) The Call to Ordered Ministry:** From its earliest beginnings, the church has emphasized that by the Spirit, God calls all people to engage in ministries by which the church reveals its continuity with the ministry of Jesus Christ and thereby contributes to God's mission. All persons – young and older – are blessed in varying ways with gifts for ministry.

God calls some to the Order of Ministry for serving in diaconal ministries of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and ordained ministries of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care. These complementary ministries are exercised in the church's many and varied ministry settings – e.g. in theological schools



and educational centres; social justice community ministries; camping ministries; administrative and program ministries in Conferences, Presbyteries/Districts, General Council and other para-church offices; in hospital, prison, and armed forces chaplaincies; seniors' facilities; experimental ministries which defy categorization; and, most familiarly, in congregational ministries.

The church also acknowledges and celebrates that God works actively in settings beyond the church. This is true, informally, wherever the Spirit moves people individually and collectively to seek justice, foster wholeness and peace, and to love God and neighbour.

Formally, the church acknowledges communities and organizations where the ministry of Jesus Christ can be discerned through eyes of faith. These organizations are called Presbytery Recognized Ministries and complement the Presbytery Accountable Ministries listed above. The amazing diversity of ministry settings reflects the many diverse communities and ways by which Christ's ministry to welcome God's reign is carried out.

To serve and offer their gifts in settings of ministry, by the Spirit, God calls individuals rooted in community.

**b) Understanding the Candidacy Pathway:** The Candidacy Pathway is a journey of faith and the process of formation by which the church community accompanies individual members, who experience God's call to serve in the Order of Ministry. The Pathway is not a "testing ground" – a place to "weed people out," but a shared pilgrimage to assist those

called and gifted persons to arrive at the particular ministry God has in mind, with particular focus on the Order of Ministry.

#### **i. Discernment**

The Pathway is predicated on the assumption that "discernment" is not a time-limited stage in the overall process, but an ongoing activity all along the Pathway. From the first inklings of call to the final steps of ordination or commissioning, the individual's and her/his companions' primary task on the Pathway is to discern more nearly and more clearly what God is calling the individual to become. Discernment is a dimension of every aspect of the Pathway.

#### **ii. Ministry Settings**

The Pathway assumes that congregational ministry, though the most numerous, is not the "signature" or "determinative" setting for ministry and that therefore congregational ministry experience is not a pre-requisite for any other form or setting of ministry. Instead, the Pathway assumes that the ministry of Jesus Christ is, to be sure, the core activity of the faith community, but that faith community is formed wherever "two or three" or more gather in Christ's name to be the Body of Christ for God's mission.

Hence, whether the ministry is carried out by a congregation, or a chaplaincy team, or in a seniors' community, or in a prison setting, or through a campus ministry, or as a social justice community, ordained and diaconal ministers can serve to strengthen the work and

ground the activity in the community's relationship with God. The marks of the church are caring community, worship and prayer, studying scripture and the heritage of faith, incarnating the Gospel of Christ, and thereby revealing the activity of God through the body of Christ, which is the church. These marks are borne by congregations AND by the other ministries of the church.

It follows that ordination and commissioning is not dependent on transfer and settlement to a pastoral charge only. The General Council (see ROP 37th General Council 2003, p. 186) has clearly indicated that settlement can take place wherever certain guidelines and requirements have been met in Presbytery Accountable and Presbytery Recognized Ministries.

### **iii. Culture of Call**

The Candidacy Pathway is also highly dependent on developing and fostering "a culture of call" throughout the church. Whether in congregations or in other ministry settings, attention needs to be given to companions who are gifted for ministry. Whether through informal conversation or intentional programming, the entire church is called to invite people to consider exercising their God-given talents more fully for the various forms of leadership in and on behalf of the church.

A more pro-active "recruitment" or "calling forth" strategy is being developed by the General Council in order to assist in this invitational approach. Key to this strategy is helping congregations and other community ministries become 'calling communities' where the practice of noticing and

naming gifts and nurturing call are activities practiced freely in a congregation or community ministry appreciative of the importance of leadership.

Another part of the strategy is to invite Conferences and Presbyteries/Districts, with the support of the General Council and educational institutions, to hold "Exploring Ministry Vocations" events regionally. The Candidacy Pathway relies on events such as these to provide any person exploring the possibility of ordered ministry the opportunity to have questions answered and initial thoughts encouraged. The events would allow participants to learn more about ministry careers in the Church through a variety of processes, such as:

- presentations,
- sharing of resources,
- conversations,
- Bible study,
- specific information sharing (re ordination and diaconal streams; re options in educational programs; re varied ministry employment possibilities, etc.), and
- subsequent reflection.

The events may result in a formal application to begin the Candidacy Pathway. On the other hand, the event may result in the person being strengthened and encouraged in her/his lay leadership roles.

### **iv. Circle of Accompaniment**

The Candidacy Pathway values the participation of companions on the journey. From the first inkling of call

and through the person's resolve to respond formally to the call, individuals need accompaniment.

Companions would be trusted persons who have knowledge and experience of the church and may be in leadership roles in church-related ministries, or, they may simply be wise companions, whom the interested person can rely upon to weigh carefully the possibility of a vocation in ordered ministry.

Such companions initially serve as an informal community of accompaniment for the person called, but could become part of the formal "Circle of Accompaniment", in the event that the person is identified as a Candidate by the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board.

The formal Circle of Accompaniment's role is to accompany, not to test, evaluate, or assess, but to help and uphold the candidate in her/his progress along the Pathway.

#### **v. Candidate's Portfolio**

This lifts up another key aspect of the Candidacy Pathway, namely that candidates take responsibility for their own progress along the pathway. It is up to candidates to be informed and to determine whether they have the experiences and the documentation necessary to be assessed by the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board.

The candidate is responsible for starting a portfolio by which the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board can assess her/his progress and readiness. The Board needs

to be equipped to assess candidates' portfolios with sensitivity to diverse cultural backgrounds and appreciation for various modes of personal expression. The assessment will include the awareness that ongoing learning is part of the practice of ministry and that candidates will continue to set learning goals to strengthen their competencies as outlined in the church's Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership.

The various aspects of the Candidacy Pathway are not simply linear. In fact the Working Group thought more in terms of a constellation of activities – akin to a solar system.

Throughout the entire Pathway (and beyond) there is a sense that the key activities are ongoing. Through the companionship of God's people, there is a sense of being called, of being accompanied and supported, of being identified for leadership, and of being affirmed and celebrated and authorized to carry out responsibilities. At every turn, the need to be equipped for the roles and tasks of ministry is affirmed.

The Spirit keeps inviting the faithful to deeper and more faithful discipleship and leadership. Individual and communal processes of discernment – through individual reflection, study of scripture, meditation on the context of ministry, conversation with other faithful people, and journaling – are integral to the Pathway and the life-long practice in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of the Candidacy Pathway is

*to call forth, identify, accompany, equip, assess, authorize, and celebrate those persons whom God calls to and endows for the Order of Ministry, offering diaconal and ordained leadership in Christ's diverse ministries contributing to God's mission in creation.*

## 6. Stages on the Pathway

The Candidacy Pathway involves a variety of steps by which a person moves and is accompanied toward membership in the Order of Ministry – commissioning or ordination – and call/settlement in a ministry setting.

The steps are:

**a) Call Forth:** The call to ministry is an aspect of the life of every faith community. All congregations and ministries need to be attentive to the reality that God calls all people to ministry, and that God calls some to the particular leadership of the Order of Ministry. “A culture of call” pervades all healthy faith communities and they will be prepared to respond effectively to those persons whom God is calling.

Those called are involved in a ministry of the church and sense that God is drawing them to deeper engagement in ministry. Such a person has conversations with trusted friends and / or community members, gathers information, and seeks to understand more clearly what God is communicating.

- The “call” is a personal experience rooted in and affirmed as to “promise” by representatives of diverse ministry contexts, e.g. camp, campus ministry, community social justice ministry, congregation, etc.;

- the person takes ownership and informed responsibility for her/his own journey of formation
  - seeks out the resources and wisdom of the community for determining next steps
  - starts to develop a portfolio by which the person's growth in ministry, including the possibility of ordination/ commissioning is carefully documented, e.g. journalling, verbatim accounts, etc.
- the church provides required information about vocations in the church and information about educational institutions to equip members for specific ministries
- The church organizes “Exploring Ministry Vocations” events in order to provide opportunity for persons exploring call to gain information and advice about the church's ministry vocations and educational programs and schools.
- Persons who sense a call to the Order of Ministry apply to the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board for access to The Candidacy Pathway. They may do this whether members of the church or not. The application is accompanied by various required documents (**including a psychological report**) and in particular letters of commendation from faith community leaders affirming the applicant's “promise” for ordered ministry in the church. [Basis and *Manual* change.]
- Once identified as a Candidate by the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board, the person is accompanied along the entire Pathway by a named “Circle of Accompaniment.” The function of the Circle is to support the person along the Pathway. The Circle does not assess the person's suitability, effectiveness, readiness for the ministry to which God has called him/her. The individual discerns for him/herself their call to ordered

ministry, and is given information about the options and requirements for diaconal or ordained ministry.

- Where possible, the Session or equivalent of a pastoral charge will commend the applicant to the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board and confirm the applicant's membership in the congregation.
- Candidates are required to be a member of the United Church prior to the Supervised Ministry Experience appointment.

**b) Identify:**

- the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board
  - Each Conference appoints a carefully selected Board, interculturally sensitive, representative of diverse ministries and varied constituencies, trained and equipped to steward the Candidacy Pathway.
  - The Board is the sole body within the Conference considering and deciding on matters related to Candidacy (and matters related to the Admission of Ministry-Personnel from other denominations). In this role, it replaces the Conference and Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee, the Conference Interview Board, and the Conference Internship & Educational Supervision Committee. The recommendation of the Presbytery/District is not required [Basis Change; *Manual*].
- The Board mandate includes:
  - formally assessing the gifts and abilities of individuals to respond to God's call and affirming their promise in ministry, and identifying Candidates for the Pathway to ordained or diaconal ministry

- providing the resources (binder; CD, etc.) to guide the Candidate's journey along the Pathway
- celebrating God's gift of people offering leadership in the church's diverse ministries
- assessing a Candidate's progress along the Pathway
- assessing a Candidate's need for more experience of and knowledge about congregational life, and/or membership in the church.
- recommending a Candidate for a Supervised Ministry Experience
- assessing a Candidate's readiness and effectiveness for ordered ministry
- celebrating the person's journey and growth
- recommending commissioning or ordination to the Conference
- transferring the Candidate to another Conference, with the consent of the Conferences involved, if requested by the Candidate.

**c) Accompany:**

- The Candidate is rooted in community; specifically, the community of faith where s/he experiences the call to a ministry vocation – congregation, campus ministry, camp, etc. Here s/he will seek out other faithful people to discuss and understand the experience of call. Leaders in the faith community – ministry-personnel, elders, trusted wise ones – are to be sought out, as are those who can cultivate the intercultural sensitivity and appreciation of diversity.
- From this supportive community, the Candidate will want to identify one or two persons to be companions on the Pathway. As well, the Candidate will need to ask one or two persons to provide a letter of reference, supporting the

application for Candidacy and indicating the qualities and gifts the Candidate has as promise for ministry roles. It is intended that these relationships will be sustained throughout the Candidacy Pathway.

- The presbytery/district, through an appropriate committee, in partnership with pastoral charges and other ministries, has primary responsibility to
  - foster a “culture of call” in congregations, ministries, and the presbytery/district itself
  - call forth (recruit) persons for ministry vocations from pastoral charges and other ministries;
  - celebrate the response of persons who sense themselves called to particular ministries
  - ensure candidates are effectively accompanied and supported as they walk along the Pathway toward ordination and commissioning
    - by the presbytery/district itself
    - by the candidate’s home congregation
    - by other ministry communities.
  - (at the request of the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board) appoint a formal presbytery/district companion to be part of the candidate’s “Circle of Accompaniment” along the Candidacy Pathway.
  - The Circle of Accompaniment walks with the Candidate throughout her/his journey on the Candidacy Pathway and plays a key role in encouraging, celebrating, challenging, and supporting the Candidate along the way.

Because of this substantially changed role, the Working Group recommends re-naming and remandating the

Presbytery/District Education Education and Students Committee. [Basis; *Manual* change]

Accompaniment also happens as congregations and community ministries maintain their relationship with the Candidate, providing prayer support, encouragement, and, as possible, financial assistance. This important relationship is to be strengthened.

Candidates will also be accompanied by other Candidates, particularly as each Conference invites all Candidates to attend Annual Meetings and gather as a caucus for mutual support and encouragement.

#### **d) Equip**

- The United Church is committed to ministry leadership that is both educated and participating in ongoing learning. The Candidacy Pathway involves significant time and energy in educational settings for the Candidate to learn both the knowledge and skills related to ordained or diaconal ministry.
- As the church seeks to foster ministries in French, develop good relationships with Aboriginal communities, cultivate sensitivity to the cultural diversity and skills for the development of intercultural ministry will be an important part of the entire equipping process for all candidates. Field education placements in intercultural settings during the academic program can contribute to this learning.
- A network of recognized educational institutions provides the educational programs to prepare Candidates to be assessed with reference to the Church’s benchmark Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership. The schools

attest to the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board that Candidates have fulfilled the General Council's educational requirements for the Order of Ministry (*Testamur*) and make a recommendation to the Board regarding readiness for appointment to a Supervised Ministry Experience.

- Two streams of education are offered by the Church's educational institutions:
  - campus-based models of formation (including "field education" components), or
  - ministry-based or community-based (Aboriginal) models of formation.
- Programs leading to ordination are available at:
  - Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax (campus-based and ministry based)
  - United Theological College, Montreal (campus-based)
  - Queen's Theological College, Kingston (campus-based)
  - Emmanuel College, Toronto (campus-based)
  - St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon (hybrid campus-based and ministry-based during 16 month internship)
  - Vancouver School of Theology (campus-based)
- Programs leading to ordination and commissioning for ministry in First Nations contexts are available at:
  - Francis Sandy Theological Centre, Paris, ON (community-based)
  - Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, Beausejour, MB (community-based)
- The national program for commissioning to diaconal ministry is available at:
  - The Centre for Christian Studies, Winnipeg (ministry-based)

- As appropriate, the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board will provide input into the Candidate's decision on which educational program and/or school to attend.

**e) Supervised Ministry Experience (SME):** The Church has learned of the crucial importance of supervised ministry experiences – field education, internships, clinical pastoral education, etc. – in the process of formation for ministry. The Working Group is convinced that such experiences must continue to be a key component of the Pathway toward the Order of Ministry. In assessing the current national eight-month and the St. Andrew's College (Saskatoon) 16-month variation, the Working Group has concluded that the internship program is not sustainable.

Hence the policy direction proposed is that the internship programs (the national eight month full-time program and St. Andrew's College's 16 month half-time program) for candidates in campus-based educational programs be phased out, and that a Supervised Ministry Experience for Candidates in campus-based educational programs and in the Centre for Christian Studies' diaconal program be developed. The Supervised Ministry Experience would commence upon completion of the academic program.

Other ministry-based and community-based educational program Candidates are **not** affected by this recommendation, since their educational program will continue to integrate ministry experience into their learning circles and modules.

Research was conclusive that the current internship program had serious drawbacks for students. In particular, students'

lives and that of their families were significantly disrupted by the requirement to re-locate to an internship site for the duration of the internship, and then (eight month program) move back to the school for the final academic year and then re-locate again to their settlement charge. Conceivably a student could:

- move from permanent home to School
- move from school to internship placement
- move from internship placement back to School
- move from School to settlement charge.

The final academic year was, for many students, anti-climactic and to some extent felt like a disruption to their recently begun practice of ministry. As well, internship funding is limited and presented for many students a financial hardship, as well as delay in their ability to earn a full salary. Offering regular salaries to interns is not feasible because of shrinking General Council budgets.

Studies demonstrate that candidates in the campus-based stream are significantly disadvantaged financially by the fact that their full-time earning ability is delayed until they are settled after ordination or commissioning. This contributes substantially to the student debt load burdening many newly ordered ministers.

Ministry-based and community-based candidates appointed to pastoral charges and other presbytery/district recognized ministries, on the other hand, are paid regular salaries during their appointment and earn pension credits and credits for years of service in those appointments. For many this is a significant difference and has been raised as a justice concern

The Supervised Ministry Experience will continue to enable pastoral charges and presbytery/district recognized ministries to participate actively and substantially in the formation of ministry leaders. In fact, this 'educational' role of some pastoral charges and ministries will be reinforced as Candidate Ministers are appointed in congregational and other ministry settings.

Some pastoral charges, which have found the placement of interns both a way to participate in the formation of ministry leaders and the means to acquire or supplement ministry-personnel leadership will be disappointed by the Supervised Ministry Experience proposal. The Working Group is convinced, however, that this is a necessary step in the evolution of preparing people for ordered ministry. It may be that other ways of supplementing congregational and community ministry leadership can be found.

**i. Candidates in Campus-Based Educational Programs:**

The Candidate consults with the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board, which advises the Candidate as to the type of Supervised Ministry Experience to be sought. The Candidate seeks an appointment through the Pastoral Relations system.

To be appointed, candidates are required to be a member of the United Church.

The Supervised Ministry Experience will be a regular presbytery/district pastoral relations appointment of not less than one-half time within a presbytery/district pastoral



charge or accountable ministry, or in a presbytery recognized ministry where the presbytery has declared a vacancy. Where appropriate, a Ministry & Personnel Committee operates as per the *Manual* and a pastoral charge supervisor is appointed by the presbytery. The authority for the appointment of the Candidate Minister remains with the presbytery/district.

Remuneration to the Candidate Minister is determined by the General Council salary scale for ministry-personnel and paid by the pastoral charge or ministry.

The Candidate Minister participates in an intentional learning circle to cultivate best practices of ministry. A Supervised Ministry Experience supervisor, trained to national standards, is appointed by the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board to accompany the Candidate Minister along the Candidacy Pathway. The pastoral charge/ministry may apply to the Conference through the presbytery/district to have the Candidate Minister licensed to celebrate the sacraments.

The Candidate Minister undertakes to serve two years. After the Candidate has served twelve months in the Supervised Ministry Experience, the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board begins the process of final assessment of the Candidate's readiness and effectiveness for **ordered** ministry.

As part of this final assessment, the Candidate will present to the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board a portfolio, which will bear witness to the knowledge, skills,

and leadership abilities s/he has developed during the journey on the Candidacy Pathway.

If the CCB determines that the Candidate is ready to assume the role and responsibilities of a member of the Order of Ministry, they will recommend the Candidate for ordination by the Conference (see below for the diaconal ministry steps).

If the Board determines that the Candidate is not ready to be recommended for ordination, a recommendation to extend or change the Supervised Ministry Experience appointment for one year may be forwarded to the pastoral charge/ministry and presbytery/district for consideration and Decision.

If a third year is added to the Supervised Ministry Experience, then the final evaluation of the Candidate's readiness and effectiveness for ministry is undertaken by the Board at the end of year two and a decision is made whether to recommend for ordination or not. If recommended, the Candidate awaits the decision of the Conference to ordain and, if approved, is ordained at the Annual General Meeting.

If the Candidate is not recommended by the Board, then the Supervised Ministry Experience appointment is not renewed and the Candidacy is terminated when the appointment is concluded.

In the final year of the Supervised Ministry Experience, the Candidate chooses one of two options for placement after ordination:

- S/he may make him/herself available for call. Any United Church pastoral charge or ministry, including the Supervised Ministry Experience charge/ministry, may consider the Candidate for call and eventual transfer/settlement to the charge/ministry; or
- S/he may elect for transfer and settlement to another pastoral charge/ministry as the Transfer and Settlement Process may determine.

Conversations will take place with the leadership of St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon to determine how the College will respond to the policy directions re internship.

**ii. Candidates in The Centre for Christian Studies' program for diaconal ministry:**

Candidates enrolled in this four year educational program, are involved in ongoing unpaid field education in a ministry setting near the candidate's home. The Centre has indicated its willingness to adapt its program so that it can participate fully in the proposed Candidacy Pathway.

Details will await decisions of the General Council or its Executive.

**iii. Candidates in Ministry-Based / Community-Based Educational Programs**

Ministry-based / community-based educational programs provide Candidates, who are already members of The United Church of Canada, with ongoing integrative

learning opportunities while serving a pastoral charge or ministry as paid ministry personnel in pastoral relationship.

These programs are normally five years in length. An educational supervisor is in place to accompany the Candidate Minister.

In the year before the Candidate's anticipated commissioning or ordination, the Conference Candidacy **and Admissions** Board will undertake an assessment process as to the Candidate's readiness for and effectiveness in ministry.

As part of this final assessment, the Candidate will present to the Conference Candidacy **and Admissions** Board a portfolio, which will bear witness to the knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities the Candidate has developed during her/his journey on the Candidacy Pathway.

If the Conference Candidacy **and Admissions** Board determines the Candidate is ready for ordination or commissioning a recommendation will be made to the Conference. If not, then the Candidate may, with the agreement of the pastoral charge/ministry and Presbytery be re-appointed for one further year in the pastoral charge or ministry.

A final and conclusive assessment is undertaken during this final year. The Board will then need to decide to recommend for ordination or commissioning, or, to terminate the Candidacy upon the completion of the pastoral appointment.

**f) Assess:** Assessment is a function of every aspect and stage of the Candidacy Pathway. Assessment comes in many forms – formal and informal. The Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board is the principal agent of formal assessment. By written data, by the portfolio of the Candidate, and by the input other participants on the Pathway, plus conversations with the Candidate, the Board will seek the basis for valid determinations about the Candidate’s suitability, readiness, and effectiveness for ministry.

The educational institution plays a major role in assessing the Candidate’s educational growth and readiness and advises the Board as to completion of the General Council’s educational requirements.

Supervised Ministry Experience supervisors (in the Supervised Ministry Experience and in field education placements) contribute significantly to final assessments of Candidates’ readiness and effectiveness.

And all along the way mentors, the Circle of Accompaniment, fellow students and teachers, members of congregations and ministries, etc. provide informal feedback and data by which the Candidate is able to assess his/her own growth on the Pathway. The Circle is not part of the **formal** assessment process, which is carried out by the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board.

As part of the final assessment, the Candidate will present to the Board a portfolio that will bear witness to the knowledge,

skills, and leadership abilities they have developed during their journey on the Candidacy pathway

In its final assessment, the Board may keep in mind the Candidate’s proposed plan for Continuing Education and peer support systems to assist the Candidate in their ongoing professional formation.

**g) Authorize and Celebrate:** The concluding step on the Candidacy Pathway is the Conference’s decision and action to ordain or commission the Candidate. In the “celebration of ministries” service, Conferences formalize the confidence they have in the Candidates who have completed the Pathway. Candidates are thereby authorized to act as ordained or diaconal ministers of The United Church of Canada and members of the Order of Ministry.

The occasion also provides opportunity for the whole church to express its gratitude to God for the Candidate’s call, for the Pathway by which s/he has been formed, and for the fervent hope that the Candidate will contribute significantly to the church’s ministry and God’s mission. This is a time of celebration.

## **6. Sending Forth**

The newly commissioned Diaconal Minister or the Ordained Minister is ready to serve the pastoral charge or ministry to which s/he has been called or settled. The receiving Conference prepares an orientation program for new ministry-personnel and encourages newly ordained and commissioned ministers to become part of a peer support program. Participation in continuing education programs and peer support systems

ensures that the new minister continues his/her formation as a member of the Order of Ministry.

### 7. Appeal Process

Decisions by the Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board may be appealed formally to the Conference Executive via the normal Appeals Process outlined in the *Manual*.

### 8. Evaluation of the Pathway

In order to ensure that the Pathway is effective and responding to the needs of all involved, an ongoing evaluation process will be developed. Such evaluations will ensure that the Candidacy Pathway can be improved and strengthened in light of experience.

### 9. To Do List (incomplete)

- a. Develop an implementation plan
- b. Organizational
  - Establish Conference Candidacy and Admissions Boards
    - Job descriptions for members / co-chairs
    - Develop binder for CCB members
  - Develop “Exploring Ministry Vocations” events
  - Phase out internship Program
  - Develop Supervised Ministry Experience criteria and protocols
  - Cultivate adequate team of educational supervisors trained to national standards
  - Training processes for all involved in the Pathway
- c. Resources / Forms
  - Develop medical and psychological report forms
  - Develop binder for candidates

- Develop formal application forms
  - Develop report forms for schools, SMEs, etc.
  - d. Legal/Policy change
    - Determine how to proceed while Manual provisions and remits are processed
      - *Manual* sections listed
      - Basis of Union references
    - Seek GC authorization to GCE for changing Basis of Union
  - e. Costs
    - Develop operational business plan and budget
- 

### Appendices

#### A. Candidacy Review Working Group - terms of reference

**Title:** Terms of Reference for Review of Discernment, Candidacy and Internship Programs for Ordered Ministry

**Origin:** Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry; approved June 3, 2008 by conference call meeting.

#### Mandate – GCE May 2008:

1. To undertake a review of the discernment, candidacy, and internship program, including consultation with key stakeholders; and
2. To integrate the implications of this review with other processes concerning ministry leadership currently underway (e.g. Meaning of Ministry, Funding Theological Institutions, Leadership Outcomes); and,

3. To report to the March 2009 Executive of the General Council.

### **Goals:**

1. To assess the current systems of discernment for ordered ministry, candidacy and internship along with recruitment, Leadership Outcomes, Meaning of Ministry, Aboriginal Schools Self Study, Funding Theological institutions, etc, as to assumptions and values, deficiencies and strengths, and overall effectiveness in serving the church's need for ordered leadership;
2. To ensure or develop a system which reflects at least the following values and factors:
  - acknowledges God's gift of leaders for the church's participation in God's mission
  - has processes / systems leading to ordination and commissioning that are simple, streamlined, but effective
  - is a system that people can understand and trust
  - focuses less on regulatory culture
  - enhances candidates' experience of self-direction with support and accompaniment
  - is efficient in use of resources (people, money, energy, time)
  - strengthens the ministry-based learning experience before ordination and commissioning
  - contributes to increased numbers of ready and effective ordered leaders
  - enhances the church's joy in identifying and affirming new ordered leader

To report to PC PMM and seek mandate to pursue next steps.

### **Objectives:**

- To identify stakeholders to be consulted including but not limited to Aboriginal, Francophone and intercultural ministries;
- to identify research areas to be explored;
- to identify other processes and projects which need to be taken into account in the course of this project (e.g. Transfer & Settlement Task Group, recruitment program etc.)
- to test options
- to prepare a comprehensive report and recommendations for the Executive of General Council through PC PMM

### **Membership – elected membership from bodies named:**

- 1 member PC-PMM
- 1 member Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry Unit-Wide Ctee
- 1 member from among Aboriginal elected members
- 1 member from among Francophone elected members
- 3 members Education and Vocations Advisory Committee (EVC)

### **Staff Resource**

- 2 Education and Vocations Program Coordinators
- 1 Executive Minister CECM

### **Proposed Timetable**

1. June 3, 2008 – seek approval of terms of reference by PC PMM and confirm membership in working group
2. Working Group meets by conference call as soon as possible to discuss parameters for research
3. Research report received by October 15, 2008

4. Working group meets with EVC in early November to prepare report for PC PMM (by conference call)
5. Report is presented to PC PMM for interim approval

**B. List of categories of 64 people consulted**

Deans and Principals of theological schools  
Conference Executive Secretaries  
Personnel Ministers  
Discernment Committees  
Education & Students Committees  
Conference Interview Boards  
Conference Internship & Educational Supervision Committees  
Candidates  
Candidates in supervised ministry education  
Newly ordained and commissioned ministry-personnel  
Withdrawn candidate  
Lay Supervision Team  
Educational Supervisors  
Presbytery Council on Learning

Care and attention was given to choosing Aboriginal, Francophone, and Intercultural voices and including representation across all Conferences.

About 40 responses to the website invitation for input into the project.

**C. Reports/documents reviewed**

*Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century – 37th General Council*  
*Report of the 1991 Consultation on Ministry Vocations*

*UCC Ministry Needs in the New Millennium 1997*  
*Internship Review – A Review of the Eight-Month Internship Program 2000*  
*Simplifying Policies and procedures Related to Pastoral Relations 2007*  
*Student Debt 2002 GCE*  
*Aboriginal Schools Self-Study 2005/2006*  
*Meaning of Ministry – conversation*  
*Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership 2007 GCE*  
*Recruitment Plan 2008*

**Candidacy Review Working Group Members:**

Stephane Vermette (Ministries in French; General Council Executive);  
Danielle James (Intercultural Ministries);  
Kelly Hudson (Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry);  
Bob Lockhart (convenor) (Education and Vocations Advisory Committee),  
Linda Lee Henriksen (Education and Vocations Advisory Committee)  
Lloyd Bruce (Education & Vocations Advisory Committee);  
Brenda Simpson (Aboriginal Ministries).

CECM Staff Resource members: Pat Lawson-Paul, Ted Reeve, Harry Oussoren, Melodie Mui.  
Researcher: Abigail Johnson