

Guidelines For Seeking A New Pastor For Your Church



Leadership Referral Services

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Foreward

The General Assembly (GA) Missions Ministry Team, is the agency that has primary responsibility for assisting churches that are seeking pastors and pastors who are seeking to relocate. In our system, the presbyterial Board of Missions, or its equivalent, is the agency charged with the oversight of churches and, in particular, the relationship between pastors and churches. It makes recommendations to the presbytery regarding the establishing and dissolving of pastoral relationships. Further, in our system the session is the agency responsible for negotiating or approving the terms of the contract, extending the call on behalf of the congregation, and working most closely with the pastor in the ministry of the church. When a pastor resigns, each of these agencies plays an important part in the process. It is the purpose of the manual to help all concerned understand and work with and through the process which will take place as one pastor leaves and another one is secured.

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SECTION I

Summary of Procedures for Churches Seeking Pastors

A. Introduction

When either the pastor or the session decides that the pastoral relationship should be dissolved, contact is made with the presbyterial Board of Missions, or its equivalent agency, to communicate that desire. If, after consultations and due consideration, the presbyterial Board concurs in the dissolution request, it makes an appropriate recommendation to presbytery. Presbytery, if it approves the request, declares the pulpit vacant and appoints a moderator for the session.

These *Guidelines* are meant to provide a step-by-step process for the church seeking a new pastor from the time the first contact is made with the presbyterial Board requesting a dissolution of the pastoral relationship to the successful conclusion of the search.

Although the *Guidelines* are written primarily with the position of pastor in mind, they can easily be adapted and used by churches seeking associate or assistant pastors or other staff positions. The term “pastor” is used with the understanding that it may mean an ordained minister currently serving another church; an ordained minister serving somewhere other than in the pastorate, but who is interested in a pastorate; a student about to graduate and accept a first pastorate; or a student still in school.

The material that follows is for the use of sessions and search committees engaged in the process of searching for a new pastor. The steps described, if followed in an orderly manner, can enable the church to avoid many pitfalls and embarrassments. These steps are in keeping with the Constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

B. Steps to Be Taken by Churches Seeking a New Pastor

Following are the steps to be taken, in proper order, by sessions and search committees as they engage in the process of seeking a new pastor. This section, *Section I*, is the listing of the steps in an abbreviated form, and *Section II* is the listing of the steps with more detailed information and suggestions.

The steps in abbreviated form are:

1. Session, usually in conjunction with the pastor, contacts the presbyterial Board requesting a dissolution of the pastoral relationship.

2. Session contacts the Leadership Referral Services and asks for a copy of the *Guidelines* to assist them in their search for a pastor.
3. Session, on receipt of the *Guidelines*, names a search committee and defines its responsibilities.
4. Session determines who is to be responsible for completing the **Church Information Form (CIF)**.
5. Church Information Form is completed, approved by the session, and forwarded to the Leadership Referral Services office.
6. Search committee establishes the process for evaluating the Personal Information Forms (PIF) to be received. Sometimes the PIF is referred to as dossiers.
7. Search committee obtains names of prospects for the position and receives Personal Information Forms from the Leadership Referral Services (a copy of the CIF will be sent to potential pastors at the directive of the church, or upon request by an interested prospect).
8. Search committee studies and evaluates the PIFs, seeks counsel of the presbyterial Board, and ranks the candidates (prospects) for the position in priority order.
9. Search committee hears candidates preach and interviews them.
10. Search committee selects the best candidate, counsels with the presbyterial Board, and discusses the suggested terms of the contract with the candidate.
11. Search committee and session finalize the terms of the proposed contract.
12. Session ascertains the will of the congregation in regard to issuing a call.
13. Session issues a call, in keeping with the terms of the contract, subject to the approval of the presbyterial Board and/or the presbytery.
14. Search committee is discharged.
15. Session makes request to the presbyterial Board for approval of the call and may request approval of plans for the installation of the new pastor.

NOTE: In the event the candidate (Step #10) decides not to give further consideration to the position, the search committee proceeds with the second candidate on the list in the priority order established, and then with the third, in the event the second person did not wish to give further consideration. In the event all the priority prospects wish to be taken out of consideration, the search committee goes back to Step #7 and repeats the process until a successful conclusion to the search is realized.

SECTION II

Step 1

Dissolving the Relationship

The pastor submits written resignation to the session.

The session, usually in conjunction with the pastor, communicates in writing to the presbyterial Board requesting a dissolution of the pastoral relationship. Ordinarily, the presbyterial Board concurs in the request to dissolve the pastoral relationship and recommend its approval to the presbytery. It is also normal for the presbyterial board to name a moderator of the session, subject to the approval of the presbytery. See sample letter **Appendix A**, page 7.

The session and/or search committee might wish to consider the appointed moderator as interim pastor, with the expectation that leadership in the pastoral search process would be one of the responsibilities. If it is not possible to use the moderator (appointed) by the presbytery, the session and /or search committee might want to consider securing an interim. (*NOTE: Resources on the role of interim pastor are available from the Leadership Referral Services.*)

In the event that it is going to be weeks or months before the presbytery meets to formally dissolve the relationship, it is accepted practice for search committees to proceed with the pastoral selection process. Some presbyteries direct their Board of Missions to approve the dissolution of the pastoral relationship pending final approval by presbytery at its next meeting.

Step 2

Initiating the search Process

If the *Guidelines* have not already been received, the session contacts the Leadership Referral Services (LRS) and asks for a copy of the *Guidelines* to assist them in the search for a pastor.

On receiving the *Guidelines* and appropriate forms, the session and/or search committee studies the *Guidelines* and familiarizes itself with the step-by-step process involved in the search for and securing of a pastor.

For this process to work as it is intended, it is important that no step be omitted or circumvented.

Step 3

Naming the Search Committee and Defining Its Responsibilities

When the session has received and reviewed the *Guidelines*, it names the search committee, if this has not already been done. Usually, this committee consists of three to five persons, at least one of whom is a member of the session. In some cases, the session elects to serve as the search committee. However, it is suggested that the number serving should be limited to no more than five.

The session defines the suggested responsibilities of the search committee. See **Appendix B**, page 7, for possible responsibilities.

Steps 4-5

Taking a Look at Yourself

The interim between pastors is often an excellent time for a congregation to review its goals, set new ones, and think about its expectations of itself and its prospective pastor.

At this point, some congregations may wish to take the time to do an in-depth self-study with the intention of self-discovery and the planning of objective and goals for the future. (The Missions Ministry Team can make recommendations with regard to materials for this purpose.)

The minimum necessity is the completion of the **Church Information Form (CIF)**. This form, along with an instruction sheet, is available on the LRS website or by calling LRS to request a packet.

The session will decide who is responsible for completing the CIF; e.g., the search committee, a special committee named by the session, the session itself or a committee thereof.

Once the form is completed, it should be reviewed and approved by the session and sent to the LRS. (A copy of the CIF will be sent to potential pastors at the directive of the church, or upon the request by an interested prospect).

Steps 6-8

Developing the Prospective Pastor List

Names of prospective pastors might come from various sources, including; the presbyterial Board; the session; the search committee itself; members of the congregation and even former members or interested friends. The LRS will not provide names prior to the receipt of the CIF. Upon receipt and review of the CIF, the LRS will forward several dossiers to the search committee.

Gathering names from such a variety of sources could conceivably result in a list containing several dozen names. If possible, the total list should be reduced, in whatever way feasible, to no more than 10 to 12 before requesting dossiers. This list of 10-12 will be further studied and prioritized by the committee through various ways, including reviewing the dossiers, making an initial contact to determine the degree of interest (see **Appendix C**, page 8), contacting those who have reason to know something about the prospect's abilities, etc. A final list of 3 to 5 should result from this kind of prioritizing. This final working list of 3 to 5 should then be ranked in a #1, #2, #3 order prior to any formal interviews.

When the completed CIF is received by the LRS, it will be thoroughly reviewed in preparation for making referrals to the search committee. It is the purpose and intention of this process to make the most appropriate referrals possible to the church. A "perfect match" is not possible, but it is hoped that this process will result in potential leadership more "in tune" with the church's needs at a particular time in its life and ministry. The LRS will initiate referrals only to those churches completing the CIF, but will forward other dossiers to the search committee at the request of the committee or interested ministers.

While the CIF is being reviewed and preparations are being made by the LRS to send copies of PIFS (dossiers) on prospective pastors to the search committee, the committee should determine the process by which they are going to evaluate the dossiers received. See **Appendix D**, page 8, for a suggested process.

Certain factors govern the availability of each pastor's dossier. The pastor has control over its release. Although most pastors indicate on their PIF that it is free to be circulated, they have the option of requiring their approval prior to circulation. In some instances, pastors do not have dossiers on file, or their dossiers are out-of-date. LRS will ask each pastor to submit a PIF in such cases. Experience has shown that many

pastors fail to respond to such requests, leaving search committees to wait for information. In such cases, it would seem advisable that the search committee have a plan for "no response," e.g. a set time limit for dropping the name from consideration if the dossier has not been received.

After the search committee has received dossiers, it evaluates and ranks them according to its predetermined process.

Some presbyteries require prior Board approval before contacting potential pastors. If this is the case in your presbytery, be sure the appropriate presbyterial agency has given approval prior to contacting individuals. If that is not required, it is, nevertheless, a good practice to get prior approval, at least from those ranked high enough to be interviewed. This practice, potentially, at least, can save some embarrassment and possible conflict later on.

Steps 9-11

Hearing Candidates Preach and Conducting Interviews

Even though it may not be the primary consideration, the search committee will want to know something of the candidate's preaching ability. This can be determined in several ways. These ways include:

- (1) requesting tapes of one or more sermons,
- (2) visiting the churches being served by the candidates and participating in the worship services (see **Appendix E**, page 10, for suggestions on visiting churches),
- (3) making inquiry of those who are likely to know something about the candidates' preaching ability, or
- (4) inviting candidates to speak at a service of worship or fellowship gathering of the church. This latter option should be exercised only when the search committee and/or session are very serious about the person and plan to say "yes" or "no" before moving on to another. This method *should not be used* to "parade" several candidates before the congregation. Much caution should be exercised at this point. To parade several candidates before the congregation and then attempt to choose a pastor is fraught with dangers, including the possibility of polarizing, or even dividing, the congregation; creating a climate that would require "healing" before any pastor coming into the situation could move forward in leading the people in ministry; etc.

The search committee may wish to hold informal conversations by phone, or it may wish to correspond with the candidates, asking for additional information, clarification, or elaborating on points in the dossier, etc.

The search committee will want to review its priority listing, select the top three in priority order, and counsel with the presbyterial Board regarding its intentions.

The search committee arranges with candidate #1 for a formal interview and the opportunity for the candidate to meet members of the congregation in an informal setting such as a reception or fellowship meal. See **Appendix F**, page 10 for sample interview questions.

A part of the formal interview will be discussing and negotiating terms of the proposed contract.

The search committee and session finalize the terms of the proposed contract. See **Appendix G**, page 11, for sample contract form.

Steps 12-15

Ascertaining the Will of the Congregation and Issuing the Call

Ascertaining the will of the congregation is an important part of the process of choosing a new pastor. This might be accomplished in at least one of two ways.

1. **Formal.** The congregation, having had opportunity to meet and talk to the candidate, hears the report and recommendation of the search committee and session, including the terms of the proposed contract, and is asked to vote on the recommendation. Voting should be by ballot. The vote serves as an indicator and is not a binding constitutional vote. In light of

the vote, the session will make a determination regarding the issuing of a call.

2. **Informal.** Most Cumberland Presbyterian churches have traditionally used this method. Members of the search committee and/or session talk to members of the congregation asking for their impressions, comments, etc., and, in light of the results, the session will make a decision regarding the call.

Once the will of the congregation has been ascertained and the session has made its decision, it is time to say “yes” or “no” to the candidate.

If “yes,” then a call is issued, in keeping with the terms of the contract; and the presbyterial Board receives written communication to this effect, along with a request for approval of the relationship. The communication to the Board also includes the terms of the call and, subject to the approval of the presbytery, may also include a request that the new pastor be installed. See **Appendix H**, page 12.

If “no,” then notify the candidate by personal letter stating, in general terms, why he/she was not chosen (see **Appendix I**, page 13 for sample letter). Then the search committee needs to approach candidate #2 and continue the process until a pastor is secured.

When a call has been issued and accepted, notify the LRS of the successful completion of the process (see **APPENDIX I**, Page 13, for sample letter). With the successful completion of the process, all dossiers that have been received from ministers and/or the LRS should be returned or destroyed. The dossiers are not for general distribution and use and, thus, should not be left available to others not involved in the search process.

The search committee, having fulfilled its responsibilities, is discharged by the session.

SECTION III

Some Helpful Suggestions for the Search Committee

The following suggestions are offered to the search committee to aid it in doing its job well as it engages in the pastoral search process. The task in which the search committee is engaged will significantly affect the life of the congregation and requires spiritual guidance. Members of a search committee should:

- 1.** Schedule regular meetings, elect chair, vice chair, and secretary.
- 2.** Open and close all meetings with a prayer.
- 3.** Before interviewing a prospective pastor, be sure the candidate's qualifications are in keeping with the skills and abilities in the CIF and that the committee is of one mind regarding the qualifications they are looking for- be familiar with a candidate's background and credentials.
- 4.** When interviewing, utilize the suggested interview questions (**Appendix F**, page 10), but do not be limited by these questions.
- 5.** After interviewing, set a specific date by which the session will reach a final decision. Except under unusual circumstances, this time period should be no longer than two weeks.
- 6.** When a person who has been interviewed is not chose, send a personal letter, stating, at least in broad terms, the reasons for the decision (sample, **Appendix I**, page 13).
- 7.** When a person has been secured for the position, notify all others who have been under consideration, expressing appreciation to them for their willingness to have been considered.
- 8.** When a pastor has been secured, contact LRS, informing them that the search has been completed. (see Section II, page 5)
- 9.** Keep the session and congregation informed of progress.
- 10.** Keep the appropriate presbyterial agency informed of progress.
- 11.** Keep clear and accurate records of all matters germane to the committee's task.
- 12.** Avoid speaking for the committee unless authorized to do so.
- 13.** Avoid setting up artificial barriers of age, sex, race, or marital status.
- 14.** Avoid making a commitment to a minister concerning a call during preliminary communications or interviews.
- 15.** If a candidate is invited to your church to preach or for an interview, plan to say "yes" or "no" before moving on to another candidate.

SECTION IV

APPENDIX A

Sample Letter When Dissolving Pastoral Relationship

When a pastor or associate/assistant pastor of a church submits a resignation, the session, usually in conjunctions with the minister, requests the presbytery to dissolve the relationship: This request may be presented as follows:

The Reverend _____ has submitted his/her resignation to the session of _____ Church effective ____Date____. We join with him/her in requesting that the relationship be dissolved. Further, we ask that the presbytery name * _____ moderator of the session, and we request the counsel and assistance of the presbyterial Board of Missions as we prepare to engage in the pastoral search progress.

Sincerely,

F.W. Wright

Clerk of Session

**If the session desires a particular individual, this would be the appropriate time to make such a request.*

APPENDIX B

Suggested Responsibilities of Search Committee

The following are some suggested responsibilities for the search committee. These are to be understood as suggestions, and the session, in defining the search committee's responsibilities, need not feel "bound" or limited by this listing.

1. Complete the CIF, if so assigned by the session, and forward it as soon as possible to the LRS.
2. Develop a prospect list (see Section II, page 4).
3. Review and rank dossiers in an initial priority order
4. Gather additional material for consideration by visiting in worship services conducted by the candidates, contacting references listed in the dossiers (or others who might have reason to know of the person's qualifications), listening to tapes of sermons, and/or holding informal conversations.
5. Review priority ranking and determine the top three to five candidates for the position.
6. Interview candidate #1, discuss proposed contract, and present him/her to the congregation.
7. Finalize proposed contract in conjunction with the session, after which further steps are the responsibility of the session.
8. Write personal letters to any candidates interviewed but not chosen.
9. Notify all who have been under consideration, thanking them for their willingness to have been considered. This communication comes after a pastor has been selected.
10. Keep the session, congregation, appropriate presbyterial agency, and LRS informed of progress.

APPENDIX C

Letters to Possible Candidates from the Search Committee

(should be individually written)

Date _____

The Reverend Mr. _____

Dear Mr. _____:

Your name has been suggested to our Search Committee as one who might be a possible candidate for the pastoral position in our church. We are writing concerning your interest in being considered.

If your interest is such that you would like to pursue this matter further, we would like to request a copy of your Personal Information Form(dossier) from the Leadership Referral Services for our consideration. We will allow two weeks for your affirmative decision to be considered and for the receipt for your dossier and, thus, an indication of your interest. If, after that time, we have not heard from you, or have not received your dossier, we will assume you are not interested.

You will realize, of course, that in indicating your willingness by seeing that we get your completed dossier, there is no commitment on your part or on the part of our Search Committee other than to pursue the matter further if both of us are interested. If this be the case, you will be receiving a copy of our Church Information Form for your perusal.

We look forward to hearing from you. We ask an interest in your prayers for God's guidance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Chair of the Search Committee
_____ Church

APPENDIX D

Sample for Evaluating Personal Information Forms

Many churches review a significant number of dossiers. In order to speed and clarify what can be a long and confusing process, some search committees use a rating sheet.

The following is an example, adapted from one used by a church in search of a pastor. Here is how it is used;

1. Each member of the search committee rates the person whose PIF is under review on each of the eight categories. Rate each category from 1 to 10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest.
2. The ratings for the eight categories are then totaled.
3. The total is divided by eight for an average rating score.
4. Then the average rating score of each member of the search committee is totaled for that individual.
5. Each individual is discussed by the whole search committee, with particular reference to why various members ranked them high or low on the various categories.
6. *Usually*, the higher-ranked individuals are pursued further, and the lower-ranked individuals' forms are returned to the DPS or destroyed

This procedure is not meant to make a very personal process mechanical, but, rather, is an example of how one search committee sought to bring some order to a difficult task of doing their homework. (See next page for "score sheet.")

Evaluation

- 1. Present position (PIF* Part I, Basic Data, Items 1-10)
- 2. Educational Background (PIF Part I, Formal Education, Item 11)
- 3. Relation of person's present strengths/future interests to pastoral skills we have listed (PIF Part III-A and CIF Part IV)
- 4. Experience-Consider length of service, size of congregation, and type of community (ies) in which person has served. (PIF Part III-B)
- 5. Special qualifications (PIF Part I, Item 12 and Part II, Number III B-D)
- 6. View of role as pastor (PIF Part II, Number II A and D)
- 7. Theological perspective and personal beliefs (PIF Part II, Number II B and C)
- 8. View of preaching-or education, or evangelism (PIF Part II, Number II E, F, and G)
- Total Points
- Average rating score of this person

My own comments:

**PIF-Personal Information Form*

**CIF-Church Information Form*

APPENDIX E

Hearing a Prospective Pastor Preach

When a search committee visits a church to hear a prospective pastor preach, the following suggestions may prove helpful to them.

- Re-read the minister's PIF.
- Be on time for the service; verify time of service, enter the sanctuary either singly or in pairs, not as a large group which would be noticeable.
- Avoid being more conspicuous than necessary lest you disturb both minister and congregation.
- Have a receptive and inquiring attitude.
 - Does the service begin promptly at the set time?
 - Does the service run smoothly?
 - Does the minister read the Scripture well and carefully?
 - Is the pulpit manner compelling?
 - Are the prayers helpful?
 - Is the sermon easily followed, well organized, and applicable to life?
 - Is the congregation attentive?
 - Is the minister's custom at the close of the service acceptable?
- Note activities announced in bulletin or from pulpit.
- Greet the minister simply and cordially as you leave the service.

APPENDIX F

Suggested Interview Questions for Use by Search Committees

Questions believed to be helpful for enlightened decision-making include the following;

1. How would you describe (a) your basic work orientation, (b) your theology and view of the Bible (c) fundamental purpose of the church/pastor, congregation, (d) your mode of operation?
2. What goals do you have for your own personal growth in ministry?
3. What parts of the pastor's role do you enjoy the most?
4. In what areas do you feel you are most skilled?
5. How do you determine what priorities to put on tasks you must do?
6. What kind of continuing education do you think is most helpful for a pastor and the congregation? What was the last continuing education

opportunity in which you were involved? What did you learn from it?

7. What do you see as the primary roles of the church session?
8. What are your views about pastoral calling on members? Inactive members? Prospects?
9. How do you feel about OOU and other benevolences?
10. What are your thoughts relative to the pastor's role in the community?
11. Would you care to share any of your weaknesses with us?
12. What financial expectation do you have?
13. What are your feelings relative to an annual review of the congregation's program, leadership, and staff?
14. Do you feel long-range planning is important?
15. What are your future plans for continued personal and professional growth?
16. How would you go about introducing any change that you feel is needed in the congregation?
17. Being as honest as you can, what do you believe you have to offer to our parish that would serve us well?

*Although the next set of questions is not crucial to the decision on calling a pastor, search committees often raise them. We list them, recognizing your potential interest-encouraging the actual decision to be made on the bases covered in **Section I** above.*

1. What "extra-parish" church responsibilities do you now have and envision in the future (presbytery, synod, and General Assembly)
2. How do you like to spend your free time?
3. What do you see as the role of your spouse and family in the life of the congregation?
4. What kind of relationship do you appreciate among other clergy, Cumberland Presbyterian and non-Cumberland Presbyterian.

Note: Some of the above questions may have been answered by the pastor in the PIF and, thus, they are not necessary at the interview unless there is a desire to expand on an answer or explain answers further. In addition to the above questions, or in lieu of some of them, the committee might want to raise other questions of importance. Above all else, ask the questions with clarity! When interviewing a candidate, seek to form the question as precisely and concisely as possible. If the candidate's answer reflects a response that does not speak to the interest of the question, TRY AGAIN. Clarity and understanding are paramount.

APPENDIX G

PROPOSED CONTRACT

This is a contract between the session of _____ Church and the Reverend _____.

The _____ Church is sufficiently satisfied with the qualifications of the Reverend _____ to serve as _____ to enter into this contractual agreement. _____ Church further believes that the Reverend _____, by experience, training, disposition, and commitment, is especially suited to serve in this leadership position.

It is the intention of _____ Church to extend to the Reverend a call to assume the position of _____ at _____, beginning on _____, and continuing for an indefinite period of time; and it is the intention of the R_____ to accept this call and for both parties to accept the following stipulations and agreements, namely:

- (1) That the _____ Church does hereby promise the Reverend in the discharge of the duties that relate to this position, all proper support and encouragement.
- (2) That the _____ Church does hereby obligate itself to pay the Reverend _____, in consideration of the services to be rendered, the sum of _____ per month for base salary;
- (3) That the _____ Church obligates itself to provide a manse, with utilities paid, for the Reverend _____ (or obligates itself to provide the sum of _____ per month for a housing allowance).
- (4) That the _____ Church agrees to contribute on a matching basis up to 5 percent of the base salary into the denomination's retirement fund account of the Reverend _____.
- (5) That the _____ Church agrees to pay the _____ (indicate family or individual coverage) medical insurance premium of the denomination's approved medical insurance program for the Reverend _____.
- (6) That the _____ Church agrees to reimburse the Reverend _____ the sum of _____ per month for automobile expense.
- (7) That the _____ Church agrees to provide the expense of moving the household effects of the Reverend _____;
- (8) That the Reverend _____ be allowed a maximum of _____ weeks' time annually for vacation, and that the _____ Church be responsible for the cost of pulpit supply during the _____ Sundays involved; (Many churches give a maximum of four weeks for pastors who have been serving the denomination for ten years or more. Some churches also give an additional week or more for continuing education purposes.)
- (9) That the Reverend _____ be allowed a maximum of _____ weeks' time annually for conferences, preaching missions, revivals, and/or other events (with the exception of judicatory responsibilities) that involve being away from the local community and/or local responsibilities, with the cost of pulpit supply being paid by the Reverend _____.
- (10) That the Reverend _____ be allowed _____ day(s) weekly (excluding Sunday) for time off, with day(s) being chosen by the Reverend _____ and being the same day(s) each week, so that the congregation may know the work schedule and call on his/her services during time off only for crisis situations;
- (11) That the Reverend _____ be allowed sick leave and emergency time off (family sickness, death, parental, etc.) within reasonable limits, and this be reviewed as necessary by the church session. *(Guidelines for suggested leave time are available from the Missions Ministry Team.)*
- (12) That the _____ Church agrees to reviews the salary and benefits promised the Reverend _____ at least annually prior to preparing the budgets for the next year;
- (13) That this contract be for an indefinite period of time, with either party having the privilege and power to terminate it upon the giving of a minimum thirty (30)-day notice of intention and desire to do so; and
- (14) That this contract be entered into with the earnest hope and prayer of all concerned that God will bless the relationship to which the _____ Church and the Reverend _____ commit themselves by their signatures to this contract, arrived at this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____.

(name) Clerk of session
for _____ Cumberland Presbyterian Church Session,
by official action on the _____ day of _____, 20_____.

(name)
Date signed: _____

Addendum to the Proposed Contract

The 1988 General Assembly directed that the Missions Ministry Team include with the standard contract a mobilization agreement for use by churches with pastors who are members of the armed forces reserves or the national guard (p. 211, Recommendation 5 of the 1988 Minutes). Following is the recommended form for such contractual agreements.

Terms of Mobilization Agreement

_____ is a chaplain to (service) .

As a military chaplain, (name) is subject to mobilization to active military service upon order of the President of the United States, the Governor of the State, and/or the U.S. Congress. In the interest of the calling agency, (church) , and the Presbytery of _____, the following agreement is understood to take effect upon notice of mobilization.

1. (name) would be relieved from all responsibilities to the calling agency he/she is serving, upon effective day of mobilization.

2. The position of (title of position) would be held by (name) for a period of ** on a leave-of-absence basis, during which time it would be determined when and if (name) would be able to return as (title of position) on a full-time basis.

*** (suggested time is 90-120 days minimum)*

3. The following terms of compensation would be paid for a period of ** following the effective date of mobilization.

*** (30 days minimum is recommended)*

a. Salary: _____

b. _____ *(list here any other forms of compensation in the contract above that would be continued.*

APPENDIX H

Sample Letter for Issuing a Call

When the decision is made to issue a call, the following sample letter might be used as a guide. A copy of the call should be communicated to the presbyterial Board of Missions and/or to the presbytery (see **Sample Letter to Presbytery When Call Has Been Issued**). A request for approval of the relationship in keeping with the terms of

the call and a request for installation of the new pastor could be part of the communication to the presbyterial agency.

Dear _____:

_____ Church, being satisfied of your ministerial qualifications and being confident of your ability to minister to the diverse needs of this congregation, extends to you a call to serve for an indefinite period of time as pastor (associate, assistant pastor) of this church and to join with us in a ministry to the entire community. We commit ourselves to provide the support, cooperation, and encouragement necessary to enable you to fulfill this calling and in keeping with the terms of the enclosed contract* (two copies are enclosed).

To indicate your acceptance**, please sign one copy of the contract and return it to us. Retain the other copy for your files.

On your affirmative acceptance of the call, we will communicate with the presbytery regarding its approval and your installation.

Sincerely,

If a formal contract, such as the recommended one in **Appendix G, is not used, the terms of the call, including annual salary, other financial commitments, e.g., retirement fund contributions, medical insurance, etc., and considerations such as vacation time, should be included as a part of the letter at this point.*

***If a formal contract is not used, indicate that an acceptance of the call can be communicated in writing by the pastor to the session.*

Sample Letter to Presbytery When Call Has Been Issued

Dear Presbyters;

We have issued a call to Rev. _____ to serve as our pastor (associate, assistant pastor) and he/she has accepted, subject to presbytery's approval. A copy of the terms of the call (contract) is enclosed for your information.

We respectfully request that, at your earliest convenience, this call, along with the terms of the contract, be approved and our church notified. We further request that a date be set for the service of installation and that a commission be named for this purpose.

Respectfully,

APPENDIX I

Sample Letters

The following sample letters are suggestions to the search committee as it seeks to fulfill its task. These letters, or similar ones, should be beneficial as the committee works with various prospects.

A. RESPONSE TO PROSPECTS WHOSE DOSSIERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED, BUT WHO WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR THE POSITION

Dear _____:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your dossier which you requested the Leadership Referral Services to send for our consideration (or “which we requested from the Leadership Referral Services,” or “which the Leadership Referral Services forwarded to us for our consideration.”)

Our Search Committee has reviewed your dossier along with others. However, because of certain particular requirements of our church at this time, we will not be considering you for this position. We greatly appreciate the privilege of considering you.

B. LETTER TO PROSPECTS THE SEARCH COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO INTERVIEW

Dear _____:

We greatly appreciated receiving your dossier.

It is our understanding that a copy of our CIF has been forwarded to you. If that is not the case, please contact the Department of Professional Services in Memphis for a copy.

We would appreciate knowing if you are willing to be interviewed and considered further for this position. Please let us know about your willingness within a week to ten days from receipt of this letter.

You will realize, of course, that in indicating your willingness there is not commitment on your part or on the part of the Committee other than to arrange for an interview. We look forward to hearing from you.

C. LETTER TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE, BUT WITH WHOM THE COMMITTEE HAS NOT CORRERSPONDED FOR TWO OR MORE WEEKS

Dear _____:

We promised to keep you informed of the progress of our Search Committee in its search for a pastor.

At the present time, we are still considering and interviewing those who have agreed to be interviewed for this position. While we wish we could be more definite, we

want you to know that you are still under consideration by our Committee. We will keep you informed as to our progress. We would appreciate it if you would inform us of any change in your willingness to be considered. Frankly, we hope that you will have patience with us.

With every good wish,

D. LETTER TO THOSE NO LONGER UNDER CONSIDERATION

Dear _____:

Our Search Committee appreciated the opportunity to consider you (or ‘to interview you’) for the pastoral position in our church. We promised to be in communication with you. After careful consideration, the Committee has narrowed consideration of candidates (or “has elected to continue our search”). Because of certain particular requirements of our church at this time,* you will not longer be under further consideration for this position.

We greatly appreciate the privilege of considering you.

**If there is a specific reason(s) why a potential pastor is not being chosen, and if this can be stated in an affirmative and helpful way, it should be included at this point as part of this letter.*

E. LETTER TO LEADERSHIP REFERRAL SERVICES AT CONCLUSION OF PROCESS

Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Missions Ministry Team, LRS
8207 Traditional Place
Cordova, TN 38016

Dear Colleagues:

We are pleased to inform you that the _____ Church has successfully completed its search for a pastor. The Rev. _____ has accepted our call and will begin his ministry with us on date.

We are returning to your office (or ‘destroying’) the dossiers we have received during this process.

Sincerely,

Chair of Search Committee
Or Clerk of Session