

THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION  
OF ORDAINED MINISTRIES

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
AND  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

A STUDY AND DISCUSSION PAPER

*December 1991 Edition*

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1989 the General Synod of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (CC/DC) each took identical actions to establish "full communion" between our two denominations. Taken within the context of the active participation of both denominations in the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), that action called for the mutual recognition and reconciliation of ordained ministries.<sup>1</sup> A process is underway in both denominations to determine the meaning and practical implications of the mutual recognition and reconciliation of ordained ministries.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ have entered into this ecumenical partnership with one another out of a commitment to the renewal of the church. The move toward the mutual recognition and reconciliation of ordained ministries grows out of our theological understanding of the unity of the church and contributes to our historic identity as uniting churches. It offers concrete steps to overcome our separateness, selfishness and pride. It recognizes that authentic ministry is first the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ before it is the ministry of a particular denomination. Through this process we open ourselves to the new places the Spirit is leading us.

II. PROGRESS REPORT AND INVITATION TO DIALOGUE

Following the actions of the General Assembly and General Synod, the Division of Homeland Ministries (CC/DC) and the Office for Church Life and Leadership (UCC) established a Joint Planning Committee to design a process whereby the two denominations could reach agreements on the meaning and practical implications of mutual recognition and reconciliation. The Joint Planning Committee is composed of staff members from the two agencies and representatives of the regional and conference ministers of the two denominations.<sup>2</sup>

The Joint Planning Committee developed a study and discussion paper as a key resource in this process. It provided background on the issue, defined terms, and offered a variety of options by which the two denominations could understand and implement mutual recognition and reconciliation.

That study and discussion paper generated numerous responses and has led to this edition (December 1991). A summary of those responses is contained in the Endnotes to this paper.<sup>3</sup> It is hoped that this paper will take us further down the road toward clarity and consensus. Materials from the first study and discussion paper on "Background" and "The Ministry of the UCC and CC/DC Compared and Contrasted" also are included in the Endnotes to this paper.<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that our two denominations have already achieved the mutual recognition of ordained ministries, by which we mean that we recognize the ordained ministries of the partner church to be efficacious ministries of grace within that denomination. These ministries are valid, full ministries of the one Church of Jesus Christ.

To reconcile these ministries is to embody their acceptance as efficacious ministries of grace in and for both denominations. The primary task before us, therefore, is to discern the meaning and practical implications of the reconciliation of these recognized ministries. Reconciliation will provide for ordained ministers to preach, administer the sacraments, provide pastoral care and leadership, and serve in other ordained ministry roles in the partner denomination when invited.

We are especially eager for association committees on ministry (UCC) and regional commissions on ministry (CC/DC) and ordained ministers of both denominations to be involved and to provide their perspectives on the principles and proposal contained in this Study and Discussion Paper.

A feedback response form is included at the end of this document to facilitate orderly and structured responses to the key issues and questions.

### III. CRITERIA AND COMMENT

The following criteria were tested in the first study and discussion paper and largely affirmed by those who responded. These criteria will guide the implementation of the reconciliation of ordained ministries. Brief explanatory comments follow each criterion.

The design for the reconciliation of ordained ministries will provide for each of the following:

- A. It will be an expression of the *distinctiveness* of our growing, unfolding Ecumenical Partnership in full communion in such a way as to enable the two denominations to accept and authorize ordained ministers from and for both denominations.

One expression of reconciliation will be the provision for ordained ministers of one denomination to serve in ordained ministries in the partner denomination, including preaching and teaching, administering the sacraments, and exercising pastoral care and leadership. Ordinations and the granting of ordained ministerial standing by one denomination will be fully accepted by the partner denomination.

- B. It will express both the *corporate and individual* nature of reconciliation.

All ordained ministers of one denomination, collectively, will be received as ordained ministers in the partner denomination. Further, ordained ministers of one denomination will have the prerogative to seek to serve in the partner denomination if they individually choose to do so.

- C. It will provide that the *ministry structures* of each denomination may remain *structurally distinctive* from one another.

Ministry structures refer primarily to the Association and Conference committees on ministry (UCC) and the Regional commissions on ministry (CC/DC), as well as the Office for Church Life and Leadership (UCC) and Division of Homeland Ministries (CC/DC). This criterion is "permissive" in that it allows for the development of cooperative structures, procedures, and/or decision making in those settings where UCC and CC/DC counterparts desire to develop them.

- D. It will insure the freedom of each denomination so that each may maintain its own *standards and procedures for ordination and standing*.

While the two denominations may work toward developing similar or identical standards and procedures for ordination and standing, each denomination will retain its present authority to determine these. The Association and Conference committees on ministry (UCC) and the Regional commissions on ministry (CC/DC) will retain their decision making authority.

- E. It will respect the right of ordained ministers of both churches to maintain their *identity, authorization, and accountability* with the church in which they hold ordained ministerial standing.

Individual ordained ministers of either denomination will not be required to participate in any way in the partner denomination.

- F. It will provide for the *primary participation and accountability* of ordained ministers to be in the denomination in which they are serving.

- G. It will *limit the expectations* on ordained ministers to participate and keep current in the structures and activities of *both denominations* concurrently.

Ordained ministers will be expected to be active and participating members of the denomination in which they are serving, but may choose the extent of their activity and participation in the other denomination.

- H. It will respect the right of *local churches* to relate to the ministry structures of their own denomination and to know the denominational identity of the persons considered for ministry positions.

- I. It will provide for the *liturgical acknowledgement and celebration* of reconciliation in local, regional, and national settings.

When the plan for the reconciliation of ordained ministries is affirmed and implemented, liturgical celebrations will be held in which all persons and settings of the church may participate.

- J. It will provide opportunity for *continuing to explore the meaning of reconciliation* of ordained ministries within the unfolding experience of living together as Ecumenical Partners in full communion with one another.

The full meaning of reconciliation of ordained ministries is still to be discovered and developed. The proposals outlined in this document are to be seen as steps in the unfolding meaning and embodiment of reconciliation. These two denominations will continue to look for ways in which the Spirit is leading us into fuller understandings of and commitments to our ecumenical partnership.

#### IV. A PROPOSAL

Overview: The following proposal seeks to embody both the corporate and individual nature of reconciliation. When reconciliation of ordained ministries has been achieved, each denomination will view the ordained ministers of the partner denomination as they do the ordained ministers of their own denomination in terms of having demonstrated their qualifications for ordained ministry. UCC and CC/DC ordained ministers will be able to move between the two denominations in a manner similar to the way they move between regions or conferences in their own denomination.

The Joint Planning Committee proposes that necessary changes be made in the *Constitution and Bylaws* of the United Church of Christ, the *Manual on Ministry* of the United Church of Christ, the *Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry* of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the attendant policies and practices of both denominations to provide for the following:

##### *Definition of Terms*

1. Provide for official definitions of the following terms:

*Ordained Ministerial Standing.* Initial authorization, by one of the denominations, of a person for ordained ministry and his or her continuing authorization in that denomination.

*Ordained Ministerial Partner.* A person who holds ordained ministerial standing in one denomination, and who would be received and accepted by the partner denomination into an ordained ministry of that denomination.

*Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing.* Authorization for ordained ministry, by one of the denominations, of a person who is an Ordained Ministerial Partner of that denomination and who has received a call to a recognized ordained ministry within that denomination.

##### *Ordination*

2. Provide for each denomination to continue its practice of ordaining persons into Christian ministry. The two denominations will be encouraged to refrain from engaging in "mutual," "joint," or "dual" ordinations. Even though each denomination will do its own ordinations, participation by the partner denomination in ordinations will be encouraged.

3. Provide for each denomination to require for ordination a working knowledge of the history, polity, theology, and practice of both denominations. Also persons granted privilege of call (UCC) or temporary recognition/transfer of standing (CC/DC) would have the same requirement.
4. Provide for each denomination to recognize the partnership relationship with the other denomination in ordination services.

#### *Standing*

5. Provide for persons to hold ordained ministerial standing in the denomination which ordains them. Ordained ministers with standing in one of the denominations at the time reconciliation is declared in effect will continue to hold standing in that denomination. Usually, ordained ministers will hold their ordained ministerial standing in the same denomination during the course of their ministry.
6. Provide for an ordained minister to change his or her ordained ministerial standing from one partner denomination to the other through the usual procedures of privilege of call (UCC) or temporary recognition/transfer of standing (CC/DC).
7. Provide for ordained ministers with standing in one denomination to be received and accepted corporately as "ordained ministerial partners" in the partner denomination. This partner relationship would not be geographically based.
8. Provide for ordained ministers who secure a call in the denomination in which they are ordained ministerial partners to be granted "ordained ministerial partner standing" in that denomination.
9. Provide for ordained ministers who hold ordained ministerial partner standing, and who have their ordained ministerial standing removed or restricted, also to have their ordained ministerial partner standing removed or restricted as well.
10. Provide for ordained ministers who hold ordained ministerial partner standing, and who have this partner standing removed or restricted, to have their ordained ministerial standing reviewed as well.

#### *Placement/Relocation*

11. Provide for UCC and CC/DC ordained ministers as well as candidates (CC/DC) and students in care (UCC) who are authorized to seek ordained ministry positions in their denomination also to be authorized to seek positions in the partner denomination in accordance with commonly accepted guidelines and procedures of the Conferences, Associations, and Regions.
12. Provide for those persons holding ordained ministerial standing in the UCC and CC/DC at the time reconciliation is declared in effect to secure and demonstrate a working knowledge of the history, polity, theology, and practice of the partner denomination in order to seek a position in the partner denomination.

13. Provide for ordained ministers of denominations other than the UCC or CC/DC, who are granted privilege of call by the UCC or temporary recognition/transfer of standing by the CC/DC, initially to seek a position only in the denomination (UCC or CC/DC) granting them this authorization.

#### *Local Church Membership*

14. Provide for ordained ministers serving local churches in the partner denomination to hold their local church membership in the local church served without jeopardizing their ordained ministerial standing in their own denomination.
15. Provide for ordained ministers serving in ministries other than local churches to hold local church membership in either denomination.

#### *Relationships and Accountability*

16. Provide for ordained ministers of one denomination, while serving in the partner denomination and holding ordained ministerial partner standing in it, to relate fully to the partner denomination.
17. Provide for the primary accountability and support of ordained ministers who have been granted ordained ministerial partner standing to be located in the denomination granting it. The denomination in which the person holds ordained ministerial standing retains the right to review a person's ordained ministerial standing at any time, or to invite the partner denomination to join it in a joint/cooperative review.
18. Provide for ordained ministers holding ordained ministerial partner standing to report periodically to the denomination in which ordained ministerial standing is held.
19. Provide for a mechanism whereby both denominations will cooperate in investigating and carrying out disciplinary procedures, if necessary, when a concern has been raised about the fitness for ministry of an ordained minister holding ordained ministerial partner standing.

#### *Voting and Representation*

20. Provide for each denomination to have its own rules regarding voting rights and responsibilities, and representation rights and responsibilities for those ordained ministers who hold ordained ministerial standing and for those who hold ordained ministerial partner standing.

#### *Pension and Insurance*

21. Provide for ordained ministers to participate in the pension and insurance programs of the denomination in which ordained ministerial standing is held even while serving in the partner denomination.

### *Ecclesiastical Endorsement*

22. Provide for ecclesiastical approval and endorsement for specialized ministries to be done only by the denomination in which ordained ministerial standing is held.

### A CASE STUDY

To assist in the understanding of what is being proposed, individuals and groups are invited to describe in detail how the following situation would be handled.

Rev. Eugene Brown is an ordained minister of the CC/DC serving a local church in the Central Region. He graduated from a CC/DC seminary in 1979. He is interested in the CC/DC partnership with the UCC and would like to seek a pastorate in the UCC.

### Discussion Questions

1. Describe the official status Eugene Brown has with the UCC, if any?
2. What qualifications would he be required to have and what procedures would he go through to seek a pastorate in the UCC?
3. Once he secured a call to a UCC pastorate (e.g., in the Northern Association), what would be his relationship with that Association prior to and following the beginning of his pastorate there? What would be his status and ongoing relationship with the CC/DC after beginning the UCC pastorate?

### ILLUSTRATIONS

The following stories, which are unrelated to the case study above, are intended to illustrate how the Proposal outlined on pages 4-7 would be implemented in a variety of settings and situations.

#### *Illustration #1A*

Jane Smith is in care of the Central Association (UCC) and, upon graduation from seminary, seeks a call in either the UCC and the CC/DC. She uses a UCC ministerial profile (comparable to a CC/DC profile) for her search in both denominations. She receives a call to a CC/DC local church which fulfills UCC requirements for a call recognized by the UCC. Her ordination examination and subsequent ordination are in the Central Association (UCC). (Option: With the cooperation of the CC/DC Region and the UCC Association in which the local church issuing her a call is located, the ordination could be done by the UCC in the local church to which she has been called.)

The CC/DC region receives and reviews her application for ordained ministerial partner standing. It insures that she has a working knowledge and affirmation of the history, polity, theology and practice of the CC/DC and grants her ordained ministerial partner standing. She is installed by and becomes a member of the local church which called her into her new ministry.

She retains ordained ministerial standing in the UCC Central Association unless her call is within the bounds of another UCC association in which case she would transfer her ordained ministerial standing to that association. She is enrolled in the UCC pension, health, dental, and life insurance programs. Her CC/DC local church makes her pension, health, dental, and life insurance payments to the UCC Pension Boards. Once each year she submits a report on her ministry to the UCC association where she holds her ordained ministerial standing.

After five years in her ministry, Jane Smith decides to seek a new call. She updates her UCC ministerial profile and circulates it to a number of UCC conferences and CC/DC regions. She receives a call to a UCC local church. The association in which the call is located receives her application for transfer of ordained ministerial standing and installation. It requests status reports from the association in which her ordained ministerial standing is held and from the region in which her ordained ministerial partner standing is held. Upon receipt of these reports it grants her ordained ministerial standing and installs her in her new UCC ministry. Jane now is an ordained ministerial partner in the CC/DC.

*Illustration #1B*

The setting is the same as Case Study Illustration #1 above, except Jane Smith is in her third year of ministry at the CC/DC local church when an accusation is made against her of embezzling church funds. Because the accusation is serious and one which calls into question her fitness for ordained ministry, the CC/DC region where she has her partnership standing and the UCC association where she has her ordained ministerial standing form a joint task force to investigate the accusation. After careful work a disciplinary hearing is conducted by a joint committee of the region commission on ministry and the association committee on ministry. The joint committee determines that the accusations are true. It recommends that her partnership standing in the CC/DC and her ordained ministerial standing in the UCC be terminated.

The CC/DC commission on ministry considers the recommendation of the joint committee and votes to terminate her partnership standing. Likewise, the UCC association committee on the ministry considers the recommendation of the joint committee and votes to terminate her ministerial standing.

*Illustration #1C*

Same situation as #1B above, except that following the CC/DC region's decision to terminate her partnership standing, in an unusual move the UCC association committee on ministry does not follow the action of the CC/DC. Instead, it decides to suspend her ordained ministerial standing for a period of two years while she undergoes a prescribed rehabilitation program rather than to terminate her standing.

At the conclusion of the two year suspension, the UCC association committee on ministry does a thorough review and examination of Jane and determines that she is fit once again for ordained ministry. It authorizes her to seek a new ordained ministry position. However, in order for her to seek a position in the CC/DC, Jane seeks reinstatement of her partnership standing pending a call. The region commission on ministry that terminated her partnership standing does its own review and examination. It concurs with the UCC association that she is once again fit for ordained ministerial partner standing in the CC/DC.

*Illustration #2A*

In one part of the country, UCC association X has 50 churches and CC/DC region Y has 60 churches. Together they determine to form one joint committee/commission on ministry. They amend the association and region bylaws to provide for this and delegate the roles, responsibilities and authority of the former commission on ministry and committee on ministry to the new joint committee. Members of the joint committee are elected by the association and region. All decisions made by the joint committee affecting UCC persons can be appealed to the UCC association and those affecting CC/DC persons can be appealed first to the region and then to the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.

*Illustration #2B*

Same setting as #2A above except the joint committee is authorized only to recommend to the association and region. Each recommendation of the joint committee is then forwarded to the appropriate region or association for decision.

*Illustration #2C*

Same setting as #2A above except the region and association continue to elect their commission/committee on ministry. The joint committee is composed of all members of the region commission and association committee. Once the joint committee has done its work and made its recommendations, the separate region commission and/or association committee convenes to decide on the joint committee's recommendations.

*Illustration #3*

In a section of the country, there is a CC/DC region with 175 churches. The region covers the same geography as three UCC associations which have 11, 14, and 9 churches respectively. The three associations modify their bylaws to delegate their committee on ministry roles, responsibilities and authority to the Region commission on ministry. The Region amends its bylaws to provide for two elected members from each UCC association to serve on the Region commission on ministry. Decisions by the Region commission on ministry affecting UCC persons can be appealed to the appropriate association.

V. TIMELINE

A progress report was made to the General Assembly and the General Synod at their meetings in 1991. A six year process is now underway with the following provisions:

- A. Final recommendations for the implementation of "the mutual reconciliation of ordained ministries" will be developed during 1991-95 for General Synod and General Assembly consideration and action in 1995.

- B. Implementation of the General Synod and General Assembly actions in 1995 will be phased in during 1995-97. This will culminate in liturgical acknowledgment of the full corporate reconciliation of the ordained ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1997. Liturgical acknowledgment will occur at the General Synod and General Assembly in 1997. In addition, opportunities for participation in area and local liturgical settings celebrating the reconciliation of ordained ministries will be planned. All local churches and ordained ministers will be encouraged to participate.
- C. Interim steps toward reconciliation have been developed which express the unique relationship of our two denominations and which provide for the movement of ordained ministers, on an individual basis, between our two denominations until the liturgical acknowledgment of the reconciliation of our ordained ministries in 1997. These interim steps have been developed collaboratively and may be implemented voluntarily by committees on the ministry (UCC), commissions on ministry (CC/DC), the Office for Church Life and Leadership (UCC) and the Division of Homeland Ministries (CC/DC).

Feedback on this study and discussion paper will be received until November 30, 1992. Additional copies of this study paper in limited quantities are available from either the Center for Leadership and Ministry (CC/DC) or the Office for Church Life and Leadership (UCC). Permission is granted for the unlimited reproduction of this Study and Discussion Paper within both denominations.

Feedback can be sent to either the Center for Leadership and Ministry (CC/DC) or the Office for Church Life and Leadership (UCC). Members of the Joint Planning Committee are prepared to respond to questions or to engage in dialogue about this issue upon request.

#### OTHER ISSUES

1. Placement/Relocation resources and processes used in the two denominations, while having similarities, do have significant differences. Work will be done to bring these into greater congruity with one another. For example, it is possible that a common ministerial profile/personnel file format may be developed for use in both churches.
2. Policies and procedures for the review and discipline of ordained ministers are handled differently in the two denominations. Legal and liability issues are involved. How the two denominations will cooperate when disciplinary action is required needs to be carefully documented.
3. After reconciliation of ordained ministries is declared in effect, all persons newly ordained in either denomination will be required to demonstrate a working knowledge of and respect for the history, theology, polity, and practice of both denominations. Persons already ordained at that time will need to secure and demonstrate such a working knowledge and respect in order to seek a call in the partner denomination. Work is underway to develop a mechanism whereby ordained ministers can acquire this knowledge and satisfactorily demonstrate it to a committee/commission on ministry. Short term courses to be offered in various parts of the country are being planned.

4. The action of the General Synod and General Assembly specifically focused on ordained ministries. There are other orders of ministry in both churches which need to be considered in the future. These include commissioned and licensed ministry in the UCC, and licensed ministry in the CC/DC which includes the commissioned church worker, the licensed lay preacher, and the licensed theological student. These will be developed after clear policy directions for ordained ministries have been established. There is also the local church practice of ordaining elders in CC/DC churches and in some UCC churches which needs to be clarified.

#### ENDNOTES

1. The actions taken by the General Assembly and General Synod in 1989 declaring "full communion" between the two churches, received the following paragraphs as commentary on the meaning of full communion:

"Mutual recognition of ordained ministries (ministers of word and sacrament of the United Church of Christ; ordained elders and ministers of word and sacrament of the Disciples) is intended to acknowledge in the ministries of the partner church the manifest blessing of God and the fruit of the Spirit, and therefore to affirm them as true ministries of the one, holy Church of Jesus Christ. Reconciliation of ordained ministries is intended to refer to future actions by the churches, both separately and together, whereby their ordained ministries become one ministry of Jesus Christ.

"Reconciliation is not intended to mean either that the standard of ministerial training and certification or differences in ministerial practice and placement process must become the same for both churches. Reconciliation means that an ordained minister of one partner church may function, whenever invited, and as established procedures permit, as a minister to the other. Such action of recognition and reconciliation of these ordained ministries is in harmony with the wider ecumenical understandings.

"Ordained ministry in these two partner churches is sufficiently similar in form and substance to pose no serious theological obstacle to the mutual recognition and reconciliation of these ordained ministries in subsequent liturgical celebrations."

2. Members of the Joint Planning Committee are: William Allen (CC/DC), LaTaunya Bynum (CC/DC), Joyce Coalson (CC/DC), Thomas Dipko (UCC), William Hulteen (UCC), Dorothy Lester (UCC), Vincent McMenemy (CC/DC), Ozark Range (CC/DC), Charlotte Still (UCC), Thomas Tupper (UCC).
3. Summary of Responses to Study and Discussion Paper of June 1990

Responses were received from 54 groups (representing 554 participants) and 132 individuals. The majority of the groups were CC/DC Commissions on Ministry and UCC Committees on Ministry. Others were clergy groups and staff groups.

The initial Study and Discussion Paper posed eight criteria to guide the shaping of the reconciliation of ordained ministries. Those eight criteria were strongly affirmed and are incorporated in the criteria in this December, 1991 Study and Discussion Paper.

Four Options were posed, as follows:

- Option One. Privilege of Call/Temporary Recognition
- Option Two. Complete Merger of the Two Ministries and Structures
- Option Three. Joint Ordination and Mutual Standing
- Option Four. Associated Standing

There was consistency in the responses from the UCC and the CC/DC. Overall, in both denominations, there was greatest support for Option Four: Associated Standing. The order of preference of the four options was: Four, One, Three, Two. There was greatest resistance to Option Two and then to Option Three.

There was encouragement to proceed carefully and deliberately. Most saw the need to take the time necessary to educate persons and to provide ample opportunity for a full exploration of the issues with grassroots involvement.

There are strong minorities in each denomination on each end of the spectrum. That is, there are some who are eager for our two denominations to move quickly toward organic merger. They perceive the complete merger of the two ministries (Option Two) as leading the way toward this outcome. Others appear to be opposed to proceeding any further in the Ecumenical Partnership and have little support for any of the options.

It was clear from the feedback that there are many persons in both denominations who are not fully aware of the Ecumenical Partnership between our two churches and the actions taken by the General Synod and General Assembly in 1989. Many of these persons are surprised that decisions have already been made about the mutual recognition and reconciliation of ordained ministries. Others perceive that this was a symbolic act but will not change the ministry policies and practices within the two denominations.

#### 4. Background

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (CC/DC) and the United Church of Christ (UCC) or its predecessors have actively pursued ecumenical dialogue since 1911. In 1989, by the respective actions of the General Assembly (CC/DC) and the General Synod (UCC), our denominations each officially acknowledged the other to be "a 'true church,' an authentic, faithful part of the one, universal body of Christ," and declared "that a relationship of full communion now exists between both churches."

This declaration, made in the context of our active participation in the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), explains that by "full communion" we mean that we "are one in faith," that we mutually recognize each other's baptism and members, that we celebrate one and the same sacrament of holy communion, that "ordained ministers of each partner church are truly ministers of word and sacrament," and that we are committed to common mission. Full communion, in the simplest terms, means that our two churches, while remaining structurally

distinctive within the polity of each, have consented to become one reconciled larger community of faith.

Full communion presupposes both the recognition of a valid ordained ministry in another church and the eventual reconciliation of that ordained ministry with that of one's own denomination. Tacitly, our two denominations *recognize* the validity of ordained ministry in most denominations without formally granting such recognition in an official and corporate way. For example, each time we welcome an ordained minister from another denomination into full standing in our ordained ministerial ranks, without requiring a new or further ordination, we are *recognizing* that that person's church of heritage possesses a valid and true ordained ministry. The transfer of an ordained minister from such a denomination effects the reconciliation of ordained ministry on an individual, not a corporate, basis.

Most members of our two denominations would recognize that clergy in most other denominations have valid ordination. However, we *recognize* their ordained ministry for the community of faith which has authorized it, but not for ordinary service in our own church of heritage.

At the present time, the CC/DC and the UCC officially and corporately *recognize* that each other's ordained ministers "are truly ministers of word and sacrament." However, we do not lay immediate claim to the *reconciliation* of these ministries. The move from recognition to reconciliation "is intended to refer to future actions by the churches, both separately and together, whereby their ordained ministries become one ministry of Jesus Christ." This full recognition and reconciliation will be consummated in appropriate liturgical acts.

Reconciliation means the bringing together of our ordained ministries as they currently find expression. Reconciliation of ordained ministries does not necessarily require either of our denominations to change its standards for ordination or its procedures related to ministerial standing or to ministerial placement. Identical or uniform standards or procedures are not called for. This is consistent with the position of COCU in which the consensus is that "uniformity among the several church polities is not essential" to communion in sacred things, "but mutual recognition and reconciliation of the ordained ministries is essential, for it is integrally related to the recognition of churches."

There can be no *full communion* without the *recognition* and eventual *reconciliation* of ordained ministers in denominations that have already recognized in each other the one universal church of Jesus Christ in which all are united in Jesus Christ by their baptism. We have made great ecumenical progress in our understanding of our baptismal unity and our common celebration of holy communion. Our progress with respect to ordained ministry has been more humble, but the need for *recognition* and *reconciliation* is clear and more hopeful than it has been since the sixteenth century.

What difference will all of this make? The Ecumenical Partnership Committee sums it all up in this Vision Statement about what *full communion* may look like:

We are working toward the day when our two churches can claim together our oneness in Jesus Christ, a time when we can say without qualification: your

baptism is our baptism, your table is our table, your people and pastors are ours, your mission and witness are ours, your decisions we own and respect.

*Full communion* does not need to wait for our resolution of all the thorny questions that divide us or for the structural consolidation of our denominational institutions. Our unity is a gift from God realized in Jesus Christ who has already made us one people in spite of the dividing walls that we or our forebears have sometimes built out of the stone and mortar of our legitimate and complementary diversity.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE UCC AND THE CC/DC COMPARED AND CONTRASTED

The following highlights some of the important ways in which ministry understandings and practices in the two denominations are similar and different. It must be recognized that these are descriptions of the norms and that there are deviances from these norms within each denomination.

### a. Ministry policies

The policies governing ministry in the CC/DC are found in the document Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry. The policies governing ministry in the UCC are found in the UCC Constitution and Bylaws and the Manual on Ministry.

### b. Authorizing body for ministry

In CC/DC, the authorizing body for ministry is the region. The work is carried out and decisions made by regional commissions on ministry.

In UCC, the authorizing body for ministry is the association. The work is carried out by association committees on ministry, sometimes called church and ministry committees. Associations are the decision making bodies, except in some places where certain decisions are delegated to committees on ministry. Usually when making ministry decisions, associations convene in delegated meetings called "ecclesiastical councils."

### c. Appeal

In CC/DC, decisions of the region may be appealed to the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.

In UCC, decisions of the association committee on ministry may be appealed to the association. There is no appeal beyond the association.

### d. Location of standing

In CC/DC, the standing of ordained ministers is lodged with the regions, except for persons engaged in non-regional ministries in which case standing is lodged with the General Board Committee on Ministerial Standing.

In UCC, standing of all ordained ministers is held in the associations, except where an association has delegated this responsibility to the conference in which it is located.

e. Authorized ministries

The CC/DC has one order of ministry which includes two offices: the office of ordained minister and the office of licensed minister. Classifications within the office of licensed minister include "the commissioned church worker," "the licensed lay preacher," and the "licensed theological student."

The UCC has ordained ministry and two categories of lay ministry-- commissioned and licensed.

This paper and process are dealing only with ordained ministry, although work on the other categories of ministry needs to be undertaken.

f. Entrance to ministry

The CC/DC initial step for entrance into ordained ministry is called "candidacy" and these persons are called "candidates."

The UCC initial step for entrance into ordained ministry is called "in care" and these persons are called "in care students."

The procedures and requirements are similar for the two denominations.

g. Standing

In CC/DC, "ministerial standing" is the term signifying the person is authorized and recognized as an ordained minister.

In UCC, "ordained ministerial standing" is the term signifying the person is authorized and recognized as an ordained minister.

Both denominations typically use the term "standing" to signify the longer term.

h. Dual Standing/Standing

Dual standing is an authorization granted by an association of the UCC to an ordained minister of another denomination serving in a ministry related to the UCC. Dual standing is granted only for the period of time the person is in the specific ministry and is not the same as ordained ministerial standing. Persons with dual standing are not listed among the ordained ministers of the UCC, do not have the right to a ministerial profile, do not have privilege of call in the UCC, and may not seek an ordained ministry in the UCC.

The CC/DC does not have a category comparable to UCC dual standing. The CC/DC may grant full ministerial standing to ordained ministers of other denominations serving in a ministry related to the CC/DC using a classification of NE, non-Disciple minister serving a local congregation. These persons are listed among the ordained ministers of the CC/DC, have the right to a personnel file, and may seek an ordained ministry in the CC/DC.

Since the CC/DC does not require a minister of another denomination to relinquish prior standing, there are ministers who, in practice, have dual standing although that designation is not in the "Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry."

i. Differences in Standing Policy

In UCC, in order to have ordained ministerial standing a person must have a call to a ministry recognized by an association as being a valid ordained ministry of the UCC. In CC/DC, the person is not required to have a call to an ordained ministry in order to have standing.

In CC/DC, ministerial standing may be given to ordained ministers of other denominations. In UCC, it is expected that ordained ministers of other denominations will relinquish their standing in the other denomination in order to be granted ordained ministerial standing in the UCC.

j. Relocation/Placement

In CC/DC, the process by which ordained ministers seek and secure new places for ministry is called "ministerial relocation." They have a personnel file which is kept in the Division of Homeland Ministries. It is an "open" file except for confidential references for which a waiver has been signed by the ordained minister permitting this confidential information to be circulated.

In UCC, this process is called "placement." The personnel resumes of ordained ministers, called "ministerial profiles," are kept in the Office for Church Life and Leadership. They are "open" files fully available to the ordained minister.

k. Pension and Insurance

The pension and insurance programs of both churches permit an ordained minister, once enrolled in these programs in his or her denomination, to remain in the programs while serving in a ministry setting of the other denomination.

l. Review and Discipline

The UCC has formal review and discipline provisions provided for in the UCC Bylaws and Manual on Ministry and implemented by associations. While having no formal provision for review and discipline, some CC/DC regions do engage in regular review procedures with ordained ministers.

m. Ecclesiastical Endorsement

The CC/DC and UCC have comparable ecclesiastical endorsement policies and procedures for persons in specialized ministries, although the requirements for endorsement vary somewhat between the two denominations.

n. Numbers and Location

CC/DC and UCC churches are not uniformly or evenly located across the country. For example, the UCC has only two churches in Canada, while the CC/DC has an entire region located in Canada. The UCC has a heavy concentration of churches in New England, while the CC/DC has very few churches there. Similarly, the CC/DC has a heavy concentration of churches in parts of the South where the UCC has relatively few.

The manner in which some of the issues of reconciliation are addressed relationally and structurally may differ from location-to-location because of some of these numbers and location realities. Based on the church-wide commitment to full communion by both denominations, it will be particularly important in those locations where one denomination significantly outnumbered the other for there to be a very intentional and sensitive addressing of the issue of reconciliation of ordained ministries.

FEEDBACK FORM  
FOR  
STUDY AND DISCUSSION PAPER  
DECEMBER 1991 EDITION

THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION  
OF ORDAINED MINISTRIES

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
AND  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

RETURN THIS FORM TO

Disciples of Christ  
Center for Leadership and Ministry  
P.O. Box 1986  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

OR

United Church of Christ  
Office for Church Life and Leadership  
700 Prospect Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44115

DEADLINE FOR RESPONSES  
NOVEMBER 30, 1992

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The major portions of the STUDY AND DISCUSSION PAPER being tested in both denominations are the sections on CRITERIA (Pages 2-4) and PROPOSAL (Pages 4-7). We invite your detailed comments on these sections.

*We will assume that unless you comment on a specific criterion or item in the proposal, you understand it and can affirm it.*

1A. Please give us your overall opinion on the CRITERIA (Pages 2-4). These are the basic principles guiding the implementation of the reconciliation of ordained ministries.

|                                 |                            |                              |                          |             |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| VERY STRONG<br>AFFIRMATION<br>1 | STRONG<br>AFFIRMATION<br>2 | MODERATE<br>AFFIRMATION<br>3 | WEAK<br>AFFIRMATION<br>4 | OPPOSE<br>5 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|

OVERALL COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, QUESTIONS

1B. Identify any specific CRITERIA (by letter) about which you wish to comment. Indicate whether you are raising a concern or objection, identifying a problem, or noting how it is unclear or ambiguous.

1C. Provide additional criteria which you would like to have considered:

2A. Please give us your overall opinion on the PROPOSAL (Pages 4-7) which describes the implementation of the reconciliation of ordained ministries.

|                            |                       |                         |                     |        |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| VERY STRONG<br>AFFIRMATION | STRONG<br>AFFIRMATION | MODERATE<br>AFFIRMATION | WEAK<br>AFFIRMATION | OPPOSE |
| 1                          | 2                     | 3                       | 4                   | 5      |

OVERALL COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, QUESTIONS

2B. Identify any specific PROVISIONS (by number) in the PROPOSAL about which you wish to comment. Indicate whether you are raising a concern or objection, identifying a problem, or noting how it is unclear or ambiguous.

2C. Provide additional PROVISIONS which you would like to have considered:

3. Case Study and Illustrations

If the CASE STUDY (Page 7) or any of the ILLUSTRATIONS (Pages 7-9) raise questions or concerns, please note them below.

4. Any other comments or suggestions?

Responder Identification

\_\_\_ Disciples of Christ

\_\_\_ Area Staff                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Regional Staff                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ General Staff                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Regional Commission on the Ministry

\_\_\_ Local Church Minister                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Specialized Minister                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Other (Please identify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ United Church of Christ

\_\_\_ Association or Conference Staff                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Instrumentality Staff                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Association or Conference Committee on the Ministry

\_\_\_ Local Church Minister                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Specialized Minister                      \_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Other (Please identify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Joint UCC/DOC

\_\_\_ Association/Conference/Regional/Area Staff

\_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Committee/Commission on the Ministry

\_\_\_ Group                      \_\_\_ Individual

\_\_\_ Other (Please identify) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of persons who participated in preparing this response \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address, and telephone number of person to contact for clarification, if needed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted \_\_\_\_\_

