

CONCERNING THE CONSIDERATION OF REINSTATEMENT OF STANDING FOR A CLERGYPERSON WHOSE STANDING HAS BEEN INVOLUNTARILY REMOVED IN THIS OR IN OTHER REGIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

This procedure outlines steps for consideration of an application for reinstatement of standing if the Mid-America Commission on the Order of Ministry removed that standing. If standing was removed by another Region, you must contact that Region for re-instatement.

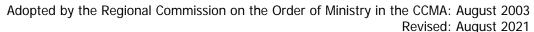
Step 1: <u>Determination of condition of termination of standing.</u>

If the removal of standing was voluntary under the provisions of COM 5, that procedure is to be followed. If the removal of standing was involuntary—by action of a Commission of this or other Region over the objections of the minister or by relinquishment of standing upon request in order to avoid adjudication—the following procedure will be followed.

Step 2: Procedure for Consideration of Reinstatement of Standing

A request for reinstatement implies that the minister believes the underlying causes of misconduct leading to the removal of standing have been dealt with and that there is ample evidence to guarantee that such behavior will never occur again. The formal request for reinstatement is a request that the Regional Commission on the Order of Ministry (RCOM) investigate the charges and circumstances of misconduct, investigate the petitioner's life and behavior since the removal of standing, review references, psychological tests and reports, and interview the candidate to determine whether the Commission can concur with the belief of the petitioner that the prior incidents or similar behavior will never occur again.

- a. The reinstatement review process will begin with a formal letter from the Petitioner to the Coordinator of the Regional Commission on the Order of Ministry requesting the review. This letter may not be filed less than one year after the removal of standing occurred.
- b. The RCOM Coordinator will make an appointment for a personal interview, at which time this policy will be explained and a determination made that the Petitioner is willing to comply with the procedure, bear all costs incurred and cooperate with the process in every possible way. The Petitioner will sign a letter indicating understanding of and agreement with the process and that the initiation of the process does not guarantee reinstatement at the end of the extensive process.
- c. Once the official request is made, the Petitioner will sign a release, authorizing persons who may have information about the circumstances of the removal of standing to reveal that information to our Commission.
- d. The Chair of the Commission, the RCOM Coordinator and legal counsel for the region will appoint an investigative team to investigate the previous allegations and to investigate the petitioner's background for evidence of similar conduct or other behavior that would be detrimental to ministry. Cost of the investigation will be borne by the





- petitioner. A good faith deposit of \$2500 for expenses will be required before the investigation will begin.
- e. The Petitioner will undergo a psychological evaluation with an agency specified by the Commission. This will be done at the expense of the Petitioner. The Petitioner will sign a release, allowing the results to be shared with the Commission.
- f. An evaluation team assigned by the Commission will review: the original investigation reports, the psychological evaluation and all supporting information. The team will interview the Petitioner.
- g. If the evaluation team feels the Petitioner's evidence shows that the Petitioner has fully dealt with the causes of the past behavior, has completed steps at reconciliation with prior victims and has demonstrated that no pattern of inappropriate behavior has recurred or is likely to recur, then a formal reinstatement hearing may be convened by the RCOM.
- h. A formal reinstatement hearing would be held, at which the Commission may authorize a probationary period of conditional reinstatement. This period shall not be less than seven years in duration. If the probationary period is granted, a team of pastor-preceptors or mentors will be assigned to observe during the Petitioner's ministries, whether employed or volunteer. The Commission will conduct an annual review. After completion of seven years of probation, a formal hearing for final reinstatement may be held. It is understood that at any time in the process the Commission may determine that the process is not fruitful and the petition for reinstatement denied.
- i. Completing the process for recognition of standing does not, in itself, assure a position in ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The "call" system of the Christian Church leaves to congregations and other ministry units, the right to select their own minister(s) within the policies and criteria of the Christian Church. Although the Regional Minister Team provides consultation and assistance in every way possible in the process of the call, they will not presume upon the authority of the congregation. The "call" of a congregation to a minister to become the resident pastor does not, in itself, assure recognition of standing. That function has been delegated to the Region who has delegated it to the Regional Commission on the Order of Ministry.