

## Section 5. Part 3 Theology of Ministry Paper

### Theology of Ministry Paper

As a candidate for ordination to pastoral ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the articulation of your theology is fundamental. Writing a 20 to 25-page paper is a tool designed for you to explore thematic understandings (theology, Christology, image of worship, model of ministry etc.) which are essential for the practice of public ministry.

This paper is designed to pull together the resources, insights and knowledge of your seminary or graduate school education woven together with personal and cultural awareness for the purpose of articulating your present “theology of Ministry.” Reflections and knowledge gained from personal growth, family history, coursework (church history, systematics, ethics, biblical studies) and your experience and practice of leadership in the church are welcome in this paper.

#### Instructions:

Oftentimes a written paper connotes the idea of something completed, finished or done. However, a paper like this is more like capturing a particular moment in time, which in another moment can, may and will change. Thus, perfection is not the end goal, the articulated discovery is in the process.

As the author of this paper you are invited to approach this task as a conversation with the Commission on Ministry and your In-Care Committee. The paper is both relational and conversational. An opportunity for you to articulate of insights and understandings.

The questions below are offered as a way to process and focus your thinking, emotions and questions about your theology of ministry. You are encouraged to treat this paper holistically rather than ten separate areas to be queried. You are welcome to link comments or responses, for example, your Christology might be linked to your pastoral approach or the mission of the church.

It is essential that you set enough time aside to write this paper. There is a rhythm to writing a paper of this magnitude – write for a little while, take a break, get some fresh air, do something else, then come back review and write some more. Consider each writing a draft to be re-written. Read it out loud to yourself or someone else.

You are invited to be self-revelatory in the process of writing. It is appropriate to write in the first person singular “I”. The readers are not looking for you to give “right answers” or “sound smart”, but ask you to capture and illuminate that which is essential and authentic.

In some questions below you are invited to evoke a particular setting or incident, by writing a friend, creating a scenario or sitting around a table. If those images don’t work well for you, create another setting, or find your own way to address the question.

You are encouraged to use references, quotations from sacred texts or theologians, course work, readings, poetry, or works from artists and musicians which enhance your discussion and/or clarifies your current thinking and insights. Your notes or footnotes may be placed in the body of your writing, rather than formal footnoting

The Areas to be Addressed:

1. What is your view of God? Articulate your understanding of God's nature, characteristics and/or image derived from experience, story, teaching, and/or text. Identify how that view has or is changing and where uncertainties and ambiguities exist. Is there a metaphor which best expresses your image of God?
2. In this section write about your Christology. Discuss the nature, mission, ministry and teaching of Jesus. Jesus used the phrase "Kingdom of God," what did that mean in his cultural setting? Which of these titles attributed to Jesus ( "Messiah," "Son of God," "Son of Man," "Prince of Peace," "Lord," "King," "Christ," and etc.); communicates best for you and why?
3. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
  - a. Thinking about your personal history, your call to ministry; why do you wish to be ordained?
  - b. Why are you seeking ordination in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and not some other ordaining body or tradition?
  - c. How would you describe the essentials or tenets of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) consider these themes worship or liturgy, baptism, communion and social justice.
  - d. Describe what the name "Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" means to someone who has never heard that denomination or tradition before.
4. Discuss the role and importance of sacred text or Judeo/Christian scriptures in the life of the church. What is your personal understanding of scripture?
5. Describe "the nature, purpose and mission" of the church today. You might imagine having coffee with 3 or 4 other people, not church members, who asked you this question. What would be your approach, how would you engage them, what other questions would surface?
6. Describe and discuss your understanding of sin and the problem of evil in the world? You are welcome to create the setting or scenario where the topic is raised and you respond.
7. Your Vision of Ministry
  - a. Explain your vision or model of ministry. Name and describe 3 essential characteristics of your vision or mode.
  - b. How has your understanding of ministry been changed or challenged in the past 5 years?
  - c. Pinpoint and describe the community you would like to work in and what kind of ministry do you see yourself doing in the next 2 years?
  - d. Viewing yourself as a pastor, describe your professional gifts or strengths, things about ministry that you are drawn to and things you don't want to do. Name your passion as well as your fears for pastoral ministry.
8. In this section recall an incident where you believe you approached someone and offered a pastoral response. Describe: the situation, what was asked of you, how did you respond, and why do you believe your response was pastoral. What personal gain did you receive as a result of your response?
9. From your academic studies or personal reading, identify eight to ten of the most important or influential authors who have shaped and/or helped you clarify any of the central themes named above. List the titles, authors, and provide 2 to 3 sentences about the impact of the writing.

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