

## **Continuing Education Policy for Disciple Ministers of the Mid-America Region**

This policy applies to each minister (licensed and ordained) with the exception of inactive retirees.

**August 2, 2006**

### **I. Continuing Education Policy**

Each minister (licensed and ordained) in Mid-America is required to spend at least 15 hours each year in continuing education, up to 6 hours (clock hours) of which may be spent in self-guided study. (In classroom or seminar settings, an hour shall be defined as a 50-minute contact period.) This requirement will be approved and publicized in 2006 to become effective in calendar year 2007.

### **II. Boundaries Training Policy**

1. Each minister (licensed and ordained) in Mid-America is required to receive a minimum of 6 hours of approved boundaries training focusing on healthy relationships by December 31, 2009. The Alban Institute course offered in the 2005 Communion of Disciples Clergy meeting fulfills this requirement.
2. Participation in refresher training is required within each five-year period thereafter. All approved boundaries training hours may be counted as part of the annual 15 hour continuing education requirement.

### **III. Compliance**

1. A compliance form has been developed (please see attached) for each minister to fill out and return annually to certify her/his activities to meet the continuing education and boundaries training requirements. Continuing Education Unit certificates can be submitted with the compliance form when available, but ultimately compliance is on the honor system.
2. The completed compliance forms will be reviewed each year by the appropriate area minister in the case of licensed ministers and by the regional minister in the case of ordained ministers. A first reminder (email, letter or postcard) will be sent to those not submitting the compliance form on time. A second reminder (certified letter) will then be sent if necessary. Those not in compliance will then be referred to the appropriate Area Church committee (licensed ministers) or the Region's Commission on the Order of Ministry (ordained ministers) with a recommendation to suspend their standing pending completion of the stated requirements. Loss of standing is the ultimate consequence of failure to meet the continuing education and boundaries training requirements.
3. If a minister is participating in an ambitious education program (e.g., a degree program or Missouri School of Religion's Certificate of Pastoral Ministry program) and amasses more than 15 continuing education hours (contact hours, not academic credit hours) in a given year, he or she may carry those additional hours over into the succeeding year.
4. In the event that personal hardship or other extenuating circumstances prevent a minister from meeting the continuing education and boundaries training requirements, she or he may contact the appropriate Area/Regional minister to request an alternate plan or a waiver.
5. In most cases continuing education and boundaries training units required or accepted in other regions will be given full credit in Mid-America.
6. Ways in which these requirements may be met include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following:
  - read one or more texts from a list of suggested works or use audio tapes on substantive topics

- complete a unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE)
- complete a college or graduate level course
- complete a Missouri School of Religion course
- complete a seminary on-line course
- complete a semester's work in a Doctor of Ministry program
- attend a seminary-sponsored Minister's Week
- attend resource groups at an Area or Regional assembly
- attend a lecture series (as offered at Drury, Culver-Stockton and elsewhere)
- attend a professional training seminar (as offered by Alban Institute, Youth Specialties and others)
- participate in spiritual discipline retreats
- prepare for and teach a higher education/continuing education course

7. In support of ministers and their efforts to meet these requirements the Region of Mid-America will collaborate with MSR to:

- develop and publish reading lists suitable for helping ministers continue their professional and spiritual growth
- maintain and publish timely notices of continuing education opportunities
- advocate for ministers with congregations to allow time and money for ministers' continuing education
- develop continuing education/professional development opportunities within clergy clusters (this could be an especially good setting for enhancing practical skills and learning how others approach issues and solve problems in congregational life)

8. The Commission on the Order of Ministry may find it necessary to maintain a standing Committee on Continuing Education to oversee such things as:

- developing and updating necessary procedures
- forming the necessary partnerships with area ministers and committees on ministry, and with MSR and colleges and other institutions within the region and in adjacent regions to assist ministers in meeting their continuing education needs

Adopted by the Commission on the Order of Ministry August 2006 and presented to the Regional Assembly October 2006.