

CONTINUING MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY

Our concern is with ministers in non-parish work. The honorably retired and those laboring outside the bounds of Presbytery are exempt from these suggestions.

From the Book of Order - G-11.0403

A presbytery shall determine who shall be its own continuing members. In making this determination, the presbytery shall be guided by all the following criteria:

- a. The ministry of continuing members shall be in demonstrable conformity with the mission of God's people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, the Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order of this Church.
- b. The ministry shall be one which serves others, aids others, and enables the ministries of others.
- c. The ministry shall give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's word. This will normally require the Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, and the completion of the requirements for ordination set forth in G-14.0401 - 14.0402.
- d. The ministry shall be carried on in accountability to the presbytery, as well as to other organizations and agencies, where appropriate.
- e. The ministry shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the presbytery and in the worship and service of a congregation.

A continuing member of presbytery is answerable to the presbytery for agreed-upon end results or activities. If one can be called to account for the "character and conduct" of one's ministry, it must be clear from the outset what is expected in that ministry. Accountability, therefore, involves intentionality. In this case it involves the intentionality of a particular ministry "in the light of" the expressed intentionalities of the presbytery and of the more inclusive judicatories of the church. It includes performance review. It must provide for support on the part of the presbytery that enables a person to carry out the ministry with maximum effectiveness.

Meaningful accountability depends on the quality of relationship existing between presbytery and a person engaged in ministry. The relationship needs to be dynamic, ongoing, and mutual as opposed to static, occasional, and initiated by one party or the other.

In seeking to identify the validity of a ministry, both presbytery and the person need to explore and evaluate that ministry on a regular basis according to mutually agreed-upon guidance given by the presbytery.

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It is clearly inadequate for a presbytery to exercise its accountability relationship with its continuing members solely by collecting and reviewing annual report forms. Accountability includes regular attendance at presbytery meetings and active service on presbytery committees. It involves a mutual support relationship between presbytery and its continuing members. For those ministering within congregations this may be exercised through annual or biannual visits to sessions by representatives or appropriate presbytery committees. For others, it may be helpful to assign the cultivation of such a relationship to a presbytery committee or to relate those members to a single colleague or to a colleague group that is responsible for discussing the ministry with him or her at least once a year.

At the very least, accountability should involve a face-to-face review of the ministry of every continuing member not less than once every three years.

Those in the service of this church other than within a congregation and those serving in ministries beyond the jurisdiction of this church should be given periodic opportunities to interpret their ministries to the presbytery so as to enlarge the presbytery's horizons. The presbytery should exhibit an openness to learn about and modify its own mission strategy in response to such insights.

When a person is employed by a body other than the presbytery, or a congregation within the presbytery, the continuing member of presbytery will be accountable to that body in specific ways that may not necessarily relate to the mission intentions of that person or of the presbytery to which he or she belongs. Presbytery should clarify with that member the specific ways in which that particular ministry contributes to the mission strategy of presbytery and the nature of the presbytery's expectation for that members' performance of the ministry.

In the light of the foregoing, the Presbytery of Geneva adopts the following Criteria for Continuing Membership:

1. Continuing members of Presbytery not serving a Presbyterian Church are expected to be responsible presbyters by:
 - a. regular attendance at Presbytery meetings except when exempted by the Committee on Ministry;
 - b. serving actively on a Presbytery committee;
 - b. moderating session and/or congregational meetings when asked by the Committee on Ministry;
 - d. supplying pulpits when possible (at least four times per year);
 - e. residing within the bounds of Presbytery, except when explicitly excused by the Presbytery.
2. Continuing members of Presbytery not serving a Presbyterian Church shall establish a dynamic relationship with the Presbytery by:
 - a. a written statement as rationale for the ministry in which the continuing member is engaged;
 - b. an annual report filed with the Presbytery and reviewed by the Committee on Ministry;
 - c. a face-to-face review with Presbytery's Committee on Ministry at least once every three years;
 - d. interpretation of the ministry of the continuing member to Presbytery by:
 - 1) giving reports on the floor of Presbytery when requested by the Committee on Ministry;
 - 2) arranging, where feasible, to host Presbytery in the place of ministry.