

## ORDINATION AND TRANSFER OF CLERGY

The following process, procedures and standards apply to the examination and ordination of ordinands, examination and commissioning of commissioned lay pastors (CLP), and the transfer of ordained ministers into the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia (PEVA).

### I. COMMITTEES

PEVA administers the ordination, commissioning, and transfer of ordinands, CLPs, and ministers (hereinafter together "Examinees") through the Committee on Ministry (COM) and its subcommittee, the Examinations Subcommittee (EXSC) (PEVA Manual, Appendix 9). Those committees should reflect the theology, gender, and race of PEVA church membership.

### II. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Examinees for ordination, commissioning, and transfer must satisfy the requirements of chapter XIV of the Book of Order. Examinees shall submit one-page biographies and one-page statements of faith to the EXSC at least one week prior to their scheduled oral examination.

The EXSC will orally examine all examinees; the examination will cover the examinees' suitability, Christian faith and views in theology, the Bible, the sacraments and church polity (G-14.0402a). The EXSC shall inquire as to whether the examinees have a conscientious disagreement with a tenet of reformed faith or of PCUSA polity as found in the Book of Confessions or the Book of Order (a scruple). If the examinee expresses a scruple the EXSC shall ask the examinee if he or she will adhere to the tenet(s) of the reformed faith or of PCUSA polity with which he or she has a scruple. Examinees who have a scruple shall so declare when examined by the EXSC<sup>1</sup>.

An examinee may be ordained, commissioned, or transferred despite scruples concerning any non-essential provision of the Book of Confessions or the Book of Order so long as the examinee agrees to abide by the provisions in question. Hambrick v. PJC, Synod of NC (PCUS, 1983 at 43.)<sup>2</sup> Scruples as to non-essential tenets of the reformed faith or of PCUSA polity will not necessarily serve as a basis for rejecting an examinee. Scruples regarding any essential tenet will disqualify the examinee for ordination, commissioning, or transfer into PEVA.

If an examinee declares a scruple concerning a tenet, and if COM concludes that the examinee is otherwise ordainable, commissionable, or transferable, COM shall refer the issue of ordination, commissioning, or transfer to the next convened PEVA without recommendation.

If a majority of the EXSC present and voting determines that the examinee is qualified and suitable for ordination, commissioning, or transfer the EXSC will recommend approval to the full COM. If the EXSC

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<sup>1</sup> No negative inference shall necessarily be drawn from the fact that a scruple has been declared.

<sup>2</sup> We have not attempted to define "essential tenet." This is for a higher adjudicatory and, in specific cases, the commissioners to presbytery.

recommends against ordination, commissioning, or transfer the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), or Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC), or session of the calling church may appeal to the full COM.

If initially, on the basis of a favorable recommendation by the EXSC, or after appeal from an unfavorable vote of the EXSC, a majority of COM members present and voting concludes that ordination, commissioning, or transfer is appropriate, COM shall so recommend to the next convened PEVA. If COM does not so conclude, the matter is terminated and a convened PEVA will not consider the issue. If an examinee's readiness for ordination or commissioning is found deficient, COM may allow the examinee to undertake remedial action to correct the deficiency.

### III. CONSIDERATION BY A CONVENEED PEVA

Consideration of examinees shall be a priority matter on the agenda of the next convened PEVA. If referred to a convened PEVA, each examinee shall first preach a sermon and then answer questions designed to reveal the examinee's qualification and suitability for ordination, commissioning, or transfer. Each commissioner shall be entitled to ask one question only, until all commissioners are given a chance to ask a question. Questioning may last up to one hour<sup>3</sup> but may be extended by a majority vote of commissioners present and voting. Questioning may include an examinee's personal conduct and knowledge and/or views in theology and polity (including scruples). Questions may test how an examinee would conduct himself or herself in ministry. Irrelevant, hortatory, argumentative or repetitious questions shall be ruled out of order.

Unanimously submitted this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April 2007 by "The Taskforce to Implement the PUP Report into PEVA."

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Rev. Dr. Steven E. Frazier - Chair

Committee Members:

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Rev. Virginia H. Russell

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Elder Carol E. Bayma

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Rev. Frank W. Webster Jr.

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<sup>3</sup>Questioning may end any time prior to the expiration of one hour, but only by a) unanimous consent or b) if there are no more questions from commissioners