



**MCC**<sup>®</sup>  
METROPOLITAN  
COMMUNITY CHURCHES

COMMUNITY CHURCHES  
МЕТРОПОЛИТАН

CLERGY MANUAL ADDENDUM

# UK Protocol

2014

Office of Formation and Leadership Development  
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## Chapter 1: Discerning a Vocation

The Metropolitan Community Church is unique in its shared ministry between lay people and clergy. There are no areas of ministry which are not equally shared amongst God's people. Lay people as well as clergy preach, lead worship, design liturgy, celebrate the Sacraments, and serve in leadership. There is, therefore, a particular task of discernment that MCC enters into when it has to consider affirming a vocation to ordained ministry.

All Christian churches have a process of discernment as they consider whether or not to affirm an individual's sense of being called to ordered ministry. Within Catholic and Anglican traditions this discernment happens under the direction of a Bishop, within the Free Churches this discernment process happens through elected or appointed panels or committees. Regardless of the process, the Church has always needed to find a way to work out if a person who feels that God is calling them to ministry is ready to start the training, might be ready in the future or is mistaken in their sense of call.

In MCC this discernment process happens in a number of ways.

Firstly the local church through its pastor and Board of Directors decide whether or not to recommend a person for training and, later, for ordination. This endorsement must be received first by the Office of Formation and Leadership Development before the student can proceed through the remainder of the discernment process.

Secondly the REVM faculty gather information and each member reads and reviews the information. Questions they have are passed to a panel of two members who meet with the applicant and consider their application which consists of structured references from the Board, personal and professional references, a report from their general practitioner and from a psychologist. The REVM panel, and faculty, will also consider various papers written by the applicant. The panel feed back to the faculty and a decision is made about the applicant's suitability to attend a REVM and pursue a vocation to ordained ministry at this time.

Thirdly, the applicant attends a REVM retreat where they have the opportunity for conversations with REVM faculty, take part in group exercises and continue their own process of discernment.

It is possible that the pastor, board or REVM panel/faculty may

- affirm a call
- say that the person needs more time to develop before entering training for ministry (in which case a recommendation will be made on when the person can reapply) or

- say that they are mistaken in their sense of calling and should be encouraged to look at other forms of ministry amongst God's people.

The discernment process continues as the student undertakes their training. Their supervisor and teaching church have their part to play in the process of training and development and will also be asked to recommend, or not, the person for ordination. Tutors on various MCC courses share their perceptions with the supervisors and with the Office of Formation and Leadership Development – especially when there are concerns and, finally, an ordination panel will have the final opportunity to discern the person's sense of vocation.

This is a thorough and ongoing process which takes a significant amount of time and helps the person better understand their own spirituality, perception of God's call and sense of vocation. It is not easy, but neither is the task to serve as an ordained minister of God's people.

## Helping Us Discern Your Sense of Vocation

In order for us to start to understand you, your motivations and your sense of vocation better as well as to discern your suitability to start to prepare for ordained ministry we need the following:

- A letter from your GP. We have a standard letter which goes to the GP and a release form that allows the GP to write to us. The letter simply asks the GP for any information about your physical or mental health which may effect training for ordained Christian ministry.
- A report from a Chartered Psychologist. We require you to contact a chartered psychologist. Details of those in private practice are found on the British Psychological Association website. We have a standard letter for them so they know what we're asking for. They will meet with you and then write a report for us.
- References from your MCC pastor(s) and Board of Directors for the last five years, as well as a list of current Board members certified by the secretary of your church. These reports will help us understand how long you've been active in your MCC (and any other MCC) and the different roles you've undertaken there.
- If you've been in MCC for less than five years we will also need contact details of the minister of any previous church you've been involved in during that time so that references can be taken up.
- Personal references from people who have known you for over five years together with a professional reference from your employers going back five years. (Excluding family members and anyone previously listed.)

We also require some written papers from you. These help both you and us understand your sense of calling and your faith background each paper is expected to be between 1000 and 1500 words.

### **1: SPIRITUAL JOURNEY – PAPER ONE**

*Describe your spiritual journey.*

How did you come to faith in Christ?  
Which other churches (if any) were you involved in prior to MCC?  
What did you like about them?  
What didn't you like about them?  
Describe that involvement?  
Why did you leave?  
What made you feel drawn to MCC as a denomination?  
What did you like and dislike about MCC when you first attended?  
What do you like and dislike now?

### **2: INVOLVEMENT WITH MCC – PAPER TWO**

How long have you been attending your current MCC?  
Have you been involved in other MCCs? If so for how long?  
Describe how you are involved in the life of your local MCC – ie small groups, worship leadership, background tasks etc.  
Include a list of ministries (eg. greeting, reading, background tasks) you've been involved in (if any), dates you were involved in them, areas that were successes and areas you found difficult.

### **3: SENSE OF VOCATION – PAPER THREE**

Why do you believe God is calling you to ordained ministry? How have you perceived that calling?  
What ministry do you feel you feel called to perform that can't be done as a lay person?  
What skills and experience do you have that makes you think that ordained ministry is where your talents will be best used?

### **4: MINISTRY IDEAS – PAPER FOUR**

Describe what you feel called to do (A general idea is fine!).

Given that most MCC Ministers are bi-vocational, how will you manage that and what do you perceive will be the implications? How do you envisage funding your ministry?

Given that many MCC ministers move as a result of undertaking ministry, reflect on whether or not you are willing to relocate.

\*\*All letters, reports, references and papers (The Discernment Package, which can be downloaded from the OFLD website) must be sent to the Office of Formation and Leadership Development via fax 310-388-1252 or email attachment OFLD@MCCchurch.net.

## Chapter 2: Readiness for Entering Vocational Ministry (REVM) Retreat

The MCC Clergy Manual provides detailed information about the REVM retreat, its goals and objectives, and what can be expected. In addition to the information contained in that document, those seeking ordination in the UK should be aware of the following:

Participation in REVM is dependent upon the successful completion of the components of 'Discerning a Vocation' (see Chapter 1) and the pre-approval of an interview panel to attend.

Upon successful completion of the REVM, one is granted **Trainee status** with MCC and enters a time of ministerial **Formation**. The period of formation is comprised of three primary elements included in a MAP:

- Personal Spiritual Formation
- Education for Vocational Ministry
- Relationship with the Denomination

The period of Formation is guided by a trained, certified MCC clergyperson who meets at least monthly with the student to guide, supervise, and evaluate the student in the above elements of Formation.

During the year preceding application for ordination, the student shall complete (minimally) a year-long **Apprenticeship in a Teaching Church** with the guidance of a trained, certified Supervisor who is an MCC Clergyperson. The Apprentice meets weekly with the Supervisor, who guides, supervises, and evaluates the work of the Apprentice and, ultimately, approves the Apprentice for ordination. This is a time of practice in the components of ministry and is guided by the student's MAP and a learning covenant created by the Supervisor and the trainee.

Each of the above elements are further described in the following chapter.

### **TRANSFER CLERGY**

Clergy from other Christian denominations often ask to transfer their credentials to MCC. The REVM faculty welcomes such applications. They will assess the educational training and experience of such applicants and make specific recommendations about addressing the MCC competencies listed above. Transfer clergy should have been in membership of MCC for one year before making such an application and must complete the apprenticeship as outlined below. This entire process helps the applicant understand their calling to MCC ministry more fully and gives them time and emotional distance from their previous denomination.

## Chapter 3: Preparation and Formation for Vocational Ministry in MCC

### **PERSONAL SPIRITUAL FORMATION:**

In order to develop spiritual practices which will serve you for a life-time of ministry, each year during your Formation and Apprenticeship, engage in one or two projects from the following list or develop your own with your Supervisor and/or REVM faculty. Document your journey. Some suggestions are:

- Practice traditional spiritual disciplines: visit the sick and those in prison, serve the poor, feed the hungry, give faithfully of financial resources, observe a weekly Sabbath
- Engage in a programme of spiritual direction
- Develop a programme of spiritual reading (classes)
- Volunteer with a community service organization and write spiritual reflections
- Actively engage a social justice cause and write spiritual reflections
- Participate in a silent or guided retreat
- Embodied spiritual practice – yoga, body work
- Personal devotional practice: observing the liturgical year. Bible study/devotion, praying with ancient Christian mystics, construct and use a home altar, create and/or use music or art
- Develop a regular meditation practice
- Explore other faith traditions
- Cultivate a regular prayer practice
- Engage with a prayer partner
- Learn to practice non-violence in daily living
- Engage in a personal worship practice

### **EDUCATION FOR VOCATIONAL MINISTRY:**

We believe in having well educated and trained professional clergy in MCC. For those pursuing ordination in MCC in the UK an **Honours Degree in Christian Theology** is the foundation for your educational preparation.

Competencies in the following areas must also be demonstrated:

- Christian Education
- Pastoral Care
- Worship, Rites and Sacraments
- Church Administration and Management
- Church Growth Studies
- Sexuality Studies

- MCC Polity and History

The Office of Formation and Leadership Development in the UK will offer courses in summer school programmes and/or on-line to teach the skills required to master these competencies.

If possible, students may complete these competencies in their Christian Theology programme. In this case the OFLD would evaluate the work and grant exemption from the taught course they offer. There are also some institutions which offer a degree with a focus in Pastoral Studies which may cover these competency areas.

For those people entering the ordination process in MCC with a degree in another academic discipline, the REVM faculty will assess academic transcripts and make recommendations about possible Theology programmes that will meet the educational requirements for ordained ministry in MCC in the UK.

#### **RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DENOMINATION:**

In addition to maintaining Trainee status with the denomination, continue to educate yourself in the culture of MCC. With your Supervisor and/or REVM faculty, choose 2 – 3 of the following:

- Attend worship in eight congregations (some MCC, some other) and write an analysis or reflection from each visit
- Attend MCC Conferences and other regional and denominational events
- View DVDs of conferences and other video archive pieces
- Establish a twinning programme with a congregation in a different culture
- Spend two weeks of your Internship in a congregation outside the UK
- Have a conversation with someone who has been involved with MCC for over ten years about their experience of MCC. Write an account of your conversation.
- Participate in a cross-cultural mission project in conjunction with the MCC Global Justice Team

#### **APPRENTICESHIP**

A minimum of one year apprenticeship with a trained and approved Supervising Clergy is also required for ordained ministry in MCC. Typically this apprenticeship is completed at the end of one's educational preparation. As a general practice, students may not complete their apprenticeship in the same congregation they began their training process.

The components of Apprenticeship are:

- A Learning Covenant which spells out the specific goals for the student as well as the means by which the goals will be accomplished and a plan for how the student will be supervised for each goal. The Learning Covenant must include goals for Self Care and Preaching as well as reflection on the competency areas of pastoral practice listed above.
- Weekly supervisory meetings.
- The establishment of an Apprenticeship Committee made up of lay people from the local congregation for the purpose of feedback and support to the apprentice.
- A final evaluation by the Supervising Clergy, Apprenticeship Committee and Board of Directors which will become part of the apprentice's ordination application.