

PASTORAL MINISTRIES

Lee Rhodes • Chairman, Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team

It is with a high level of joy in serving for the past two years that I bring this report to you.

Responsibilities of the PMLT

The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team (PMLT) focuses on all issues relating to ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA. Specifically, our areas of responsibility include:

- Licensing and ordination.
- Discipline and restoration.
- Recruitment and professional development.
- Working with denominational leadership to develop policies and procedures for all areas related to the ministry.

The Team

I was privileged to serve in this area with a great team.

- *Denny Sites* and *Chris Little* represented the East Region.
- *Terry Smith* and *Chuck Wheatley* split the Central region.
- *Les Smith* and I split the North Region.
- *Bob Bruce* and *Craig Burkholder* gave oversight for the West Region.

Bishop Ron Ramsey attends meetings in an ex-officio status. Due to the changes at the Graduate School of Christian Ministries, we have not had consistent representation from them. We have, however, been kept apprised of the ongoing progress.

Dr. Ray Seilhamer has continued evaluating the transcripts of individuals seeking licensing or ordination.

Cathy Reich has been very valuable to me in coordinating information on licentiates and getting information to them, whether it is a letter of information or a packet of material to guide them to the next step in the licensing process.

Steve Dennie has been of great assistance to our team in helping us produce publications.

Areas Needing Attention

Pastoral Health

One area that continues to need attention is pastoral health. It is one matter to have healthy churches, but without healthy pastors the reality may be just a hope and a dream. (It has been documented that one-third to one-half of seminary graduates leave the ministry within five years of graduation.) The PMLT began listing places that provide a quiet respite for tired pastors. One PMLT member wants us to make sure the pastor's spouse sees the list to make the time away a reality.

We also developed a Senior Pastor Sabbatical Policy. The PMLT encourages churches to adopt a policy for pastoral sabbaticals (compensated leaves of absence). This policy is intended to encourage sabbaticals for ministry professionals who can benefit from a period of change and renewal. Such leaves are to be used for professional and personal development.

Without time off, clergy are good candidates for burnout. Pastors are on call around the clock and are "among the last generalists," required to be orators, theologians, counselors, and administrators. It is our desire that churches carefully consider planning a sabbatical, which will strengthen the Kingdom by strengthening your pastor's health. The non-pastor leaders must step up and make it happen.

Pastoral Assessment

Another avenue that we have considered at the request of Bishop Ramsey is a Pastoral Assessment. This would be an added component to the licensing process. It will necessitate training to perform the evaluation. Tim Roehl has agreed to do the training. We would insert the assessment before issuing a National Conference license.

The idea is to interview a couple to determine the couple's readiness for pastoral ministry. Tim would be willing to do the training

and model the process for the PMLT. Then the PMLT could train others or gather others to perform this evaluation.

Apparently the Evangelical Congregational Church has a procedure in place similar to this. They bring a couple into a “boot camp” setting for a weekend evaluation.

Other Issues

Pastoral Ministries Handbook

Separating the Pastoral Ministry Handbook from the UB Discipline enabled us to make some changes that fit the needs of our present licentiates without requiring National Conference action.

Bishop Ramsey created an additional list of books for the recommended reading list for Lay Ministers. They come under the following areas:

- Functional Structures.
- Empowering Leadership.
- Hermeneutics & Preaching.
- Passionate Spirituality.

Licensing Issues

We discovered a number of issues in regards to licensing. One is that we have some individuals that hold a Local Church license and apparently have no desire or plan to become ordained. As we contact these individuals, we are directing them back to their pastor and cluster coach to get the correct license, which in a case like this would be the Lay Minister’s license.

Another issue is that of licenses being renewed for years upon years without any educational progress being made. Our team has set itself to hold these licentiates accountable. The time is coming when many licenses will be dropped if there has been no educational advancement.

Consistency in the Process

Confusion due to carry-over from the various annual conferences allowed for some diversity in our licensing process. The forms looked one way in one region and totally different in another. Some letters of reference were written without regard to the reference form, so we were not getting as complete a picture.

We developed standardization in the forms and applications for Lay Minister, Local Church, Specialized Ministry, and National Conference License, as well as Elders Orders (Ordination). The same form we send by mail, upon request, is also available online (ub.org/ministers)

Specialized Ministry License

In the area of licensing, this question surfaced on a consistent basis.: If a person with a Specialized Ministry license decided to move on toward ordination, why should that person have to revert back to a Local Church license? We revised the Pastoral Ministry Handbook to make a Specialized Ministries license the equivalent of a National Conference license. When a minister holding a Specialized license decides to move toward ordination, they would complete the requirements for ordination without reverting to a Local Church license.

Licensing Brochure

With Steve Dennie’s help, we began to develop a tri-fold licensing brochure that will give a brief overview of the licensing process for the local church and the potential licentiate. This publication should help alleviate the variance in how we license pastors, track their progress, and hold them accountable to move to the next step.

Restoration Manual

As we reviewed the Restoration Manual, it became evident that the scope of the material is limited to restoration from sexual sin. The decision was made to rewrite the material to include a broad policy to help us bring health and restoration to the pastor that has faced failure from one of any in an assortment of issues. Steve Dennie has agreed to pull information from a variety of sources and put them in a document that can be presented to the PMLT for discussion and finalization. Topics to be addressed:

- Racial comments.
- Sexual behavior.
- Mishandling money/finances/debt.
- Time management.
- Addiction: substance abuse, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, occult, pornography.
- Insubordination—not attending meetings, not submitting reports, etc.
- Investigation philosophy: should the local church handle this or have the denomination handle it?
- First line of accountability: local church and cluster leader; denomination if needed.

United Brethren History Course

We contemplated revising the delivery vehicle for the United Brethren History Course. Howard Cherry does an excellent work in presenting the content of our history. We would like to preserve his knowledge and expertise for

Licenses Issued Since 2007

Local Conference:

Micheal Dean, Sabetha, KS, 5-29-08
Nate Bristol, New Hope Community, 6-30-08
Dave Nicholls, New Hope Community, 6-30-08
Julie Priestley, Colwood, 12-16-08
Michael Whipple, Colwood, 12-16-08
Travis Ambrose, Lake View, 12-9-08
Joe DiMarco, Elem3nt, 1-1-09
Drew Wutke, Good Shepherd (IN), 1-1-09
Kevin Whitacre, Good Shepherd (IN), 1-1-09
Erin Stringer, Emmanuel, 1-1-09
Eric Kappes, Crestview, 2-9-09
Amos Rawley, Otterbein, in process
Scott Downey, NorthPoint, 2-23-09
Eric Baumann, NorthPoint, 2-23-09
Todd Greenman, Elem3nt, 4-09
John Emmons, New Horizons, 4-15-09
Kathy Kelly, Hillsdale UB, MI, 4-17-09
Tom Mahas, Bethel, OH, in process

National Conference:

Dalton Jenkins, Yonkers, 7-23-08
Ken Williamson, Idaville, 7-23-08
Warwick Fuller, Devonshire, 7-23-08
Brad Kittle, Findlay Faith, 6-5-08
Marvin Schwartz, New Horizon, 5-12-08

Gary Boston, Huntington, 10-31-08
Troy Green, Monroe, 2-17-09
Mike Soltis, Mt. Zion, Wayne, OH, transitional
Michele Vigil, in process

Ordination:

Peter Martindale, 2008
Milt Herrold, 2008
Sam Suman, Fostoria, 9-12-08
Michael Stine, Mt. Carmel, 8-8-08
Art Page, Orrstown, 4-20-08
Norm Picket, 2-23-08
David Dickson, 3-13-09 (transferred in)
Roy Atherton, at National Conference
Tim Scroggs, in process
Dan Bentz, in process
Thurman Payton, in process
Marvin Schwartz, recognized at NC 2009

Specialized:

Wendy Kindel, Browns Corners, MI, 4-16-08
Mark Young, Chambersburg, PA, 11-9-08

Surrendered license:

Doug Moyer (local, Oak Harbor/Lancaster)
Jeremy Spear (NC, Colwood) now with BIC

the future and capture a variety of historical locations and notes from living former bishops. The plan is to put this on a format that would enhance our capability to present the UB History Course in a broad array of places and times.

Personnel Relations Commission Manual

The Personnel Relations Commission Manual is outdated and inaccurate, yet if re-done could be a very helpful tool in the hands of the local church governance body. We recently did some committee work on this material. It will be reviewed and, when it is sent through the proper channels and finally approved by the PMLT, published.

Pastoral Recruitment

Looking to the future, the PMLT needs to take initiative in pastor recruitment. We need help with tools to identify, invest in, and invite quality individuals to “come on board” to the pastorate. The first step is the one way that everyone can be involved—prayer. While Bishop Raymond Waldfogel was in office, he initiated

a prayer movement for men to be called into ministry. Those few years saw more men called into ministry than any other time in United Brethren history.

CEU Requirements

Another area of work to be accomplished in the future is addressing the CEU requirement for pastors—what is expected, how to fulfill the requirements, and what the various possibilities are to complete the expectations.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Lee V. Rhodes, Chairman
Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team*

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Pastoral
Ministry
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Team