

DATE: April 6, 2015

TO: The Administrative Committee of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The General Minister and President, The Moderator, The Immediate-past Moderator, and leaders of the racial ethnic constituencies recommended/approved the task force membership.

This task force was charged to respond to GB-13-0848 – Supplemental Document to the Executive Search Process: The Administrative Committee draft a supplemental document to the Executive Search Process to provide cultural orientation and preparation to boards and/or organizations issuing calls to persons from historically underrepresented groups.

Based on the task force research and findings, this document recommends action steps to create a welcoming and supportive environment in which **ALL** new ministry/organization executives, irrespective of nationality, race, age, sexual orientation or gender, can successfully guide the respective ministry/organization in fulfilling God's vision and mission.

Cultural competence within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a call to work together with an understanding of and appreciation for people of different cultural backgrounds, in recognition that all of God's people are created in God's own image and equally valued. The image of God we see reflected through those of different cultures has many different interpretations, based on a plan that we do not fully understand. Our call is: a) to see the image of God in the differences from our culture, as well as in the similarities; b) to build an appreciation and understanding of the various cultural differences we encounter; c) to accept those whose cultural image of God is not our own; and d) to encourage each other to live into all God created us to be.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

A. **Some** people in the underrepresented groups including women come to leadership positions in historically white/male dominated institutions with an inherent uncertainty about their abilities to succeed and if they will be welcomed, even when they are extremely well-qualified and experienced.

B. Broken and unacknowledged ministry cultures produce broken search processes.

C. Institutional preparedness is critical to the success of the call.

D. The selection of the candidate is not the end of the ministry's responsibility to the executive or the receiving organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Pre-search

The governing body is encouraged to call an interim executive to help the ministry accomplish the following tasks:

- 1) Clarify vision, mission, and values.
- 2) Conduct a formal cultural assessment that includes key stakeholders. The following attached resources are recommended: Cultural Competency Self-Assessment/The Cultural Proficiency Continuum Self-Assessment and Cultural Competency Continuum. Use an experienced facilitator recommended by the Minister of Reconciliation to conduct this assessment.
- 3) Conduct an anti-racism audit. The following attached resource is recommended: Institutional Self-Assessment/Anti-Racism Audit Questionnaire. Use an experienced facilitator recommended by the Minister of Reconciliation to conduct this assessment/audit.
- 4) Assess the financial sustainability of the ministry.
- 5) Develop an executive compensation package that is equitable. (Preferably, executives' salaries should be greater than those they supervise.)
- 6) Dismantle and/or identify potential barriers or hindrances to the success of the new executive.

B. Search

Based upon the work and learnings from the pre-search, the search team is encouraged to:

- 1) Use the current Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Executive Search Process.
- 2) Develop the job description and ministry profile in relationship to the organization/ministry vision, mission, and values.
- 3) Include intentional delineation of skills and experiences required.
- 4) Identify soft skills of the position (i.e. conflict management, listening, cultural sensitivity, and developing one-to-one relationships, etc.).
- 5) Meet or have conference calls with the screener to more fully articulate the vision, mission and goals of the organization and the skills preferred/required of the applicants.

3. Post-search

- a) A. The search committee's continued responsibilities include preparing the dominant culture to receive and empower the new executive. Coordinate activities to genuinely welcome the new executive.
 - 1) Conduct a press conference/press release, in coordination with the new executive.
 - 2) Coordinate a timely and appropriate reception to introduce the new executive to the board, community, and office staff, in coordination with the new executive.
 - 3) Purchase a new computer, business cards and activate new email address, in advance of arrival and in coordination with the new executive.

- 4) Purchase a new mobile phone and input board members, staff and other important contacts, in coordination with the new executive.
- 5) Make sure the new office is clean and uncluttered.
- 6) Have personnel forms ready for signature upon arrival (payroll card, medical benefits, parking pass/key, etc.
- 7) Provide directory information for board members, staff, and other frequent contacts.
- 8) Provide calendars for board, staff and other scheduled meetings.
- 9) Select person/s to be readily available for questions/concerns.

2. Continuing as the Pastoral Relations Committee (Refer to Revised GUIDELINES for the Pastoral Relations Committee, revised May 2014) or recommending other candidates in consultation with the new executive.

3. Connecting the new executive to peer groups, i.e. fraternities, sororities and business/social groups. This is especially helpful for persons from historically underrepresented groups including women.

B. The governing board responsibilities include:

- 1) Engage a personal coach in consultation with the new executive. A personal coach works with the new executive to set goals and objectives. A personal coach is an accountability partner.

- 2) Engage an organizational mentor in consultation with the new executive, who holds a position within the ministry and possesses formal power and influence. She/he can interpret the culture and help the organization understand and fully utilize the gifts of the new executive. The organizational mentor also helps the new executive to understand the gifts and concerns of the organization. The organizational mentor **should not** supervise the new executive.
- 3) Connect the new executive to peer groups, i.e. fraternities, sororities and business/social groups. This is especially helpful for persons from historically underrepresented groups including women.
- 4) Develop a continuing education plan to help equip the executive for the position.
- 5) Assure regular performance/assessment reviews of the executive, the governing board, and the vision and mission of the ministry.

F. Healthy parting process

1. Healthy parting processes include honest dialogues, exit interviews, and celebrations.
2. In the event that the executive or the governing body discovers that this is a relationship that is not advancing the ministry's vision and mission, the governing body should engage in an exit process that values both the executive and the organization.
3. Many times rumblings are heard far and near when an executive or ministry is about to implode. Discuss in advance how to address such rumblings for the well-being of the executive and ministry/organization.

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 - i. Select person/s to be readily available for questions/concerns.