

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY PLAGIARISM GUIDELINES**

Plagiarism-Copyright and Respect for Intellectual Property

Materials prepared and presented by candidates for ordination in the Baltimore Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church in connection with their Examinations are solemn documents that warrant careful preparation reflecting the faithfulness, inspiration, scholarship, and integrity that our congregations anticipate from their clergy. As such, these Examination Documents must reflect the work of the candidates submitting them and must properly recognize the work of others that contribute to them. Examination Documents that present the work of others without attribution raise serious questions regarding a Candidate's fitness for ministry that must be addressed by the Board of Ordained Ministry in addition to the other processes used by the Board to evaluate a Candidate.

#### **AREAS OF CONCERN**

The Board of Ordained Ministries has identified three areas of concern relating to Examination Documents of candidates for Probationary or Full Membership in the Order of Deacons or the Order of Elders.

First, Candidates must not violate the copyrights of other persons. Extensive quotation from copyrighted sources without the permission of the copyright holders violates their rights. Ordinarily, the Board would not expect copyright violation issues to arise in connection with Examination Documents because

- The fair use doctrine permits reasonable quotation or excerpting with attribution.
- Candidates' papers are expected to reflect substantial original work.

Second, Candidates must not knowingly present the work of other persons as their own. Examples of improper conduct would include

- Excerpting material from written sources without attribution
- Presenting material prepared by a fellow student or candidate as if it were one's own
- Using an analysis, presentation format or similar material taken from notes or recordings of a class, sermon, or lecture presented by another.

Third, Candidates must demonstrate the ability to engage the candidacy process substantively, to think independently, and to maintain good academic discipline. When a candidate unknowingly presents the work of another as their own, regardless of the reason, it raises serious concern for whether the candidate has engaged in the struggle with his or her written work that is expected of candidates.

For example, assume that a candidate were to present, without attribution, extensive quotations from the Social Principles, Book of Discipline, or the United Methodist Hymnal. The Board would find it difficult to conclude this was done in an intentional effort to present that work as the candidate's own since the sources would be recognized by Board members. The conduct could, however, raise questions regarding a candidate's fitness for ministry. This would be true if the conduct suggested a lack of theological or ethical preparedness or a lack of discipline that could

adversely affect their pastoral effectiveness. The candidate's performance under examination could be appropriately weighed in evaluating such a circumstance.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF COPYRIGHT VIOLATION OR PLAGIARISM**

When it finds that a Candidate has violated copyright, presented another's ideas as his or her own, or otherwise failed to credit another's work, the Board of Ordained Ministry (acting through the Executive Committee) shall take appropriate remedial or disciplinary action. Generally, in balancing the violation and the consequences thereof, the Board may distinguish between

1. Conduct that constitutes a failure to meet high standards of personal integrity expected of those set apart for ordained ministry,
2. Conduct that suggests poor academic or intellectual understanding or an unengaged attitude toward the material, and
3. Conduct that reflects low standards of care in preparing material, and poor academic discipline.

Upon discovery of any materials in Examination Documents that raise plagiarism issues, the Board Members discovering them shall promptly bring them to the attention of the Executive Committee which shall consider and act upon the concerns as soon as reasonably practical. The Executive Committee will review any alleged violations in consultation with such additional Board Members as the Chair may designate for that purpose. If the Executive Committee decides that an allegation does not warrant disciplinary or remedial action, then the matter shall be considered fully resolved. Otherwise, the Executive Committee may take any of the actions described below at any time before, during, or after the Examination for which the Examination Documents in question were prepared.

### **With respect to candidates for Probationary Membership,**

1. Leave the Candidate with the District Committee (by rejecting the Examination Documents or otherwise),
2. Impose conditions to be met before attending the full member exam.
3. With the concurrence of three-fourth of the Board attending at any meeting of the Board, leave the candidate in the care of the District Committee with recommendation that the District Committee and candidate seek alternative paths to ministry.

### **With respect to Probationary Members seeking Full Member Ordination,**

1. Continue the Candidate (by rejecting the Examination Documents or otherwise) to a subsequent year without participation in, or completion of, the Examination.
2. Continue the Candidate following Full Member Examination.
3. With the concurrence of three-fourth of the Board attending at any meeting of the Board, discontinue the Candidate, or

Imposition of a condition that coaching on plagiarism issues by an individual (to be approved by BOOM Executive Committee) be completed prior to ordination.