

VI. Policies Concerning Conflict in Churches

- A. The Book of Order states, "Each Presbytery shall elect a Committee on Ministry...to settle difficulties on behalf of presbytery when possible and expedient." (G-11.0501)
The Book of Order further states of the COM:

"It shall serve as an instrument of presbytery for promoting the peace and harmony of the churches, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between ministers and churches. Its purpose shall be to mediate differences and reconcile persons, to the end that the difficulties may be corrected by the session of the church if possible, that the welfare of the particular church may be strengthened, that the unity of the body of Christ may be made manifest." (G-11.0502i)

"It shall exercise wise discretion in determining when to take cognizance of information concerning difficulties within a church, proceeding with the following steps:

1. "It may take the initiative to bring the information which has come to it to the attention of the session of the church involved, counseling with the session as to the appropriate actions to be taken in correcting the reported difficulties.
2. "It may offer its help as a mediator in case the session either finds itself unable to settle the problems peaceably or takes no steps toward settlement.
3. "It may act to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the parties concerned, or if this authority is granted by the Presbytery for the specific case. When so doing, the committee shall always hold hearings which afford procedural safeguards as in cases of process, following the procedures outlined in the Rules of Discipline." (G-11.0502j)

And, "The committee shall be open to communication at all times with the ministers, elders who are members of sessions, sessions of the Presbytery, and Certified Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery." (G-11.0503)

The COM shall inform churches of the proper methods and channels of communicating problems or conflicts to the COM as part of the triennial visitation, and at other times as needed.