

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. The paramount purpose of professional development should be the enhancement of personal and professional skills having immediate relevance to the ministry to which the pastor is called, and the plans should be designed accordingly. However, this principle should not be so narrowly applied as to preclude the acquiring and developing of skills for future calls and assignments. The Church has an obvious interest in developing a cadre of competent pastors.

1. Ordinarily, the program for professional development should be pursued away from the pastor's normal place of service. Professional development opportunities sponsored by universities, seminaries, hospitals, clinics and retreat centers as well as conferences, seminars, workshops and mission study programs offered by the church (broadly defined) would normally fulfill the spirit of these guidelines. However, parts of these programs may include some "on-site" training, providing these are supervised by a qualified professional.

2. The content and purpose of the educational components of any professional development plan should be consistent with the Reformed tradition as represented in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Again, this principle should not be so narrowly interpreted as to exclude courses and experiences that contribute to the breadth and enrichment of the pastor's ministry.

3. The following do not normally constitute valid professional development programs for which absence from the congregation would be approved: unsupervised, private study; extended vacations; leaves of absence; or activities such as guiding tours.

B. The Committee on Ministry will use these guidelines in considering applications for assistance from the Culley Fund.

C. Policy:

1. That the present "Study Leave" be designated as "Professional Development".

2. That provision for professional development in the terms of call or other contracts include: 1) two weeks per year, cumulative to eight weeks and 2) financial support for Professional Development, cumulative up to four years of allowances.

3. That pastors and sessions be encouraged to observe these guidelines in planning for professional development leave. (as amended November 1990)

4. Pastor's Involved in Presbytery Sponsored Work Projects and Camps

a. The participation of clergy in international and national work/mission projects/trips shall normally be considered church service not requiring use of professional development leave or vacation time. Professional Development Funds may be used to encourage such participation. (September 1995)

b. When clergy, youth directors, and church educators serve as a director/leader for a summer camp or as an adult advisor/ leader for youth at a national or regional meeting, this shall normally be considered a normal part of employment not requiring use of professional development leave or vacation time. (June 1996)

