

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS (DSTO)

VOLUME 1

D. MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH

Directives concerning parish workers

Prepared by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations. Adopted by the General Synod, 1978 Convention, as Appendix to 'Policy on the Supply, Training and Service of Parish Workers'.

Not edited.

Since the office of parish worker is an auxiliary office which has been established to assist the office of the Ministry in the congregation, the following directives are laid down.

1. A parish worker shall publicly preach or administer the Sacraments only when he has been commissioned to do so. The right to preach and/or administer the Sacraments shall be granted only in relation to a given situation. When conditions change or when the parish worker is transferred to a new field, only such rights and privileges shall be granted to the parish worker as are specified by the Church.
2. Parish workers shall at all times avoid giving the impression that they are pastors, and are not to assume the title 'Pastor'.
3. Parish workers may attend certain sessions of Pastors Conferences and In-Service Schools, but not necessarily the whole of the Conference. Their attendance, however, is by invitation and not by right. Parish workers do not have a vote at Pastors Conferences.
4. Parish workers do not, by virtue of their office, have voting rights at Conventions. They may however, be appointed as representatives of congregations who have power to vote at Conventions.
5. Parish workers in a parish situation shall work under close supervision of a parish pastor, or in cases of isolation, under the President of the District. The pastor or President who has the oversight of a parish worker is responsible for his ministry in general, including his teaching and sermon work, if these apply.

6. When calling a parish worker to a new field of labour, the official call forms used in the cases of calling ordained men to a parish shall not be used. A Letter of Appointment shall be drawn up, which will have the approval of the President of the District.
7. When administering baptism in a situation of isolation, the commissioned parish worker shall give the necessary pre-baptism counselling and keep the necessary records of baptism and all other official acts. Where an ordained man is nearby, the parish worker shall direct people who require these services to the pastor.
8. A parish worker may be registered as an authorised Celebrant of Marriage, in an area of particular need.
9. If approval is given by the supervising pastor, a parish worker may give Confirmation lessons to children; however, the rite of Confirmation shall be performed only by an ordained pastor or by a parish worker commissioned to do so by the President of the District.
10. A parish worker shall perform only such duties as outlined in the Letter of Appointment.