

Adopted by the National Commission on the Ministry, January 18, 1991

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## **CUSTOMIZING THE PROCESS FOR YOUR REGION**

In customizing the process, the Ministerial Leadership Commission recognizes that this document will need to be "custom fit" to each Region. There are at least three levels at which this customizing might occur. The first and most obvious is at the point of terminology. The generic terms used in the model will need to be made specific to fit your region.

The second level relates to the geographic size or number of churches in your Region. The "model document" allows for this customizing. Some Regions will want to make certain points more specific (such as specifying the size of a preliminary exploration or review hearing panel). The hope of the Commission is that all Regions will have a process which follows this basic structure while recognizing the need to make adjustments for specific needs of Regions.

The third level is to bring the document into line with applicable state law. At that point, it is very important to make clear what question is being asked of an attorney within your Region. For instance, if you ask most attorneys "How should we do this process?" or "Is this process the way you think we should do it?" most attorneys will begin to reconstruct the process around the civil or criminal proceedings with which they are most familiar. While this is a natural response, it is not what we are recommending as the most helpful. On the other hand, show the document to an attorney and say, "This is the process we would like to follow because we think it is fair and more in keeping with our church's values. Is there anything in this that would not be allowed by the laws of this state"? This gets at the real issue . . . which is whether or not what we seek to do will be allowed by the state law. (We have been told that states will not intrude into "interchurch" matters unless (1) that process is clearly unfair, or (2) that process is made a public issue by the church body such as defaming a person.)

\*Effective January 1, 1994, the National Commission on the Ministry was renamed the Ministerial Leadership Commission.

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