

**Committee on Ministry- Presbytery of Arkansas  
Report of Central Arkansas Examinations Subcommittee  
Examination of Bradley D. Thornton**

**October 28, 2019**

Members of the Central Arkansas Examinations Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Arkansas met on October 28, 2019 at the office of the Presbytery of Arkansas to conduct the examination of Bradley D. Thornton.

Brad comes before the Subcommittee as an ordained minister of a denomination not in full communion with PC(USA.)

Members in attendance were: Retired MWS Sally Johnson, MWS Carol Clark, Retired MWS Don Campbell, MWS Fern Davis, Elder Jim Morehead and Elder Don Eilbott, moderator. Also attending was General Presbyter Stewart Smith.

The meeting had previously been opened with prayer by Carol Clark.

This examination request represents a new challenge for our group. We are asked to examine a minister of a denomination not in full communion with PC(USA.) This is not an examination where a specific church is seeking to establish a defined relationship. In those instances, the specific relationship is available for review including the availability of resource persons. Rather this is a request for an examination for the purpose of the minister being in a position to discuss a relationship in the event one arises.

The Subcommittee met with Brad. He is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ.) His faith journey was fully explored by the Subcommittee.

Further Brad was fully examined by the Subcommittee on the various areas as previously outlined for examination.

- Christian Faith
- Bible and Views in Theology
- Views Regarding the Sacraments
- The Government of the PCUSA
- Denominational Commitment, Collegiality, and the Ability/Commitment to Work with Others
- Personal Integrity, Maturity, Character, Wholeness
- Ongoing Ministry Vocation
- Vision and Leadership Capacity and Skills
- Pastoral Sensitivity

It was apparent to the members that his faith journey and personal beliefs, have much in common with our denomination.

Brad is a former attorney. He is well spoken, of good character and possesses the necessary training and experience to serve a congregation of the Presbytery of Arkansas on a Stated Supply or Pulpit Supply basis.

On motion made, seconded and unanimously agreed it was recommended to the Committee on Ministry that he be placed on the Stated Supply/ Pulpit Supply List as available for service for those positions.

In preparation for the Two-Step Process outlined in the Policy for Ministers of Other Denominations Seeking to Serve in an Installed or Temporary Pastoral Relationship Role (*approved by Presbytery February 11, 2017*), the Subcommittee discussed at length his personal views on baptism and communion and his lack of knowledge of the Government of the PC(USA.)

The Subcommittee believed his expressions on the examined items to be generally in accordance with Presbyterian theology and polity, and the ethos of The Presbytery of Arkansas and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The Subcommittee discussed the challenge as presented by the current request for examination.

The Subcommittee on motion made seconded and unanimously agreed recommended to the Committee on Ministry the following:

- That based on the examination that Brad be considered as approved and available for service in a temporary relationship with a church in our Presbytery in situations where an ordained MWS PC(USA) is available to moderate the Session and serve the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and baptism.
- In accordance with the Two- Step Process outlined in the Policy for Ministers of Other Denominations Seeking to Serve in an Installed or Temporary Pastoral Relationship Role, that GP Stewart Smith assist in pairing Brad with an appropriate ordained MWS PC(USA) to assist Brad in his furtherance of a broader relationship with the Presbytery of Arkansas.
- That GP Stewart Smith in consultation with the designated MWS, designate required coursework for Brad in the following areas:
  - Reformed Theology (Book of Confessions)
  - Reformed Understanding of the Sacraments (Book of Confessions and "Directory for Worship")
  - Presbyterian Polity (Book of Order)

As noted above, the Subcommittee discussed at length his personal views on baptism and communion and lack of knowledge of Presbyterian Government and while this is referred to GP Stewart Smith, it is generally believed that the course of study required will not be extensive.

When that course of study is completed, the Subcommittee will, if requested, examine Brad again, and may specifically approve a recommendation to COM to authorize Brad to perform one or more of the following pastoral functions:

- a. Presiding at the Lord's Supper
- b. Celebrating a baptism
- c. Serving as the officiant for a session-authorized wedding of a congregation.

These authorizations would not need to be paired to a specific denomination, but approval of "fit" will apply.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Brad.

Respectfully Submitted;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don A. Eilbott", written in a cursive style. The signature is enclosed within a circular scribble.

Don A. Eilbott, Moderator