

## **Michigan Area Board of Ordained Ministry Policy on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is taking someone else's work and presenting it as one's own. It is presenting as new and original an idea derived from an existing source.

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) is charged with the responsibility of examining candidates for orders of ministry and conference membership. This examination cannot take place when candidates fail to use their own voice and instead submit work that is not their own. Furthermore, the BOM considers plagiarism to be an act of fraud that involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward. It therefore violates the ethical standards inherent in a called and disciplined life.

The following are examples of plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

To help avoid plagiarism, the following suggestions are recommended in an article from the Claremont School of Theology website:

- Use your own voice. Put what you have to say in your own words.
- Never compose your responses with source material open. Do not cut and paste material into your notes without citing it for yourself.
- Keep quotations brief and few. Use direct quotes as spices in a meal, not the main dish.
- Always introduce quotations (e.g. According to Helmer, "...")
- Summarize or paraphrase material using sentence structure that differs significantly from the source. (Changing a few words, but keeping the same basic sentence structure of the original, is still plagiarism.)
- Provide a citation for all quoted, paraphrased, or summarized material. You may use parenthetical or footnote style; citations are not considered part of the maximum word count.

Quoting clichés or phrases of common knowledge in the Methodist tradition (example: "My heart was strangely warmed", "The world is my parish", etc.) will not be cause for action. However plagiarism of another writer's material is grounds for discussion and action up to dismissal by the Board.