



Mennonite  
Church  
Canada

Mennonite  
Church  
USA

2  
4  
6

## Ministerial Credentialing, Competencies and Education

### Mennonite Church Canada

### Mennonite Church USA

#### I. Background

Representatives from Mennonite Church USA area conferences and pastoral education programs gathered in Glen Eyrie, Colorado, in the fall of 2003. At this meeting a listening committee noted an interest among participants in exploring the development of churchwide educational standards for ministerial credentials.

A task force to explore this interest was formed at the encouragement of conference ministers in December of 2004. The task force began its work in the spring of 2006 and brought a report to the conference ministers meeting in November 2006. The report noted the development of educational standards of ordination by a number of area conferences. The report also indicated that the task force was unable to agree as to the advisability of developing churchwide standards. At their annual meeting in 2006, the conference ministers encouraged the task force to continue its work and bring a recommendation to the conference ministers meeting in November 2007.

A smaller group from the original task force met together in March 2007. This meeting included Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Ertell Whigham, Carlos Romero, Gilberto Flores and Keith Harder. Darrell Baer was planning to be at the meeting but illness prevented him from attending.

Three broad questions were addressed by the task force:

1. What problem(s) and concerns in the current situation need to be addressed?
  - Uneven application of educational and training expectations.
  - Polity provides foundation but more specificity is needed.
  - Confidence in ministerial credentials granted by conferences as pastors move from one conference to another.
  - Interest in raising the bar in terms of competencies and outcomes; what will help move us to fulfill our missional calling?
  - Feedback to pastoral education programs and educators regarding curriculum and pastor-training programs.
  - Meaning and significance of ordination in a post-modern environment.
2. What outcomes are we expecting in the life and ministry of candidates and in the congregations they serve? (See grid titled “Core Competencies for Ministerial Credentialing and Education”)
3. What educational/training programs and/or courses, would help produce these outcomes? (grid)

1 **Conclusion and recommendation:**

2 The task force identified six “**core competencies**” that enhance effectiveness in ministry and should be  
3 considered in the process of testing one’s call to ordained ministry. (The core competencies are based  
4 on the work of a joint meeting of the Theological and Pastoral Education Committee [TPEC] and the  
5 Pastor Education Committee of Mennonite Education Agency in March 2006 – USA.)  
6

7 The task force also identified the “**knowledge base**” and the “**skill set**” that undergirds each  
8 competency. The core competency grid identifies:

- 9 1. six core **competencies**:
  - 10 2. the **knowledge base** and
  - 11 3. **skill set/practices** that provides a foundation for each competency,
  - 12 4. the educational/training, **formation content** that will help develop each competency, and
  - 13 5. a sampling of programs and **delivery systems** that will help form these competencies.
  - 14 6. In addition they identified anticipated **outcomes in the congregation** for each competency.
- 15

16 Because the grid is a short-hand summary, a “**narrative summary**” and a “**commentary**” on the grid  
17 has also been developed. The commentary provides a more detailed exposition on each competency,  
18 what shapes and informs each competency, how these competencies might be developed and what the  
19 congregational outcomes might look like.  
20

21 The task force recommends that those in conferences who are responsible for granting ordination focus  
22 on core competencies as the basis for their discernment in granting ordination. It is recommended that  
23 all candidates for ordination would be examined with these core competencies in view as a primary  
24 basis for ordination.  
25

26 This approach is based on the notion that ordination should enhance effectiveness in ministry. “The  
27 purpose of ministry is to bear fruit in the service of God.” (*Mennonite Polity...*, p. 99) By entrusting an  
28 office of ministry to an individual, the church can expect that the ordained person will function in ways  
29 that will “build up the body of Christ,” (Eph. 4) and help the church fulfill its mission. On this basis,  
30 the process of granting ordination should include the consideration of the kind of competencies and  
31 capacities that will contribute to effective ministry. Focusing on competencies will respect and speak  
32 to those who have had differing degrees of access to formal education opportunities.  
33

34 In section IV, “Qualifications for Ministry,” *The Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*  
35 highlights three major categories: Personal Character, Office and Call and Task or Function. There is  
36 considerable overlap in the core competencies identified by the task force and these “qualifications.”  
37 Ordained ministry will be strengthened and clarified if area church and conference credentialing  
38 committees are more explicit and direct about what kind of competencies are needed for effective  
39 ministry and also form the basis for ordained ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada basing  
40 their decisions on the same agreed-upon criterion.  
41

42 Since particular courses of study, specific academic degree programs, educational standards, and core  
43 curricula are designed to develop competency in ministry, the task force supports the importance of  
44 formal, degree-based training programs and the preference for ordinands to have a Master of Divinity  
45 degree. *The Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership* says that the “Master of Divinity is the  
46 standard degree, but the extent of training will be determined by the group which does the examination

1 for ministry and the congregation to be served” (p. 96). Elsewhere it says that the “Master of Divinity  
2 is highly recommended and encouraged for those in pastoral ministry. Continuing education is also  
3 expected.” (p. 104).

4  
5 In addition to considering a candidate’s education and training, including the concept of competencies  
6 in the examination process will serve to clarify the meaning of ordination and strengthen the practice  
7 of ministry.

8  
9 All candidates for ordination will be engaged in this process of examination, including those with  
10 formal degrees and those who have been previously ordained in another denomination. Deficiencies in  
11 any of these competencies will be addressed by the credentialing body using a variety of delivery  
12 systems in designing additional training or remediation either before licensing for ordination is granted  
13 or as conditions to be met during licensure before ordination is granted. Resources and assessment  
14 tools will be developed to assist credentialing committees in this examination and discernment.

15  
16 The grid will be available to potential candidates for ordained ministry to guide in their self assessment  
17 and discernment. It will also be used by those charged with designing and providing pastoral  
18 education, training and formation programs.

19  
20 The conference/area church credentialing body will retain full authority in determining who is licensed  
21 for the purpose of ordination or granted ordination while basing their decision on the core  
22 competencies that would be used throughout Mennonite Church USA and Canada

23  
24 On November 29, 2007, the conference ministers of Mennonite Church USA affirmed the use of the  
25 six competencies identified in this document in determining who should be licensed toward ordination  
26 and ordained. Area conferences were encouraged to begin using and testing the competencies and the  
27 interview guide in their credentialing process. The experience with this approach and the feedback  
28 was reviewed at the 2008 area church/conference ministers meeting.

29  
30 Subsequently, Mennonite Church Canada tested the document with various leadership groups and area  
31 church ministers and, in consultation with ministerial leadership of Mennonite Church USA  
32 recommended minor changes at the December 2009 area church/conference ministers meeting. Those  
33 changes were accepted and incorporated into the current document. Lee Lever and Karen Martens  
34 Zimmerly edited the final document.

## 35 36 37 38 **II. Narrative description of Ministerial Competencies as a basis for** 39 **Ordination**

40  
41 Assessing competencies as a basis for ordination is not meant to imply that only people with highly  
42 developed competencies should be ordained. All are on a journey in developing their capacity and  
43 potential for ministry and competency in ministry. The process outlined in *The Mennonite Polity of*  
44 *Ministerial Leadership* suggests as much in that the first step toward ordination is a “license toward  
45 ordination.” The granting of this license is then typically followed by at least two years of further  
46 testing and development when another interview is held to assess the calling and capacity of the

1 candidate for ordained ministry before ordination is granted. And even when one is ordained, there is  
2 ongoing, life-long development and formation into ordained ministry. Therefore, competency should  
3 be thought of as having the potential and capacity for competent ministry.  
4

5 We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and  
6 Mennonite Church Canada will be **deeply and firmly grounded in the biblical story** and text. This  
7 involves knowing the biblical narrative, being grounded in it and being continuously formed by it. It  
8 involves being immersed in the biblical story and dwelling in it. It also involves knowing how the  
9 text/Canon came into being in the early Christian community. It involves interpreting and  
10 understanding the Bible from a Christological perspective, where the life, death, resurrection and  
11 teaching of Jesus are the keys to interpreting the Bible; where truth is anchored in Jesus Christ and the  
12 scriptures that tell his story.  
13

14 Ordination for Christian ministry also includes the competence to communicate the message of the  
15 Bible through preaching and teaching those in the church and beyond the church. It includes the  
16 capacity to help others develop sound interpretive skills, understand the meaning of the biblical text  
17 and apply it to daily life. It includes helping the church become a “hermeneutic community” where  
18 congregates search the scriptures together and are formed by the Bible in its internal life and its  
19 witness in the world.  
20

21 We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
22 will **understand and embody core Anabaptist** principles. This will include awareness of the issues  
23 and theological principles that have informed Anabaptist/Mennonite history, and continue to inform  
24 Anabaptist values and witness as these are formulated in *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite*  
25 *Perspective*. This will involve a commitment to practice and teach Anabaptist/Mennonite principles  
26 and to minister, witness and lead in a way that is consistent with these principles, including  
27 discipleship, community and mission (peacemaking and evangelism).  
28

29 We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
30 will give evidence of a **spirituality that is continually being shaped by the everlasting love of God,**  
31 **the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.**  
32 Those in Christian ministry will be shaped by an active relationship with the triune God, a commitment  
33 to follow Jesus and his way, and an ongoing openness to God’s leading and the transforming work of  
34 the Holy Spirit. They will have a keen interest in and eagerness to discern what God is doing in the  
35 world.  
36

37 Those who are ordained will have the capacity and willingness to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus  
38 Christ in word and deed (I Peter 3) and the capacity to equip others to bear witness to Jesus and his  
39 way. They will also have the capacity to provide healthy pastoral care and counsel that contributes to  
40 the spiritual formation of individuals, the faith community and those beyond the church.  
41

42 We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
43 will **have a healthy sense of self and a capacity to enter into and maintain healthy relationships**  
44 **with others.** This involves a clear and vital call to ordained ministry and an active ongoing  
45 discernment of spiritual gifts, ministry capacities (e.g. Romans 12:3) and ministry roles (e.g. Ephesians  
46 4). This involves the capacity to take clear stands and the capacity to follow one’s convictions without

1 imposing those convictions onto others and the capacity to disagree with others without rancor. It  
2 involves a healthy respect for diversity and the capacity to live creatively with differences and conflict  
3 (See *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love.*). It involves a commitment to and capacity for life-long  
4 learning and a healthy curiosity about life, self and others.

5  
6 Those who are ordained will understand and accept appropriate boundaries, including sexual  
7 boundaries in relationships. They will recognize the importance of accountability in monitoring  
8 boundaries and managing the stress that often accompanies ministry.

9  
10 We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
11 will have the competence to **recognize, interpret and creatively engage their ministry context.** This  
12 involves the inter-cultural, inter-faith, ecological, ecclesial and global environments of ministry. It  
13 involves learning the language and values of those to whom one is called to minister and the capacity  
14 for inter-cultural and ecumenical dialogue. It involves an awareness of systemic racism and a vision  
15 for being an anti-racist church.

16  
17 This also involves helping the church to engage its context of ministry. While seeking to help the  
18 church engage its context it is recognized that the church is indispensable in the proclamation of God's  
19 work in the world (Eph. 3.10) and meant to function as a visible sign of God's reign in the world.

20  
21 We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
22 will have a **capacity for leadership.** Ordained leaders of the church will recognize and tend to their  
23 position (office), person and tasks. Ordained leadership involves the conferred authority that comes  
24 from one's position and the earned authority that comes from one's person, relationships and  
25 functioning. Ordained leaders who accept the conferred authority of their office and the earned  
26 authority in their practice will lead with clarity and resolve.

27  
28 Leadership that is consistent with Anabaptist values will be rooted and grounded in one's relationship  
29 with Jesus and will aspire to lead as Jesus led. This kind of leadership will cultivate an environment of  
30 trust and confidence where the gifts and ministry capacities of others are collaboratively evoked and  
31 empowered. Leaders who are clear about their own gifts and calling will recognize that they do not  
32 have all the gifts needed by the church (Eph 4) and will respect, welcome and enhance the leadership  
33 of those with other gifts. Leadership that is empowered through ordination will be accountable to the  
34 church that grants authority for ministry.

35  
36 Ordained leadership will have the capacity to competently lead the church in its public rituals and to be  
37 an able spokesperson for the church in its ecumenical relationships. Ordained leadership will have a  
38 basic understanding and appreciation for systemic and organizational dynamics and be able to help  
39 lead in organizational change and help lead the church in fulfilling its missional calling.

### 40 41 42 43 **III. See "Ministerial Credentialing, Competencies and Education Grid."**

44  
45 **Grid:** Separate 8 ½ by 14 document.

## IV. Commentary on Competencies

### **Biblical Story:**

We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada will be **deeply and firmly grounded in the biblical story** and text. This involves knowing the biblical narrative, being grounded in it and being continuously formed by it. It involves being immersed in the biblical story and dwelling in it. It also involves knowing how the text/Canon came into being. It involves interpreting and understanding the Bible from a Christological perspective, where the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Christ are key to interpreting the Bible; where truth is anchored in Jesus and the scriptures that tell his story.

Ordination for Christian ministry also includes the competence to teach others the Biblical story, to help others develop sound interpretive skills, understand its meaning and apply it to personal daily life. It includes helping the church as a “hermeneutical community” to search the scriptures together and be formed by the Bible in its internal life and its witness in the world.

#### 1. Knowledge

- The Bible and its formation
- Biblical content
- Hermeneutical principles
- Various cultural backgrounds of biblical texts

#### 2. Skills / practices

- Effective preaching and teaching the Bible
- Interpretative and exegetical skills
- Creates a hermeneutical community

#### 3. Formation content

- Bible survey course (college level)
- Biblical hermeneutics course that includes the Anabaptist hermeneutic

#### 4. Delivery system

- Formal college or graduate level course; diploma and certificate options

#### 5. Congregational outcomes

- Congregation life, values and processes will be formed by the biblical story
- View of truth will be anchored in Jesus and the Bible

### **Anabaptist History and Theology:**

We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada will understand and embody core Anabaptist values. This will include awareness of the issues and theological principles that have informed Anabaptist/Mennonite history, and continues to inform Anabaptist values and witness as these are formulated in *Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective*. This will involve a commitment to practice and teach Anabaptist/Mennonite values and to minister, witness and lead in a way that is consistent with these values.

1. Knowledge
  - Ability to recognize the major streams of Anabaptist history and their historical contexts
  - Ability to identify core elements of Anabaptist theology while recognizing that there are multiple Anabaptist histories and streams that are reflected in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and subsequent Mennonite history
  - *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*
  - *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*
2. Skills
  - Capacity to communicate the Anabaptist/Mennonite story
  - Capacity to transfer the Anabaptist/Mennonite story to one's ministry context
  - Interpret the Bible with an Anabaptist hermeneutic and encourage the development of a "hermeneutic community" in the congregation
3. Formation resources/content
  - Anabaptist/Mennonite college level survey course
  - *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*
  - *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*
  - Other basic texts
4. Delivery systems
  - College-level course(s)
  - Formal class in Anabaptist theology and history
5. Congregational outcomes
  - Congregations will be formed by Anabaptist/Mennonite values
  - Congregations will actively claim Mennonite identity
  - Congregations will teach Anabaptist/Mennonite values (e.g. peacemaking, discipleship, community)

**Christian Spirituality and Discipleship:**

We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada will give evidence of a spirituality that is continually being shaped by the everlasting love of God, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Those in Christian ministry will be shaped by an active relationship with the triune God of the Bible and a commitment to follow Jesus and his way, and an ongoing openness to God's leading and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. They will have a keen interest in and eagerness to discern what God is doing in the world.

Those who are ordained will have the capacity and willingness to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed (I Peter 3) and to equip others to bear witness to Jesus and his way.

1. Knowledge
  - Understanding theology of the triune God that is revealed in the Bible
  - Recognize and appreciate the variety of spiritualities and spiritual practices, e.g. contemplative, charismatic
  - Ongoing transformation by "renewing of your minds" (Romans 12:1)
2. Skills
  - Spirituality is a lived experience through scripture, prayer, ongoing formation

- 1                   • Commitment to following Jesus in life
- 2                   • Appreciates knowing Christ through following Christ (Hans Denk)
- 3
- 4           3. Formation content
- 5                   • Practicing spiritual disciplines
- 6                   • Learning about God’s purposes, love and grace through lived experience
- 7           4. Delivery systems
- 8                   • Class, seminar in spiritual disciplines
- 9                   • Spiritual discipline practices
- 10                  • Spiritual direction
- 11           5. Outcomes in congregation
- 12                   • Congregation actively seeking after and formed by God’s purposes
- 13                   • Congregation formed by an active awareness of God’s truth, love and grace in
- 14                    worship and interpersonal relationships
- 15                   • Congregation is challenged to actively follow Jesus in everyday life
- 16

17           **Self-Understanding and Self-Awareness, Emotional Intelligence:**

18           We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and  
19           Canada will have a healthy sense of self and a capacity to enter into and maintain healthy  
20           relationships with others. This involves a clear and vital call to ordained ministry and an active  
21           ongoing discernment of spiritual gifts, ministry capacities (e.g. Romans 12:3) and ministry roles  
22           (e.g. Ephesians 4). This involves the capacity to take clear stands and the capacity to follow  
23           one’s convictions without imposing those convictions onto others and the capacity to disagree  
24           with others without rancor. It involves a healthy respect for diversity and the capacity to  
25           creatively live with differences and conflict. (See *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love*.) It involves  
26           a commitment to and capacity for life-long learning and a healthy curiosity about life, self and  
27           others.

28

29           Those who are ordained will understand and accept appropriate boundaries in relationships.  
30           They will recognize the importance of accountability in monitoring boundaries and managing the  
31           stress that often accompanies ministry.

- 32           1. Knowledge
- 33                   • Clear awareness of one’s calling as a beloved child of God and calling in
- 34                    ministry
- 35                   • Self knowledge and self understanding
- 36                    ○ Gifts and abilities
- 37                    ○ Influence of family of origin and birth/gender order
- 38                   • Understands concept of boundaries and the potential to abuse the power that
- 39                    comes with the ministerial office
- 40           2. Skills
- 41                   • Healthy and accurate sense of self
- 42                   • Self definition (Romans 12:3)
- 43                    ○ Calling to faith and ministry – inner and outer call (church)
- 44                    ○ Clarity of values and convictions
- 45                    ○ Gifts/abilities



- Self regulation
    - Recognizes and practices limits and boundaries (does not impose self onto others or allow others to impose themselves onto her or himself)
    - Capacity to listen and ask questions in tense situations (not overly reactive)
    - Does not need to conform to others or require others to confirm to him or herself
    - Understands potential for the abuse of power in the pastoral office
    - Recognizes vulnerabilities and what prompts reactivity
    - Builds and maintains healthy relationships with others
    - Resists temptation to do what others are called to do and capable of doing themselves; embraces call to “equip the saints for ministry” in Ephesians 4
  - Life-long learning from life experience, seminars, workshops, classes, reading, etc.
  - Healthy sense of curiosity about self and life in general
  - Balanced engagement of right and left part of the brain
    - appreciates and recognizes importance of rational thinking capacity and emotional process
    - values and engages the arts and aesthetics
3. Formation content
- Learnings from life experience
  - Bowen family systems theory e.g. Ed Friedman, *From Generation to Generation*
  - Appreciates influence of family of origin (strengths and weaknesses)
  - Engaging the arts as a resource to integrate and access right brain resources
4. Delivery systems
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)
  - Formal class in family systems theory
  - Class in guided experience in ministerial formation
  - Coaching relationship
5. Congregational outcomes
- Congregation will grow in capacity to embrace differences and diversity
  - Gifts of congregants will be engaged as pastoral leadership embraces the call to “equip the saints for ministry” (Ephesians 4).

**Contextual awareness:**

We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada will have the competence to recognize, interpret and creatively engage their ministry context. This involves the inter-cultural, inter-faith, ecological, global and ecclesial environment of ministry. It involves learning the language and values of those to whom one is called to minister and the capacity for inter-cultural dialogue and relationships.

1. Knowledge

- Aware of inter-relatedness of all things
  - Creation theology
  - Creation awareness
- Cultural environment

- Inter-cultural dynamics
- Systemic Racism
- Inter-faith context of one's ministry

## 2. Skills

- Seeks out and engages cross cultural experiences
- Actively cultivates the capacity to learn the language of others
- Asks questions for understanding and learning from others

## 3. Formation content

- Inter-cultural experiences
- Anti-racism training
- The created order in all of its God ordained diversity

## 4. Delivery systems

- Learning experiences (internships, sabbaticals, classes) in other cultures
- Voluntary service
- Seminars, workshops

## 5. Congregational outcomes

- Inclusive and respectful of multiple cultures
- Flexible
- Capacity to incorporate cultural diversity in worship, teaching and relationships
- Global awareness
- Engages its context

### **Leadership:**

We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada will have a **capacity for leadership**. Ordained leaders of the church will recognize and tend one's position (office), person and tasks. Ordained leadership involves the conferred authority that comes from one's position and the earned authority that comes from one's person, relationships and functioning. Ordained leaders who accept the conferred authority of their office and the earned authority in their practice will lead with clarity and resolve.

Leadership that is consistent with Anabaptist values will be rooted and grounded in one's relationship with Jesus and will aspire to lead as Jesus led. This kind of leadership will cultivate an environment of trust and confidence where the gifts and ministry capacities of others are collaboratively evoked and empowered. Leaders who are clear about their own gifts and calling will recognize that they do not have all that are needed (e.g. Eph 4) and will respect and welcome the leadership of others who have other gifts. Leadership that is empowered through ordination will be accountable to the church that grants authority for ministry.

Ordained leadership will have the capacity to competently lead the church in its public rituals and to be an able spokesperson for the church in its ecumenical relationships. Ordained leadership will have a basic understanding and appreciation for systemic and organizational dynamics and be able to help lead in organizational change and help lead the church in fulfilling its missional calling.

## 1. Knowledge

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25
- 26
- 27
- 28
- 29
- 30
- 31
- 32
- 33
- 34
- Systemic and organizational dynamics (e.g. whole is bigger than its parts, everything is related to everything else)
  - Importance of healthy leadership to organizational health and mission
  - Appreciation of the importance of leading congregation in its public ministry (e.g. worship, weddings, funerals)
  - Understands and embraces “office” dimension of ministerial leadership (*A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*)
2. Skills
- Public ministries (preaching, teaching, leading funerals, weddings, dedications, healing ministries and other rituals of the church)
  - Encourages and empowers the leadership and ministry gifts of others (Polity)
  - Encourages and promotes an atmosphere of trust and safety in the congregation (See Alan Roxburgh and Alan Romunuck, *Missional Leader*)
  - Encourages and models risk taking and learning from failure
3. Formation content
- Capacity to identify where change is needed and capacity to help develop change process strategies
  - Capacity to receive feedback - both critique and affirmation.
4. Delivery systems
- Ministry formation class
  - Leadership literature
  - Leadership seminars, workshops
  - Leadership coaching
5. Congregational outcomes
- Changes will emerge from the bottom up rather than be imposed from the top down
  - Missional engagement with its environment and context
  - Clear leadership roles and active engagement of others in ministries within and beyond the congregation
  - Ongoing transformation
  - Connection with and accountability to congregations, conferences/area churches and agencies of Mennonite Church USA/Councils of Mennonite Church Canada

1 **APPENDIX A**

2  
3 **Interview guide to assist conference credentialing bodies assess core**  
4 **competencies**

5  
6 **Introduction:**

- 7 • This interview guide focuses more on how the candidate thinks and approaches the  
8 competencies than on eliciting correct or prescribed answers. This is not to say that there are  
9 no correct answers. *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* outlines the current  
10 understanding and teaching of Mennonite Church USA and Canada and should serve as a  
11 primary point of reference in the interview and discernment process. The candidate and the  
12 credentialing body should be familiar with this resource and it is expected that its perspectives  
13 will be reflected in the candidate’s responses.
- 14 • It is not expected that all the questions below would be asked in every interview; it would be  
15 good to ask at least one or two questions in each of the six competencies.
- 16 • The candidate would be asked to be prepared to respond to any of these questions but the  
17 credentialing body would select which questions seem most relevant and appropriate for any  
18 given candidate.
- 19 • A credentialing body could also ask the candidate to submit written responses to all of the  
20 questions.
- 21 • It will be important that the credentialing body discuss these questions in advance to have as  
22 much clarity as possible on what constitutes appropriate responses. This could be a valuable  
23 exercise for the body in its orientation and preparation. *(Additional aids in evaluating a*  
24 *candidate’s responses are provided in italics after some of the questions. The commentary is an*  
25 *additional resource.)*
- 26 • The credentialing body should be ready to judge the candidates responses to help the candidates  
27 fitness and readiness for ministerial credentialing and/or where additional study or remediation  
28 is needed to satisfy the credentialing body’s requirements.
- 29 • The credentialing body should also be familiar with and consult the candidate’s Ministerial  
30 Leadership Information Form (MLI) and references. Additional resources may also be used in  
31 making their assessment.

32  
33 **1. A candidate for ordination will be firmly grounded in the Bible**

- 34 a. What gives unity to the biblical story as it unfolds in the two testaments?
- 35 b. How has the biblical story shaped you and how does it continue to shape you and your  
36 ministry?
- 37 c. What principles of interpretation of the Bible are important to you and how do you  
38 apply them in preaching?
- 39 d. Describe a time when you were involved in a situation where sincere Christians had a  
40 fundamental disagreement about the interpretation of scripture. How did you respond to  
41 this situation?
- 42  
43  
44

- 1       **2. A candidate for ordination will understand and embody core Anabaptist principles**  
2           a. Describe how and why the early Anabaptists were in agreement with and differed from  
3           other parts of the Protestant reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.  
4           b. Comment on this saying by an early Anabaptist leader: “No one may truly know Christ  
5           unless one follows him in life and no one may follow Christ without first knowing  
6           him.”  
7           c. Talk about how you would introduce someone to Anabaptism who is unfamiliar to its  
8           way of thinking and living.  
9           d. How would you respond to the notion that Anabaptist principles are a hindrance to  
10          mission?  
11          e. How do you understand the relationship between Anabaptist principles and what it  
12          means to be a Mennonite?  
13  
14       **3. A candidate for ordination will give evidence of a spirituality that is continually being**  
15       **shaped by the everlasting love of God the Father, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus**  
16       **Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit**  
17           a. Talk about your relationship with the God that is revealed in the Bible.  
18           b. Talk about the individual and corporate practices that nurture your relationship with  
19           God.  
20           c. Talk about a situation where you had the opportunity to share your Christian faith with  
21           another person.  
22           d. How has your experience in the church influenced and shaped your relationship with  
23           God?  
24  
25       **4. A candidate for ordination will be on a journey toward greater self awareness and self-**  
26       **understanding and will have a capacity to enter into and maintain healthy relationships**  
27       **with others in the church and beyond**  
28           a. What have you learned about yourself as a ministering person? How would you  
29           describe your particular gifts for ministry?  
30           b. Talk about your relationships with your parents and others in your family of origin.  
31           c. Talk about your calling and identity as a minister. What will it mean to you to be  
32           ordained?  
33           d. Talk about a situation when you held a minority viewpoint that was important to you.  
34           How did you give expression to that viewpoint? What did you experience in this  
35           situation?  
36                       *What is the candidate’s appreciation for diversity of opinion and perspective?*  
37                       *“Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love” is a valuable resource with which every*  
38                       *candidate should be familiar.*  
39           e. What are the appropriate boundaries, including sexual boundaries that you will  
40           maintain in your life and your ministry?  
41           f. How would you respond to a situation where people in the congregation where you are  
42           serving think the congregation should leave the regional church and denomination?  
43           g. Talk about a situation when you were called upon to intervene in a crises situation.  
44           How did you decide what to do?  
45                       *People in ministry and other helping professions are sometimes tempted to rescue*  
46                       *people in need or crises and to become overly responsible for the welfare of others*

1 *in a way that undermines the responsibility of the one being cared for and is*  
2 *detrimental to the health of the caregiver. Is there evidence that the candidate is*  
3 *able to recognize when an impulse to help may not actually be helpful?*

4 **5. A candidate for ordination will have the capacity to recognize, interpret and creatively**  
5 **engage his/her context in the world and help the church engage its context**

- 6 a. How would you engage a cultural context that is unfamiliar to you?  
7 b. How would you go about assessing the “emotional field” (e.g. level of anxiety or trust)  
8 in a ministry context?  
9 c. How does your baptism and calling to be a ministering person impact how you relate to  
10 your cultural and social environment?  
11 d. What is racism and how has it affected your life?  
12 e. How would you relate to other Christian communions in your context of ministry?  
13 f. What is the place of the church in God’s mission in the world? What does it mean for  
14 the church to engage the world by being a sign of God’s love for the world and God’s  
15 reign in the world?  
16

17 **6. A candidate for ordination will have the capacity for leadership**

- 18 a. What is the leadership role of an ordained minister?  
19 b. Talk about a situation where you provided leadership in a ministry role. What did you  
20 experience?  
21 c. What leadership principles are important to you?  
22 d. How would you work on evoking the gifts, equipping other for ministry and increase  
23 their leadership capacity?

## APPENDIX B

### **Institutions and Programs Offering Education and Training in Ministerial Competencies in Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA**

#### 1. Seminaries

- A. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN
- B. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Great Plains Extension, Newton, KS
- C. Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, VA
- D. Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, Toronto, ON

#### 2. Colleges/Universities

- A. Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas
- B. Bluffton University, Bluffton, OH
- C. Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, MB
- D. Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, BC
- E. Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, ON
- F. Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA
- G. Study and Training for Effective Pastoral Ministry (STEP) (EMU)
- H. Hesston College Pastoral Ministries Program, Hesston, KS

#### 3. Certificate Programs

- A. IBA (Spanish Language)
- B. Semilla (Central America)
- C. STEP (Lancaster Conference)
- D. Damascus Road Training

#### 4. Other educational institutions with Anabaptist roots and affinity such as Mennonite Brethren or Church of the Brethren Schools in Canada and USA.

Edited and Updated March 2010

Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister, Mennonite Church Canada

Lee Lever, Director, Denominational Ministry, Mennonite Church USA