



5 **Ministerial Credentialing, Competencies and Education**  
6 **Mennonite Church Canada**  
7 **Mennonite Church USA**  
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9

10 **I. Background**

11 Representatives from Mennonite Church USA area conferences and pastoral education programs  
12 gathered in Glen Eyrie, Colorado, in the fall of 2003. At this meeting a listening committee noted an  
13 interest among participants in exploring the development of churchwide educational standards for  
14 ministerial credentials.  
15

16 A task force to explore this interest was formed at the encouragement of conference ministers in  
17 December of 2004. The task force began its work in the spring of 2006 and brought a report to the  
18 conference ministers meeting in November 2006. The report noted the development of educational  
19 standards of ordination by a number of area conferences. The report also indicated that the task force  
20 was unable to agree as to the advisability of developing churchwide standards. At their annual meeting  
21 in 2006, the conference ministers encouraged the task force to continue its work and bring a  
22 recommendation to the conference ministers meeting in November 2007.  
23

24 A smaller group from the original task force met together in March 2007. This meeting included:  
25 Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Ertell Whigham, Carlos Romero, Gilberto Flores and Keith Harder. Darrell  
26 Baer was planning to be at the meeting but illness prevented him from attending.  
27

28 Three broad questions were addressed by the task force:

- 29 1. What problem(s) and concerns in the current situation need to be addressed?
  - 30 • Uneven application of educational and training expectations.
  - 31 • Polity provides foundation but more specificity is needed.
  - 32 • Confidence in ministerial credentials granted by conferences as pastors move  
33 from one conference to another.
  - 34 • Interest in raising the bar in terms of competencies and outcomes; what will help  
35 move us to fulfill our missional calling?
  - 36 • Feedback to pastoral education programs and educators regarding curriculum  
37 and pastor-training programs.
  - 38 • Meaning and significance of ordination in a post-modern environment.
- 39 2. What outcomes are we expecting in the life and ministry of candidates and in the  
40 congregations they serve? (See grid titled “Core Competencies for Ministerial  
41 Credentialing and Education”)
- 42 3. What educational/training programs and/or courses, would help produce these outcomes?  
43 (grid)  
44

45 **Conclusion and recommendation:**

46 The task force identified six “**core competencies**” that enhance effectiveness in ministry and should be  
47 considered in the process of testing one’s call to ordained ministry. (The core competencies are based

48 on the work of a joint meeting of the Theological and Pastoral Education Committee [TPEC] and the  
49 Pastor Education Committee of Mennonite Education Agency in March 2006 – USA.)  
50 The task force also identified the “**knowledge base**” and the “**skill set**” that undergirds each  
51 competency. The core competency grid identifies:

- 52 1. six core **competencies**:
- 53 2. the **knowledge base** and
- 54 3. **skill set/practices** that provides a foundation for each competency,
- 55 4. the educational/training, **formation content** that will help develop each competency, and
- 56 5. a sampling of programs and **delivery systems** that will help form these competencies.
- 57 6. In addition they identified anticipated **outcomes in the congregation** for each competency.

58  
59 Because the grid is a short-hand summary, a “**narrative summary**” and a “**commentary**” on the grid  
60 has also been developed. The commentary provides a more detailed exposition on each competency,  
61 what shapes and informs each competency, how these competencies might be developed and what the  
62 congregational outcomes might look like.

63  
64 The task force recommends that those in conferences who are responsible for granting ordination focus  
65 on core competencies as the basis for their discernment in granting ordination. It is recommended that  
66 all candidates for ordination would be examined with these core competencies in view as a primary  
67 basis for ordination.

68  
69 This approach is based on the notion that ordination should enhance effectiveness in ministry. “The  
70 purpose of ministry is to bear fruit in the service of God.” (*A Shared Understanding of Ministerial  
71 Leadership: Polity Manual for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA*, p. 23) By  
72 entrusting an office of ministry to an individual, the church can expect that the ordained person will  
73 function in ways that will “build up the body of Christ,” (Eph. 4) and help the church fulfill its mission.  
74 On this basis, the process of granting ordination should include the consideration of the kind of  
75 competencies and capacities that will contribute to effective ministry. Focusing on competencies will  
76 respect and speak to those who have had differing degrees of access to formal education opportunities.

77  
78 In section II, “Qualifications for Ministry,” *A Shared Understanding for Ministerial Leadership: Polity  
79 Manual for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA* highlights three major categories:  
80 Personal Character, and Call and Function. There is considerable overlap in the core competencies  
81 identified by the task force and these “qualifications.” Ordained ministry will be strengthened and  
82 clarified if area church and conference credentialing committees are more explicit and direct about  
83 what kind of competencies are needed for effective ministry and also form the basis for ordained  
84 ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada basing their decisions on the same agreed-upon  
85 criterion.

86  
87 Since particular courses of study, specific academic degree programs, educational standards, and core  
88 curricula are designed to develop competency in ministry, the task force supports the importance of  
89 formal, degree-based training programs and the preference for ordinands to have a Master of Divinity  
90 degree. *A Shared Understanding for Ministerial Leadership: Polity Manual for Mennonite Church  
91 Canada and Mennonite Church USA* says that “while the Master of Divinity degree is the  
92 recommended standard for pastoral ministry, it is equally important for a pastor to be willing to grow  
93 and learn. Continuing education is the expected standard practice for all pastors. It is vitally important  
94 to sustain ministry.” (p. 29).

95  
96 In addition to considering a candidate’s education and training, including the concept of competencies  
97 in the examination process will serve to clarify the meaning of ordination and strengthen the practice  
98 of ministry.

99 All candidates for ordination will be engaged in this process of examination, including those with  
100 formal degrees and those who have been previously ordained in another denomination. Deficiencies in  
101 any of these competencies will be addressed by the credentialing body using a variety of delivery  
102 systems in designing additional training or remediation either before licensing for ordination is granted  
103 or as conditions to be met during licensure before ordination is granted. Resources and assessment  
104 tools will be developed to assist credentialing committees in this examination and discernment.  
105

106 The grid will be available to potential candidates for ordained ministry to guide in their self-assessment  
107 and discernment. It will also be used by those charged with designing and providing pastoral  
108 education, training and formation programs.  
109

110 The conference/area church credentialing body will retain full authority in determining who is licensed  
111 for the purpose of ordination or granted ordination while basing their decision on the core  
112 competencies that would be used throughout Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
113

114 On November 29, 2007, the conference ministers of Mennonite Church USA affirmed the use of the  
115 six competencies identified in this document in determining who should be licensed toward ordination  
116 and ordained. Area conferences were encouraged to begin using and testing the competencies and the  
117 interview guide in their credentialing process. The experience with this approach and the feedback  
118 was reviewed at the 2008 area church/conference ministers meeting.  
119

120 Subsequently, Mennonite Church Canada tested the document with various leadership groups and area  
121 church ministers and, in consultation with ministerial leadership of Mennonite Church USA  
122 recommended minor changes at the December 2009 area church/conference ministers meeting. Those  
123 changes were accepted and incorporated into the current document. Lee Lever and Karen Martens  
124 Zimmerly edited the final document.  
125

126 In December 2013 at their annual meeting, Area Church/Conference Ministers along with AMBS and  
127 EMS representatives reviewed this document along with the *Ministerial Credentialing, Six Core*  
128 *Competencies and Education Grid* and discussed some significant changes. A task force (Lois John  
129 Kaufmann, chair, David Martin, Stephen Kriss and Clarence Rempel) was appointed to review the two  
130 documents and bring an updated version to the December 2014 annual meeting of Area  
131 Church/Conference Ministers. AMBS and EMS representatives were present for that discussion as  
132 well. Additional suggestions were made to the documents which the Task Force incorporated into the  
133 documents.  
134

## 135 **II. Narrative description of Ministerial Competencies as a basis for Ordination**

136 Assessing competencies as a basis for ordination is not meant to imply that only people with highly  
137 developed competencies should be ordained. All are on a journey in developing their capacity and  
138 potential for ministry and competency in ministry. The process outlined in *A Shared Understanding*  
139 *for Ministerial Leadership: Polity Manual for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA*  
140 suggests as much in that the first step toward ordination is a “license toward ordination.” The granting  
141 of this license is then typically followed by at least two years of further testing and development when  
142 another interview is held to assess the calling and capacity of the candidate for ordained ministry  
143 before ordination is granted. And even when one is ordained, there is ongoing, life-long development  
144 and formation into ordained ministry. Therefore, competency should be thought of as having the  
145 potential and capacity for competent ministry.  
146

147 We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and  
148 Mennonite Church Canada will be **deeply and firmly grounded in the biblical story** and text. This  
149 involves knowing the biblical narrative, being grounded in it and being continuously formed by it. It

150 involves being immersed in the biblical story and dwelling in it. It also involves knowing how the  
151 text/Canon came into being in the early Christian community. It involves interpreting and  
152 understanding the Bible from a Christological perspective, where the life, death, resurrection and  
153 teaching of Jesus are the keys to interpreting the Bible; where truth is anchored in Jesus Christ and the  
154 scriptures that tell his story.

155  
156 Ordination for Christian ministry also includes the competence to communicate the message of the  
157 Bible through preaching and teaching those in the church and beyond the church. It includes the  
158 capacity to help others develop sound interpretive skills, understand the meaning of the biblical text  
159 and apply it to daily life. It includes helping the church become a “hermeneutic community” where  
160 congregates search the scriptures together and are formed by the Bible in its internal life and its  
161 witness in the world.

162  
163 We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
164 will **understand and embody core Anabaptist** principles. This will include awareness of the issues  
165 and theological principles that have informed Anabaptist/Mennonite history, and continue to inform  
166 Anabaptist values and witness as these are formulated in *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite*  
167 *Perspective*. This will involve a commitment to practice and teach Anabaptist/Mennonite principles  
168 and to minister, witness and lead in a way that is consistent with these principles, including  
169 discipleship, community and mission (peacemaking and evangelism).

170  
171 We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
172 will give evidence of a **spirituality that is continually being shaped by the everlasting love of God,**  
173 **the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.**  
174 Those in Christian ministry will be shaped by an active relationship with the triune God, a commitment  
175 to follow Jesus and his way, and an ongoing openness to God’s leading and the transforming work of  
176 the Holy Spirit. They will have a keen interest in and eagerness to discern what God is doing in the  
177 world.

178  
179 Those who are ordained will have the capacity and willingness to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus  
180 Christ in word and deed (I Peter 3) and the capacity to equip others to bear witness to Jesus and his  
181 way. They will also have the capacity to provide healthy pastoral care and counsel that contributes to  
182 the spiritual formation of individuals, the faith community and those beyond the church.

183  
184 We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
185 will **have a healthy sense of self and a capacity to enter into and maintain healthy relationships**  
186 with others. This involves a clear and vital call to ordained ministry and an active ongoing  
187 discernment of spiritual gifts, ministry capacities (e.g. Romans 12:3) and ministry roles (e.g. Ephesians  
188 4). This involves the capacity to take clear stands and the capacity to follow one’s convictions without  
189 imposing those convictions onto others and the capacity to disagree with others without rancor. It  
190 involves a healthy respect for diversity and the capacity to live creatively with differences and conflict  
191 (See *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love*). It involves a commitment to and capacity for life-long  
192 learning and a healthy curiosity about life, self and others.

193  
194 Those who are ordained will understand and accept appropriate boundaries, including sexual  
195 boundaries in relationships. They will recognize the importance of accountability in monitoring  
196 boundaries and managing the stress that often accompanies ministry.

197  
198 We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
199 will have the competence to **provide focused missional engagement and leadership** within their  
200 ministry context. We believe that the church is indispensable in the proclamation of God’s work in the

201 world (Eph. 3.10) and meant to function as a visible sign of God’s reign. In the postmodern, post-  
202 Christendom social context that is increasingly characteristic of North American society, it is  
203 imperative that pastoral leaders conceive of their role as more than “chaplains” to the faith community.  
204 It is critical that congregations understand the quality of their communal and spiritual life as a gift that  
205 God is calling them to share with the people in their neighbourhood. At this point in its history, the  
206 Church is calling on pastoral leaders and lay leaders to collaborate in exercising strong missional  
207 leadership so that our congregations can actively engage the local and global community with the  
208 peace of Jesus Christ.

209  
210 Pastors and congregational leaders require the skills to **recognize and interpret where God is at**  
211 **work in their ministry context and understand that as a “sent people” God is inviting the**  
212 **congregation and its members to be ambassadors of Jesus’ peace.** This involves developing  
213 missional leadership competencies, an awareness of the social, political, and economic realities of the  
214 local community, attunement to where the Spirit is at work beyond the Church, and an appreciation of  
215 the intercultural, interfaith, ecological, ecclesial and global environments of ministry. It also involves  
216 an awareness of systemic racism and a vision for being an anti-racist church.

217 |  
218 We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada  
219 will have a **capacity for leadership**. Ordained leaders of the church will recognize and tend to their  
220 position (office), person and tasks. Ordained leadership involves the conferred authority that comes  
221 from one’s position and the earned authority that comes from one’s person, relationships and  
222 functioning. Ordained leaders who accept the conferred authority of their office and the earned  
223 authority in their practice will lead with clarity and resolve.

224  
225 Leadership that is consistent with Anabaptist values will be rooted and grounded in one’s relationship  
226 with Jesus and will aspire to lead as Jesus led. This kind of leadership will cultivate an environment of  
227 trust and confidence where the gifts and ministry capacities of others are collaboratively evoked and  
228 empowered. Leaders who are clear about their own gifts and calling will recognize that they do not  
229 have all the gifts needed by the church (Eph 4) and will respect, welcome and enhance the leadership  
230 of those with other gifts. Leadership that is empowered through ordination will be accountable to the  
231 church that grants authority for ministry.

232  
233 Ordained leadership will have the capacity to competently lead the church in its public rituals and to be  
234 an able spokesperson for the church in its ecumenical relationships. Ordained leadership will have a  
235 basic understanding and appreciation for systemic and organizational dynamics and be able to help  
236 lead in organizational change and help lead the church in fulfilling its missional calling.

237  
238 **III. See “Ministerial Credentialing, Six Core Competencies and Education Grid.”**

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240 **IV. Commentary on Competencies**

241 **Biblical Story:**

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

250

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

255 1. Knowledge

- 256 • The Bible and its formation
- 257 • Biblical content
- 258 • Hermeneutical principles
- 259 • Various cultural backgrounds of biblical texts

260 2. Skills / practices

- 261 • Effective preaching and teaching the Bible and proclamation of Good News
- 262 • Interpretative and exegetical skills
- 263 • Reading scripture missionally
- 264 • Creates a hermeneutical community

265 3. Formation content

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

268 4. Delivery system

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

270 5. Congregational outcomes

- 271 • Congregation life, values and processes will be formed by the biblical story
- 272 • View of truth will be anchored in Jesus and the Bible
- 273 • Basic biblical literacy

274  
275 **Anabaptist History and Theology:**

276 We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and  
277 Canada will **understand and embody core Anabaptist values**. This will include awareness of  
278 the issues and theological principles that have informed Anabaptist/Mennonite history, and  
279 continues to inform Anabaptist values and witness as these are formulated in *Confession of Faith*  
280 *in Mennonite Perspective*. This will involve a commitment to practice and teach  
281 Anabaptist/Mennonite values and to minister, witness and lead in a way that is consistent with  
282 these values. Ministers will grow in knowledge of the global Anabaptist story that honors the  
283 diversity of people who are Anabaptist today.

284 1. Knowledge

- 285 • Ability to recognize the major streams of Anabaptist history and their historical  
286 contexts
- 287 • Ability to identify core elements of Anabaptist theology while recognizing that  
288 there are multiple Anabaptist histories and streams that are reflected in the 16<sup>th</sup>  
289 century and subsequent Mennonite history
- 290 • Awareness of global Anabaptist story that honors the diversity of Anabaptists  
291 today
- 292 • *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*
- 293 • *A Shared Understanding for Ministerial Leadership: Polity Manual for*  
294 *Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA*

295 2. Skills

- 296 • Capacity to communicate and embody Anabaptist/Mennonite belief, values and  
297 practices
- 298 • Capacity to transfer the Anabaptist/Mennonite story to one’s ministry context

- 299 • Interpret the Bible with an Anabaptist hermeneutic and encourage the
- 300 development of a “hermeneutic community” in the congregation
- 301 • Commitment to discipleship and peacemaking as integral to the Gospel
- 302 • Ability to teach ethical methodologies
- 303 3. Formation resources/content
- 304 • Anabaptist/Mennonite courses in Anabaptist history, mission, peacemaking,
- 305 discipleship and ethics
- 306 • *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*
- 307 • *A Shared Understanding for Ministerial Leadership: Polity Manual for*
- 308 *Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA*
- 309 • Historic confessions; contemporary confessions, Mennonite World Conference’
- 310 Shared Convictions
- 311 4. Delivery systems
- 312 • Mennonite/Anabaptist seminary and college courses
- 313 • See Appendix B
- 314 5. Congregational outcomes
- 315 • Congregations will be rooted in ongoing discipleship, communal faith and
- 316 discernment and other Anabaptist/Mennonite values
- 317 • Congregations will actively claim Mennonite identity
- 318 • Congregations will engage in extending God’s shalom to all people both
- 319 globally and in their neighborhood
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### **Christian Spirituality and Discipleship:**

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

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

#### 1. Knowledge

- 330 • Understanding theology of and personal encounter with the triune God revealed
- 331 in the Bible
- 332 • Recognize and appreciate the variety of spiritualities, spiritual practices and
- 333 worship styles
- 334 • Ongoing transformation by “renewing of your minds” (Romans 12:1)
- 335 • Centrality of one’s identity as rooted in being beloved of God

#### 2. Skills

- 336 • Spirituality is a lived experience through scripture, prayer, ongoing formation
- 337 • Commitment to following Jesus in life and sharing the Christian gospel in word
- 338 and deed; knowing Christ through following Christ (Hans Denckler)
- 339 • Contributes to spiritual formation of individuals and the faith community
- 340 • Builds capacity for missional leadership by increasing ability to see God’s
- 341 movement
- 342 • Leading in capacity to worship outside one’s personal preference
- 343 • Preaching and teaching on healthy sexuality

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3. Formation content
    - Practicing spiritual disciplines, both personal and corporate
    - Learning about God’s purposes, love and grace through lived experiences of God’s love in good times and hard times.
    - Communal worship
    - Engaging with other Christian groups
  4. Delivery systems
    - Classes, seminars on spiritual disciplines
    - Spiritual discipline and formation practices
    - Spiritual direction and spiritual friendships
    - Tools for personal growth: Myers-Briggs, the Enneagram, DiSC
  5. Outcomes in congregation
    - Congregation builds capacity to be missional
    - Congregation builds capacity to love God, self and others
    - Congregation actively formed by God’s love and purposes
    - Congregation is challenged to actively follow Jesus and to invite others along
    - Ability to receive and offer forgiveness and grace

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

367 We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and

368 Canada will have a healthy sense of self and a capacity to enter into and maintain healthy

369 relationships with others. This involves a clear and vital call to ordained ministry and an active

370 ongoing discernment of spiritual gifts, ministry capacities (e.g. Romans 12:3) and ministry roles

371 (e.g. Ephesians 4). This involves the capacity to take clear stands and the capacity to disagree

372 with others without rancor. It involves a healthy respect for diversity and the capacity to

373 creatively live with differences and conflict. (See *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love*.) It involves

374 a commitment to and capacity for life-long learning and a healthy curiosity about life, self and

375 others.

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377 Those who are ordained will understand and accept appropriate boundaries in relationships.

378 They will recognize the importance of accountability in monitoring boundaries and managing the

379 stress that often accompanies ministry.

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1. Knowledge
    - Clear awareness of one’s calling as a beloved child of God and calling in ministry.
    - Self-awareness and self-knowledge
      - Influence of family of origin
      - Gifts and abilities
    - Concept of boundaries and the potential to abuse the power that comes with the ministerial office
    - Understanding of crisis intervention techniques and awareness of self in the midst of crisis
    - Understanding of personal values and their impact on ministry
    - Emotional intelligence
  2. Skills
    - Action – reflection practices on ministry and relationships
    - Stress and boundary management
      - Recognizes and practices limits and boundaries (does not impose self onto others or allow others to impose themselves on to him or herself.)
      - Recognizes potential situations for the abuse of power in the pastoral



- 398 office
- 399 -Recognizes personal vulnerabilities and reactivities
- 400 ▪ Conflict management
- 401 -Capacity to listen and ask questions in tense situations
- 402 -Resists temptation to do what others are called to do and capable of
- 403 doing themselves
- 404 -Has basic conflict mediation skills and recognizes appropriate settings
- 405 for their use
- 406 ▪ Builds and maintains healthy relationships with others – personal, peer, and
- 407 pastoral relationship; appropriate emotional expression
- 408 ▪ Life-long learning
- 409 -Has a healthy curiosity about self and life in general
- 410 -Learns from life experience, seminars, workshops, classes, reading,
- 411 discussions
- 412 ▪ Whole person self-care
- 413 -Tends to own emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental needs
- 414 -Values and engages both the rational and emotional, aesthetic and
- 415 physical, activity and rest

### 3. Formation content

- 417 • Learnings about self, including personality, leadership, and psychological
- 418 assessment tools
- 419 • Family system theory especially as it relates to family of origin understanding
- 420 • Conflict Mediation training
- 421 • Pastoral ethics and personal values
- 422 • Relationship skills training
- 423 • Creative and physical activities – artistic and athletic expression of self

### 4. Delivery systems

- 425 • Clinical Pastoral Education
- 426 • Therapy or counseling
- 427 • Classes in pastoral ethics, ministry formation, conflict mediation, counseling
- 428 • Mentor relationships and/or Peer accountability groups with growth plans
- 429 • Continuing education events – workshops, lectures, etc.
- 430 • Classes and/or events that foster creativity or physical expression

### 5. Congregational outcomes

- 431 ▪ Healthy relationship between congregation members
- 432 ▪ Congregation welcomes and incorporates a variety of people
- 433 ▪ Conflict and differences are engaged productively
- 434 ▪ Gifts of all in the congregation are engaged in diverse way
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- 436

### **Missional Engagement:**

437 We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and  
 438 Canada will have the competence to **provide focused missional engagement and leadership**  
 439 within their ministry context. Pastors and congregational leaders require the skills to recognize  
 440 and interpret where God is at work in their ministry context and understand that as a “sent  
 441 people” God is inviting the congregation and its members to be ambassadors of Jesus’ peace.  
 442 This involves developing missional leadership competencies, an awareness of the social,  
 443 political, and economic realities of the local community, attunement to where the Spirit is at work  
 444 beyond the Church, and an appreciation of the intercultural, interfaith, ecological, ecclesial and  
 445 global environments of ministry.  
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1. Knowledge
    - Well versed in a missional theology that understands the Church as an apostolic, sent community embodying God’s Presence & transformation in the world
    - Understand the interrelatedness of racial, cultural, interfaith, and environmental factors, including systemic issues such as racism and economic injustices that are active in the ministry context
    - Understand incarnational ministry and the importance of contextualizing the gospel within the complexities of the above realities
    - Learn to perceive where God is at work beyond the church in the “neighbourhood” and how to partner with what God is doing in that context.
  2. Skills
    - On a personal level, demonstrate a “love your neighbor” engagement in the local neighbourhood/ministry context
    - Foster practices of welcoming the stranger and joining with God’s restoring work beyond the church
    - Ability to build relationships and partnerships within the local mission context that foster the development of healthy communities shaped by the Presence and peace of Jesus Christ
    - Cultivate a missional imagination in the congregation that generates diverse ministries within and beyond the faith community
    - Foster missional teams that incarnate the good news of Jesus across the street and around the world
  3. Formation content
    - Integration of being, doing, and proclaiming the good news of Jesus
    - Ability to read, learn from and engage the ministry context
    - Demonstrate the ability to transition from inward spiritual formation and ministry to outward mission that explicitly invites others into the faith community
    - Spiritual attunement to the leading of the Spirit and communal discernment practices
    - Experience in a variety of intercultural contexts, including relating comfortably to individuals and communities who embrace a secular worldview
    - Anti-racism training
  4. Delivery systems
    - Resources from MC Canada and MC USA informed by various missional networks
    - Seminary courses
    - Coaching, cohorts, and internships in churches with a missional culture
    - Learning experiences (internships, sabbaticals, classes) in other cultures and in “unchurched” contexts
  5. Congregational outcomes
    - Every member understands themselves as being sent by God as an ambassador of redemption and reconciliation in his/her own sphere of living
    - Congregational governance is focused on being a mission agency of the peace of Christ
    - Every church is a participant in multiplying kingdom communities
    - The attractional, consumer model of Church that is focused on “member chaplaincy” is transformed into an incarnational, sent-by-God model that is actively engaged in God’s mission in the world

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- Congregations celebrate and embrace cultural diversity in worship, teaching and relationships
  - Growth in global awareness

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501 **Leadership:**

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

508

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

516

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

522 1. Knowledge

- 523
- Leadership theory; systemic and organizational dynamics
  - Importance of healthy leadership to organizational health and mission
  - Appreciation of the importance of leading congregation in its public ministry of ceremonies and rituals (e.g. worship, weddings, funerals)
  - Strength-based leadership approaches
  - Aware of resources for team-building and team-leading
  - Embraces "office" dimension of ministerial leadership (*A Shared Understanding for Ministerial Leadership: Polity Manual for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA*)

532 2. Skills

- 533
- Leadership from the inside out that is grounded in personal spiritual formation
  - Public ministries (preaching, teaching, leading funerals, weddings, dedications, healing ministries and other rituals of the church)
  - Ability to teach team-building and ability to engage in team-leading
  - Encourages and empowers the leadership and ministry gifts of others  
538 Encourages and promotes an atmosphere of trust and safety in the congregation  
539 (See Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*)
  - Encourages and models risk taking and learning from failure

541 3. Formation content

- 542
- Leadership development; organizational change processes
  - Identification of needed change and capacity to help develop change process strategies
  - Capacity to receive feedback - both critique and affirmation.
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546		• <i>A Shared Understanding for Ministerial Leadership: Polity Manual for</i>
547		<i>Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA</i>
548	4.	Delivery systems
549		• Courses/workshops on ministry formation; change and transformation; worship
550		• Lombard Peace Center training events
551		• DiSC leadership style assessment tools
552		• Values-Based Leadership Training; leadership coaching
553	5.	Congregational outcomes
554		• Missional purpose and engagement with its environment and context
555		• Clear leadership roles and active engagement of others in ministries within and
556		beyond the congregation
557		• Systemic vitality and ongoing transformation
558		• Connection with and accountability to congregations, conferences/area churches
559		and Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada
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## APPENDIX A

### Interview guide to assist conference credentialing bodies assess core competencies

#### Introduction:

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

#### 1. A candidate for ordination will be firmly grounded in the Bible

- a. What gives unity to the biblical story as it unfolds in the two testaments? What themes emerge in the biblical story?
- b. How has the biblical story shaped you and how does it continue to shape you and your ministry? What does it mean to you to read scripture missionally?
- c. What principles of interpretation of the Bible are important to you and how do you apply them in preaching?
- d. Describe a time when you were involved in a situation where sincere Christians had a fundamental disagreement about the interpretation of scripture. How did you respond to this situation?

#### 2. A candidate for ordination will understand and embody core Anabaptist principles

- a. Describe how and why the early Anabaptists were in agreement with and differed from other parts of the Protestant reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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- b. Comment on this saying by an early Anabaptist leader: “No one may truly know Christ unless one follows him in life and no one may follow Christ without first knowing him.”
  - c. Talk about how you would introduce someone to Anabaptism who is unfamiliar to its way of thinking and living.
  - d. How would you respond to the notion that Anabaptist principles are a hindrance to mission?
  - e. What are the essential beliefs, values and practices of Anabaptism that you see in the global Anabaptist family?

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**3. A candidate for ordination will give evidence of a spirituality that is continually being shaped by the everlasting love of God the Father, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit**

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- a. Talk about your relationship with the God that is revealed in the Bible.
  - b. Talk about the personal disciplines and practices that ground you in your relationship with the God who calls you ‘beloved.’
  - c. Talk about the corporate disciplines and practices that increase your ability to see the movements of God.
  - d. How has your experience in the church influenced and shaped your relationship with God?
  - e. Talk about experiences of worship beyond your personal preferences that have contributed to your love for God.

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**4. A candidate for ordination will be on a journey toward greater self-awareness and self-understanding and will have a capacity to enter into and maintain healthy relationships with others in the church and beyond**

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- a. What have you learned about yourself as a ministering person? How would you describe your particular gifts for ministry?
  - b. Talk about your relationships with your parents and others in your family of origin.
  - c. Talk about your calling and identity as a minister. What will it mean to you to be ordained?
  - d. Talk about a situation when you held a minority viewpoint that was important to you. How did you give expression to that viewpoint? What did you experience in this situation?
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- e. What are the appropriate boundaries, including sexual boundaries, that you will maintain in your life and your ministry?
  - f. How would you respond to a situation where people in the congregation where you are serving think the congregation should leave the regional church and denomination?
  - g. Talk about a situation when you were called upon to intervene in a crises situation. How did you decide what to do?

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*What is the candidate’s appreciation for diversity of opinion and perspective? “Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love” is a valuable resource with which every candidate should be familiar.*

*People in ministry and other helping professions are sometimes tempted to rescue people in need or crises and to become overly responsible for the welfare of others in a way that undermines the responsibility of the one being cared for and is detrimental to the health of the caregiver. Is there evidence that the candidate is able to recognize when an impulse to help may not actually be helpful?*

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- 5. A candidate for ordination will have the capacity to provide missional leadership and the ability to collaborate with lay leaders to resource the congregation for active missional engagement in and beyond its local context.**
- a. What is the place of the church in God’s mission in the world? What does it mean for the church to engage the world by being a sign of God’s love for the world and God’s reign in the world?
  - b. If the Church is the body of Christ, what does this mean for the mission of the congregation and its relationship to its local ministry context?
    - How is the relationship between personal and congregational transformation and being the missional Presence of Christ in the world?
  - c. When a congregation is at its best, what is the purpose and role of congregational governance?
    - What experience do you have in
  - d. How would you gain an understanding or “reading” of your local ministry context?
    - What factors would you look for?
    - Where would you look for God at work?
  - e. What relationships do you have outside the Church? How are you personally building a connections or relationships with people in the community and with those who do not have a faith-based worldview?
  - f. What is your experience and comfort level in relating in a cultural context that is new to you? What experience do you have in understanding and relating to people who primarily function within a secular cultural context?
  - g. How would you engage a cultural context that is unfamiliar to you?
  - h. How would you go about assessing the “emotional field” (e.g. level of anxiety or trust) in a ministry context?
  - i. How does your baptism and calling to be a ministering person impact how you relate to your cultural and social environment?
  - j. What is racism and how has it affected your life?
  - k. How would you relate to other Christian communions in your context of ministry?
- 6. A candidate for ordination will have the capacity for leadership**
- a. What is the leadership role of an ordained minister?
  - b. Talk about a situation where you provided leadership in a ministry role. What did you experience?
  - c. What leadership principles are important to you?
  - d. How would you work on evoking the gifts, equipping other for ministry, increasing their leadership capacity, and lead as a team?

## APPENDIX B

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

#### 1. Seminaries

- A. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN
- B. Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, VA
- C. 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 – Instituto Biblico Anabautista (Spanish Language)
- B. SeBAH - *Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano* (Spanish Language)
- C. Semilla (Central America)
- D. STEP (Lancaster Conference)
- E. Damascus Road Training
- F. Journey (AMBS, INMI Mennonite Conference and Central District Conference)

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

Bibliography added 10/30/2015

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Original 2007



## Resource For MC USA Core Competencies

(all recommended resources have been published since 1990)

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### 1. Biblical Story

750 As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to be firmly grounded in the Biblical story and  
751 foundational theology and preach and teach the Word of God for life transformation.  
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754 Beachy, Duane. *Reading the Bible as if Jesus Mattered*. 2014.

755 Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. 1997.

756 Hershberger, Michele. *God's Story, Our Story*. 2013.

757 Mulholland, Robert. *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation*.  
758 2001.

759 Stanley, Andy and Lane Jones. *Communicating for a Change*. An accessible guide in  
760 preaching for life transformation. 2006.

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### 2. Anabaptist/Mennonite Principles

763 As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to understand and embody core Anabaptist  
764 values, beliefs, and practices.  
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767 Becker, Palmer. *What is an Anabaptist Christian*. Available online at

768 [www.MennoniteMission.net](http://www.MennoniteMission.net); easily remembered updating of the three core Anabaptist  
769 principles in Harold S. Bender's *The Anabaptist Vision*. 2008.

770 Hinojosa, Felipe. *Latino Mennonites: Civil Rights, Faith, and Evangelical Culture*. 2014.

771 Swartley, Mary and Rhoda Keener. *She Has Done a Good Thing*. Mennonite Women Tell  
772 Their Stories. 1999.

773 Neufeld, Alfred. *What We Believe Together: Exploring the Shared Convictions of*  
774 *Anabaptist-Related Churches*. 2007.

775 Snyder, Arnold. *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction*. 1995.

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### 3. Christian Spirituality/Discipleship

778 As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to grow in a spirituality that is continually  
779 being shaped by the everlasting love of God the Father, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ  
780 and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.  
781

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783 Boers, Arthur Paul, et al. *Take Our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book*.

784 Offers a four-week cycle of morning and evening prayer for personal or group use; rich  
785 in scripture and reflects a Mennonite spirituality. 2010.

786 Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. A basic  
787 introduction to the inward, outward and corporate spiritual disciplines. 1978, 1988,  
788 2002.

789 Guenther, Margaret. *At Home in the World: A Rule of Life for the Rest of Us*. This book has  
790 a chapter on "Learning from our enemies"--forgiving as a spiritual discipline. 2006.

791 Gutierrez, Gustavo, *We Drink From Our Own Wells: A Spiritual Journey of a People*.  
792 2003.

793 Weems, Renita. *Listening for God: A Minister's Journey Through Silence and Doubt*.  
794 1999.

795

796 **4. Self-Understanding and Self-Awareness**

797 As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I seek a healthy sense of self and a capacity to enter  
798 into and maintain healthy relationships with others.

799  
800 Marcuson, Margaret J. *Leadership that Lasts -- Sustaining Yourself and your Ministry*.  
801 2009.

802 McNeal, Reggie. *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*.  
803 A pathway to understanding how God has shaped you as a person and pastor by looking  
804 at how God shaped Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul. 2000.

805 Rohr, Richard. *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective*. 2001.

806 Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. 2003.

807 Sisk, Ronald. *The Competent Pastor: Skills and Self-Knowledge for Serving Well*. Covers  
808 the landscape for beginning pastors – self-motivation, communication, time and stress  
809 management, leadership, spiritual development and more. 2005.

810  
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812

813 **5. Contextual Awareness and Missional Leadership**

814 As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to grow in my ability to recognize, interpret,  
815 and redemptively engage the natural, cultural, ecclesial and global environments of my ministry  
816 context.

817  
818 Barrett, Lois and Darrell L. Guder. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the*  
819 *Church in North America*. 1998.

820 Griffin, Mark, and Theron Walker. *Living on the Borders: What the Church Can Learn*  
821 *from Ethnic Immigrant Cultures*. 2004.

822 Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. Apologetics from a  
823 pastor who effectively connects with agnostics and atheists every week. 2009.

824 Kreider, Alan, Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja. *A Culture of Peace*. 2005.

825 Rah, Soong-Chan. *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church*. 2010.

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828 **6. Leadership**

829 As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to grow in my capacity for leadership.

830  
831 Barton, Ruth Haley. *Pursuing God's Will Together*. 2012.

832 Branson, Mark Lou and Juan Martinez. *Multi-Cultural Churches, Cultures, and*  
833 *Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicity*. 2011.

834 Claiborne, Shane. *Follow Me to Freedom: Leading and Following as an Ordinary Radical*.  
835 2009.

836 Hirsch, Alan and Lance Ford. *Right Here Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday*  
837 *People*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011.

838 Sawatsky, Erick, ed. *The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective*.  
839 A collection of essays on various aspects of pastoral ministry by professors of  
840 Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. 2004.