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)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to considering a candidate’s education and training, including the concept of competencies in the examination process will serve to clarify the meaning of ordination and strengthen the practice of ministry.
All candidates for ordination will be engaged in this process of examination, including those with formal degrees and those who have been previously ordained in another denomination. Deficiencies in any of these competencies will be addressed by the credentialing body using a variety of delivery systems in designing additional training or remediation either before licensing for ordination is granted or as conditions to be met during licensure before ordination is granted. Resources and assessment tools will be developed to assist credentialing committees in this examination and discernment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We expect that those who are ordained for Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church 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 in the early Christian community. It involves interpreting and
understanding the Bible from a Christological perspective, where the life, death, resurrection and
teaching of Jesus are the keys to interpreting the Bible; where truth is anchored in Jesus Christ and the
scripts that tell his story.

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

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

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, 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 (1 Peter 3) and the capacity to equip others to bear witness to Jesus and his
way. They will also have the capacity to provide healthy pastoral care and counsel that contributes to
the spiritual formation of individuals, the faith community and those beyond the church.

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

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

We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada
will have the competence to provide focused missional engagement and leadership within their
ministry context. We believe that the church is indispensable in the proclamation of God’s work in the
world (Eph. 3.10) and meant to function as a visible sign of God’s reign. In the postmodern, post-
Christendom social context that is increasingly characteristic of North American society, it is
imperative that pastoral leaders conceive of their role as more than “chaplains” to the faith community.
It is critical that congregations understand the quality of their communal and spiritual life as a gift that
God is calling them to share with the people in their neighbourhood. At this point in its history, the
Church is calling on pastoral leaders and lay leaders to collaborate in exercising strong missional
leadership so that our congregations can actively engage the local and global community with the
peace of Jesus Christ.

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

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 to their
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 the gifts needed by the church (Eph 4) and will respect, welcome and enhance the leadership
of those with 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.

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

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 and its themes, 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 and proclamation of Good News
   - Interpretative and exegetical skills
   - Reading scripture missionally
   - 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
   - Basic biblical literacy

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. Ministers will grow in knowledge of the global Anabaptist story that honors the diversity of people who are Anabaptist today.

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 16th century and subsequent Mennonite history
   - Awareness of global Anabaptist story that honors the diversity of Anabaptists today
   - Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective
   - A Shared Understanding for Ministerial Leadership: Polity Manual for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA

2. Skills
   - Capacity to communicate and embody Anabaptist/Mennonite belief, values and practices
   - 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
Commitment to discipleship and peacemaking as integral to the Gospel
Ability to teach ethical methodologies

3. Formation resources/content
Anabaptist/Mennonite courses in Anabaptist history, mission, peacemaking, discipleship and ethics
Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective
A Shared Understanding for Ministerial Leadership: Polity Manual for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA
Historic confessions; contemporary confessions, Mennonite World Conference’ Shared Convictions

4. Delivery systems
Mennonite/Anabaptist seminary and college courses
See Appendix B

5. Congregational outcomes
Congregations will be rooted in ongoing discipleship, communal faith and discernment and other Anabaptist/Mennonite values
Congregations will actively claim Mennonite identity
Congregations will engage in extending God’s shalom to all people both globally and in their neighborhood

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

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

Self-Understanding and Self-Awareness, Emotional Intelligence:

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

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

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
office

- Recognizes personal vulnerabilities and reactivities

- Conflict management
  - Capacity to listen and ask questions in tense situations
  - Resists temptation to do what others are called to do and capable of doing themselves
  - Has basic conflict mediation skills and recognizes appropriate settings for their use

- Builds and maintains healthy relationships with others – personal, peer, and pastoral relationship; appropriate emotional expression

- Life-long learning
  - Has a healthy curiosity about self and life in general
  - Learns from life experience, seminars, workshops, classes, reading, discussions

- Whole person self-care
  - Tends to own emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental needs
  - Values and engages both the rational and emotional, aesthetic and physical, activity and rest

3. Formation content

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

4. Delivery systems

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

5. Congregational outcomes

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

Missional Engagement:

We expect that those who are ordained to Christian ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Canada will have the competence to provide focused missional engagement and leadership within their ministry context. Pastors and congregational leaders require the skills to recognize and interpret where God is at work in their ministry context and understand that as a “sent people” God is inviting the congregation and its members to be ambassadors of Jesus’ peace. This involves developing missional leadership competencies, an awareness of the social, political, and economic realities of the local community, attunement to where the Spirit is at work beyond the Church, and an appreciation of the intercultural, interfaith, ecological, ecclesial and global environments of ministry.
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
• Congregations celebrate and embrace cultural diversity in worship, teaching and relationships
• Growth in global awareness

**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**
   - 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*)

2. **Skills**
   - 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
   - Encourages and promotes an atmosphere of trust and safety in the congregation
   - Encourages and models risk taking and learning from failure
   (See Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*)

3. **Formation content**
   - 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.
4. Delivery systems
   - Courses/workshops on ministry formation; change and transformation; worship
   - Lombard Peace Center training events
   - DiSC leadership style assessment tools
   - Values-Based Leadership Training; leadership coaching

5. Congregational outcomes
   - Missional purpose and engagement with its environment and context
   - Clear leadership roles and active engagement of others in ministries within and beyond the congregation
   - Systemic vitality and ongoing transformation
   - Connection with and accountability to congregations, conferences/area churches and Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada
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 16th century.
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?

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.

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.

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.

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?

   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.

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?

   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?
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 Bíblico 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
Final changes based on AC/C Ministers December 2014 Meeting 2/20/2015.
Edited and Updated December 2014 AC/C Ministers Task Force (Lois Johns Kaufmann, David Martin, Clarence Rempel, and Steve Kriss)
Edited and Updated March 2010 Karen Martens Zimmerly, Canada and Lee Lever USA
Original 2007
1. Biblical Story

As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to be firmly grounded in the Biblical story and foundational theology and preach and teach the Word of God for life transformation.


Hershberger, Michele. *God’s Story, Our Story*. 2013.


2. Anabaptist/Mennonite Principles

As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to understand and embody core Anabaptist values, beliefs, and practices.


3. Christian Spirituality/Discipleship

As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to grow in 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.


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


4. Self-Understanding and Self-Awareness

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


5. Contextual Awareness and Missional Leadership

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


6. Leadership

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