

**Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches**

**Ministry Credentialing Questionnaire**

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| Name: |
| Address:  | City: | Postal Code: |
| Phone:  | E-mail: |
| Current or Anticipated Position: |
| Church / Organization: |
| ***Signature of Supervisor*** (e.g., Senior Pastor, Moderator, Administrator) who recommends the applicant:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

 I hereby verify that I have read the completed questionnaire and recommend the applicant for credentialing.

**This is an Application for** (Please mark an 'X' beside all that apply)**:**

* **Credentialing** (Discerning and affirming the theological and personal suitability of applicants for ministry roles within the Ontario Conference of MB Churches and associated ministry agencies, which are a part of the larger Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. Individuals interested in credentialing must be members in good standing of a Mennonite Brethren congregation).
* **Licensing** (licensing includes registration with the provincial government to solemnize marriages).
* **Ordination** (affirmation of a local church decision to recognize a pastor for service in their community, after a minimum of two years of service. Be sure to include a letter of request from the church leadership board).
* **Recognition of Ordination** (affirmation of the discernment and commissioning process used by another denomination. Be sure to include documentation of ordination).

**Required Documents Enclosed** (Please mark with an 'X'):

* **Completed Credentialing Questionnaire** – Please read the instructions for the completion of each section carefully. The recommended length for a completed questionnaire is approximately 30 pages. Please be advised that if it is significantly longer or shorter you may be asked to revise and edit your work before it will be accepted by the Faith and Life Team of the Ontario Conference of MB Churches.
* **Criminal Record Check** (Copy of a Criminal Record Check issued within the last three years).
* **Two Book Reviews** (See Section VII for instructions regarding the reading assignments)
	+ *Confession of Faith: Commentary and Pastoral Application* (Kindred Productions, 2000).
	+ *Family Matters: Discovering the Mennonite Brethren* (Kindred Productions, 2002).
* **References**
	+ List the names and addresses of three individuals who will complete Reference Forms on your behalf, with at least one reference coming from a person in a leadership role in your local church, and one who has been your supervisor. If you are married please ask your spouse to complete the Spousal Reference Form. Completed reference forms must be submitted directly to the Ontario Conference of MB Churches office by the individuals completing them on your behalf.

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| **Name** | **Position** | **Address, phone, and email** |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. | Spouse (if applicable) |  |

* **Pastors Credentialing Orientation** - date of completion or scheduled date of attendance \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Provincially Required Seminars** (e.g., Sacred Trust Seminar)

An interview will **NOT** be scheduled until the completed application with all documentation has been submitted to the Ontario Conference of MB Churches office. Be sure to have your supervisor sign the questionnaire indicating that he/she has read the completed questionnaire and supports your application. Your supervisor and spouse (if applicable) are requested to be present during the credentialing interview.

**Credentialing Rationale**

1. The Relationship between Christian Ministry, Personal Lifestyle and Credentialing: The request for credentialing means that you are seeking recognition by the Ontario Conference of MB Churches that you are, and will continue to be, a spiritual leader within the Mennonite Brethren community. The Ontario Conference of MB Churches believes that all spiritual leaders should be expected to live an exemplary Christian life in all aspects. It is important, therefore, that all Ontario Conference of MB Churches leaders and pastors:

(a) have and maintain a vibrant and healthy spiritual life that demonstrates a history of, and an ongoing commitment to, cultivating a relationship with God;

(b) affirm Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Church teachings about the Bible and theology as outlined in the Confession of Faith;

(c) make exemplary ethical and Christian lifestyle choices that are consistent with Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Church teachings including, but not limited to, those outlined in the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Code of Christian Conduct;

(d) maintain healthy relationships that are conducive to the well-being of spouse and children (if applicable), and others with whom you interact on a regular basis;

(e) have a clear sense of your spiritual gifts and abilities;

(f) demonstrate a love for Jesus by courageously sharing the gospel in word and deed; and

(g) in all other ways, maintain an active and healthy Christian life as an example to all with whom you interact or who may look to you as a spiritual example.

All areas of your Christian walk and leadership may be examined as part of your application for credentialing within the OCMBC.

1. *Personal Information Protection Act* Compliance and Consent: The information requested in this questionnaire and obtained throughout the credentialing process (including the interview) will only be used by those leaders within the Mennonite Brethren Conference who have been designated to assess your suitability for credentialing in the ministry role indicated in this questionnaire. Information will not be disclosed without your consent, other than to the leadership of your employer and church (if applicable). By providing the personal information in this questionnaire and credentialing process, you are consenting to this use and limited disclosure. You are also consenting to us contacting the educational, employment and other references you have provided (including your spouse, if applicable) and obtaining information from them that is relevant to the credentialing process. The application and any related documents and information will be kept in the OCMBC office in confidentiality and in a safe and secure location. Any concerns about the privacy of personal information may be directed to the OCMBC privacy officer.
2. For questions that ask for brief discussion try to find a balance between offering one-sentence responses that may in some cases be too simplistic, and writing an extended theological treatise. It is helpful to highlight your responses in either *italics* or **bold** print.

**I. Biographical and Personal Information**

1. Date of Birth: 2. Place of Birth and Citizenship:

3. Date of believer’s baptism:

4. Which church baptized you?

**II. Spiritual Autobiography**Please write a short spiritual autobiography. Identify the influences and circumstances that prompted you to make a decision to become a Christian. What is the biblical basis by (or through?) which you understand your conversion experience? Share how God has led you along in your spiritual pilgrimage: what have been some of the most important decisions and experiences in your Christian life?What appeals to you about serving as part of the Mennonite Brethren conference?

**III. Education and Professional Experience**

5. Post-secondary education or training: List school, degree and year obtained

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| Schools attended | Diploma of Degree Program (if any) | From | To | Grad Year |
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6. List experience in churches and/or ministry organizations (e.g., missionary service, chaplaincy, etc.) giving length of service and position. If part-time, indicate.

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| Church / Organization | City, Prov/State | Position | From | To |
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7. List any employment experience that has contributed to your preparation for a professional ministry role.

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| Position | Place | How long? |
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8. List any denominational, community and other activities or organizations in which you have participated in recent years, or in which you are still participating.

9. Comment briefly about the cultural settings (rural/suburban/ethnic/national, etc.) with which you are familiar and in which you work best.

**IV. Biblical – Theological Affirmations**

Please answer each question in your own words and where appropriate offer some scriptural support for your views (if you use any direct quotations be sure to identify the source). For questions that ask for a brief discussion try to find a balance between offering one-sentence responses that may in some cases be too simplistic, and writing an extended theological treatise.

10. Describe your understanding of the significance of God as Eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

11. Explain your understanding of both the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible.

12. Describe how the affirmation of the Bible as the authoritative guide for faith and practice impacts your life and ministry.

13. Describe your approach to interpreting and applying the Bible.

14. Discuss your understanding of the relationship of God to creation in the past, present and future.

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15. What is your understanding of the origins, nature and consequences of sin?

16. What is your understanding of the significance of Christ’s:

* 1. incarnation,
	2. deity,
	3. life and teaching,
	4. death, and
	5. resurrection?

17. What is your understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit?

18. What is the process by which a person begins life as a follower of Christ (disciple)? What is the human responsibility in maturing in Christ?

19. What is your understanding of the nature and mission of the church?

20. Discuss your understanding of:

* 1. baptism,
	2. communion,
	3. church discipline, and
	4. the relationship between baptism and church membership.

21. Discuss your understanding of what it means for Christians to be peacemakers, and how this might apply to interpersonal relationships, to congregational life, to an individual’s involvement in government, and more broadly, to the church’s relationship to government?

22. What is your view of the unseen spiritual world (i.e., angels, demons, Satan), and the relationship between spiritual powers and visible powers in the world.

23. Discuss your understanding of the second coming of Christ, final judgment, and eternal state.

**V. Current Theological Issues**

Please answer each question in your own words and where appropriate offer some scriptural support for your views (if you use any direct quotations be sure to identify the source). For questions that ask for a brief discussion try to find a balance between offering one-sentence responses that may in some cases be too simplistic, and writing an extended theological treatise.

24. Discuss briefly your understanding of discipleship. How do you disciple people?

25. What do you consider to be the greatest challenges in living a life of faith in a pluralistic, multicultural society? How do you explain the work of Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation?

26. Describe your understanding of the kingdom of God, and how you participate in it in everyday life.

27. Describe succinctly your understanding of the gospel, and how you would effectively communicate it in your current context.

28. Discuss briefly your theology of worship and describe how you engage others in worshipping God.

29. Discuss briefly your biblical understanding of men and women in ministry and church leadership roles.

30. If your primary ministry role is within a local church, please outline your understanding of ordination.

31. Regardless of your current ministry role, please discuss your biblical understanding of leadership in the church. Discuss the role of the pastor, the participation of the congregation in decision-making, and the process that should be used for addressing conflict.

32. Discuss briefly your biblical understanding of marriage, singleness, and healthy sexuality.

33. What do you believe and teach about divorce and remarriage, living together before marriage, same-sex relationships, and marrying individuals who do not share a common faith in Christ?

34. Discuss briefly your views about (a) potentially addictive behaviours such as the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, illicit/illegal drugs, and the practice of gambling; (b) ethical issues such as truth-telling, pre-marital sex, abortion, euthanasia; and (c) global issues such environmentalism, consumerism, and poverty.

35. Are there other current critical issues to which you think the church should respond? In what ways could the church respond?

36. Please identify the main sources you used for the completion of the two theological sections.

**VI. Personal Experience and Development**

The previous sections focus on the beliefs you hold, while this section asks questions that shed light on who you are as a person and your experience. The reason that such questions are included is that the role of a pastor (spiritual leader) is unlike other employment. You are not only an employee, but also a model of lifestyle and character. Therefore, it is important for the Mennonite Brethren Conference to understand how you will be influencing those under your spiritual care, to see how you have addressed any difficult issues, and to see whether you need specific support in certain life areas.

37. Describe your relationship with God at present.

38. What is your usual practice of spiritual self-care?

39. How do you discern God’s direction in your life?

40. Which spiritual gifts, abilities and competencies have been affirmed in your life/ministry?

41. Describe how these gifts have been operative in your life/ministry.

42. Describe your sense of call to the ministry role you are currently in or for which you are applying. How has this call been recognized and affirmed by others?

43. Describe your own personal involvement in reaching those who are not followers of Christ.

44. What aspects of your present or most recent ministry role provide you the greatest satisfaction?

45. What aspects of your present or most recent ministry role have resulted in your deepest disappointments?

46. Discuss your theology and practice of financial management. Describe how you practice generous living. Do you have any financial obligations that might adversely affect your reputation and ministry? (see e.g., 1Timothy 3:8)

47. Describe your strategy for continuing education (formal and informal).

48. List periodicals, websites/blogs that you read regularly for your enrichment.

49. Identify and describe briefly the most significant books you have read within the past year.

50. Please list any blogs, articles, books that you have published.

51. What do you do to maintain your physical well-being (exercise, diet, rest, etc.)?

52. Explain your biblical understanding and practice of Sabbath rest. How do you maintain a balance of work and rest?

53. What are some of the activities/hobbies you enjoy in your leisure time?

54. What do you consider to be some of your greatest personal strengths?

55. What do you consider to be some of your greatest personal weaknesses?

56. Discuss some of your personal goals and plans for the future? (Dream a little)

57. If married, does your spouse intend to be involved in your ministry? If yes, please describe how.

58. If married, discuss briefly how your current or anticipated ministry role may impact your spouse.

59. If you have children in your home, how might your current or anticipated ministry role impact your relationship with your children and your role as a parent? How, if at all, do you anticipate that your children will participate in your ministry?

60. What do you perceive the essential work of a pastor to be (substitute your ministry role if you are not involved in pastoral ministry)? Describe the three tasks or priorities to which you allocate the greatest amount of time in your ministry role.

61. Describe how you relate to those leaders and groups (e.g., church boards) in authority over you.

62. Describe a situation in which you were involved in a conflict. How did you deal with the situation in order to bring resolution?

63. Are there any unresolved conflicts or difficult relationships in your life that could adversely affect your ministry? If yes, explain.

64. If you have children, describe how you demonstrate a Christian approach to family life (e.g., Ephesians 6:1-4, 1Timothy 3:4-5, 12).

65. Leaders frequently acquire information that others do not have. How do you handle information that is confidential? Do you anticipate sharing confidential information about your ministry with your spouse (if applicable) and, if so, how do you jointly manage such information?

**Godly Character** - Pastors and Christian leaders are not immune from temptation that can lead to addictions, sexual sins, and character weaknesses prohibited in the Bible (e.g., Romans 13:13). Though these may sometimes be hidden from others, minimized or denied by Christian leaders, they always diminish ministry influence, and if left unchecked, often result in a serious betrayal of trust, public embarrassment, loss of ministry position, as well as harm to individuals within or outside the congregation.

66. In Colossians 3:5-10, Christians are given a list of sins that are to be “put to death.” Are you free from addictive or habitual practices that are manifestations of any of these sins (for example, regular uncontrolled outbursts of anger, viewing of pornographic materials, compulsive spending and greed, vindictive behaviour, use of addictive substances, etc.)?

67. According to the Bible, sexual intimacy rightfully takes place only within marriage (a publicly recognized exclusive union between one man and one woman). In passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Christians are therefore exhorted to avoid sexual immorality. Have you been involved in any non-marital sexual activity? If so, to what extent has there been confession, repentance and efforts at redemptive restoration of broken relationships so that your spiritual health, reputation and effectiveness in your ministry role will not be impaired?

68. Christ invites us to place Him first in our lives above other disordered desires or lesser gods (for example, Psalm 24:3-5, I Corinthians 6:9-11, I John 5:21). Even though these may be culturally acceptable, they are antithetical to faithful discipleship. As such, the Bible warns us to be vigilant against any tendencies toward idolatry within our own hearts (for example, pride, seeking the approval of others, using power or positional authority in unhealthy ways, perpetuating economic injustice by wilfully ignoring the needs of people who are poor, etc.). What areas of sin do you need to be particularly aware of and be vigilant to resist and overcome in your own life?

69. If you are struggling, or have struggled in the past, with any sinful behaviours related to the last three questions, what steps are you taking, and/or have you taken, to overcome these areas?

70. Many people have experienced significant traumas -- whether at one point in time or over a longer duration. These traumas can cause deep and long-lasting wounds in one's character. Have you experienced such trauma(s)? If so, how have you have sought healing, reconciliation, and/or counselling so that your spiritual health, reputation and effectiveness in your ministry role will not be impaired?

71. Describe how you have been growing in Christ-likeness, especially in fruits of the Spirit and qualities identified in Colossians 3:12-17 (showing kindness, compassion, patience, gentleness, humility, forgiveness, love, peace, community accountability, speaking the truth in love, etc.).

72. Is there anything in your past about which you have not been asked in this questionnaire that could become a problem for you in your ministry and that leaders in the Mennonite Brethren Conference should know about, recognizing that you are and will be in a position of trust and a model of Christian lifestyle expected of a spiritual leader as described in the Credentialing Rationale at the beginning of this form?

73. Do you have any questions or concerns about the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith or the Mennonite Brethren Conference? Are there questions that you wished would have been asked, but were not?

**VII. Reading Assignments**

Read the two books identified below and write an evaluative response of approximately 250 words for each book. *Highlight key points of agreement as well as points of disagreement.* Individuals who have taken an Anabaptist/Mennonite history or theology course from a Mennonite Brethren school may ask for exemption from reading and reviewing *Family Matters*. An alternate reading list is available upon request.

74. *Confession of Faith: Commentary & Pastoral Application* (Kindred Productions, 2000).

75. *Family Matters: Discovering the Mennonite Brethren* by Lynn Jost and Connie Faber (Kindred Productions, 2002).



**Ontario Conference of Mennonite**

**Brethren Churches**

**Mennonite Brethren Conference Covenant**

1. Do you affirm the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Confession of Faith in all its aspects?

2. Do you agree to live according to the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Code of Christian Conduct included below?

3. Are you willing to be in a relationship of mutual accountability with the Ontario Conference of MB Churches, and to serve in unity with fellow workers in the Conference?

4. Will you actively seek to participate in, support and promote (as possible) the initiatives, mission, programs and ministries of both the provincial and national Mennonite Brethren conferences?

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Signature Date

**Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches**

 **Code of Christian Conduct**

Credential holders working with any of the provincial conferences or associated ministry agencies of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches are spiritual leaders who are expected to live an exemplary Christian life in all aspects. Credential holders are to be guided by Biblical values concerning personal holiness, respect, responsibility, integrity, love and grace as outlined in the Confession of Faith, and as taught and understood in other documents and policies of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. These values emerge from a Mennonite Brethren understanding of what it means to love God with all our being and to love our neighbours as ourselves, and emphasize a Mennonite Brethren commitment to righteousness, moral and holy living, practicing justice, helping those in need, forgiving others, seeking forgiveness, and balancing personal freedom with a loving regard for others. Living according to these values involves a commitment on the part of all credential holders to embody attitudes and to practice actions identified in the Bible as virtues, and to avoid those portrayed as destructive or sinful.

The Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Code of Christian Conduct outlines the relationship between ministry, personal lifestyle and credentialing within the Ontario Conference of MB Churches. While credential holders may have a variety of personal views on certain lifestyle issues, it is expected that they will make exemplary ethical and Christian lifestyle choices that are consistent with the Code of Christian Conduct. . Adherence to this Code of Christian Conduct is, therefore, an integral part of the credentialing process. All Ontario Conference of MB Churches credential holders are expected to renew this commitment every three (3) years as part of the Mennonite Brethren Covenant renewal process.

As a credential holder within the Ontario Conference of MB Churches, I commit myself to living in accordance with the following teachings and values by:

1. having and maintaining a vibrant and healthy spiritual life that demonstrates a history of, and an ongoing commitment to, cultivating a personal relationship with God;
2. maintaining healthy relationships that are conducive to the well-being of spouse and children (if applicable), and all others with whom one interacts,
3. reserving sexual expressions of intimacy exclusively for the context of a covenantal marriage between a man and a woman;
4. abstaining from communication that is destructive to inter-personal relationships, including gossip, slander, vulgar/obscene language, prejudice and abusive or demeaning language;
5. abstaining from stealing, misusing or destroying property belonging to others;
6. avoiding lying, cheating, financial impropriety, or other forms of dishonesty including plagiarism;
7. avoiding drunkenness, addictive behaviours, the use or possession of illegal drugs, and the misuse or abuse of substances including prescribed drugs;
8. avoiding the use of materials that are degrading, dehumanizing, exploitive, hateful, or gratuitously violent, including, but not limited to pornography;
9. treating all persons with respect and dignity, and upholding their God-given worth from conception to death, including the avoidance of harassment, harmful discrimination and any form of verbal or physical intimidation;
10. acting as responsible citizens both locally and globally who respect authorities, submit to the laws of this country when not inconsistent with Biblical teaching, and who contribute to the welfare of creation and society;
11. demonstrating a love for Jesus by courageously sharing the gospel in word and deed;
12. in all other ways, maintaining an active and healthy Christian life, consistent with the Christian teachings of Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, as an example to all with whom one meets and interacts.

When credential holders live or behave in contradiction to the Christian standards outlined in this statement, Ontario Conference of MB Churches first response will ordinarily be to seek a redemptive resolution to the situation. Ontario Conference of MB Churches leaders, along with local church leadership, are committed to working with credential holders who voluntarily, and if necessary with the assistance of counseling, restore Christian consistency in their lives. This does not mean that Ontario Conference of MB Churches and the local church will not also exercise their discretion to discipline Ontario Conference of MB Churches credential holders in the context of the employer-employee relationship (up to the point of termination of employment when appropriate).

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Signature Date

Please note: Individuals credentialed by the Ontario Conference of MB Churches will be asked to renew their commitment to the Mennonite Brethren Conference Covenant and the Mennonite Brethren Code of Christian

Conduct every three years.

Completed forms should be sent by mail or email to the OCMBC office.

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