

## Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Ministry Credentialing Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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 MENNONITE BRETHERN 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.)

**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 INSERT NAME OF PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR CREDENTIALING.
- 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*, Revised Canadian Edition, second printing (Kindred Productions, 2019).

**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 Mennonite Brethren Churches office by the individuals completing them on your behalf.

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 Mennonite Brethren 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 Mennonite Brethren Churches that you are, and will continue to be, a spiritual leader within the Mennonite Brethren community. The Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren 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 Mennonite Brethren 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 your 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 Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

2. *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 Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches office in confidentiality and in a safe and secure location. Any concerns about the privacy of personal information may be directed to the Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches privacy officer.
3. For questions that ask for brief discussion, try to find a balance between offering one-sentence responses, which 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 believers 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.

Schools attended	Diploma or Degree Program (if any)	From	To	Grad Year

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.

Church / Organization	City, Prov/State	Position	From	To

7. List any employment experience that has contributed to your preparation for a professional ministry role.

Position	Place	How long?

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.

Position	Activity/Organization	How long?

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, which may in some cases be too simplistic, and writing an extended theological treatise.

**SUMMARIZE your understanding of the Bible’s teaching** on the following theological doctrines **and state the implications** for your ministry.

10. God as eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
11. The inspiration and infallibility of the Bible.
12. The Bible as the authoritative guide for faith and practice.
13. Your approach to interpreting and applying the Bible.
14. The relationship of God to creation in the past, present, and future.
15. The origins, nature, and consequences of sin.
16. Christ’s:
  - a. Incarnation,
  - b. Deity,
  - c. Life and teaching,
  - d. Death,
  - e. Resurrection.
17. The person and work of the Holy Spirit
18. Salvation:
  - a. The process by which a person begins life as a follower (disciple) of Christ.
  - b. The human responsibility to mature in Christ.
19. The nature and mission of the church.
20. The church’s practice of:
  - a. Baptism,
  - b. Communion,
  - c. Church discipline,
  - d. The relationship between baptism and church membership.
21. Peacemaking
  - a. In interpersonal relationships,
  - b. In congregational life,
  - c. In individual involvement in government,
  - d. In the congregation’s relationship to government.
22. Principalities and powers in the unseen spiritual world (including angels, demons, Satan).
23. Relationship between the visible and invisible powers in our world.
24. The second coming of Christ, final judgment, and eternal state.

#### **V. Practical Theology 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, which may in some cases be too simplistic, and writing an extended theological treatise.

**INTERACT** with the following questions. Include how and why these are critical for your ministry.

25. Discipleship:
  - a. What is your biblical understanding of discipleship?
  - b. How are you making disciples?
26. Christ, the only way:
  - a. What are the greatest challenges and opportunities of living in a pluralistic society?
  - b. How do you explain the work of Christ as the only way to salvation?
27. Kingdom of God:
  - a. What is your biblical understanding of the Kingdom of God?
  - b. What is the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the local church?
28. The Gospel:
  - a. Articulate your understanding of the gospel.
  - b. Give an example how you have recently communicated the gospel in your context.
29. Worship:
  - a. What is your theology of worship?
  - b. Explain the function of corporate worship.
  - c. How do you worship in your personal life?
30. Gender in Ministry Leadership:
  - a. Discuss your biblical understanding of men and women in ministry leadership roles.
  - b. In the context of the MB community who have affirmed women in all roles of ministry leadership, how will you respond to those who own a differing understanding of men and women in ministry leadership.
31. Leadership:
  - a. Provide a biblical definition of leadership.
  - b. How does this definition speak to decision-making in the local church?
  - c. How does this definition speak to addressing conflict in the church?
32. Provide a biblical definition of human sexuality.  
How does that definition inform your teaching and ministry regarding
  - a. Gender identity
  - b. Sexual orientation
  - c. Same-sex relationships
  - d. Cohabitation before marriage
33. Provide a biblical definition of singleness and marriage.  
How does that definition inform your teaching and ministry regarding
  - a. Singleness
  - b. Marriage between those who do not share a common faith in Christ.
  - c. Divorce
  - d. Remarriage
34. With the many issues our facing our society, what is your pastoral response to individuals and families regarding
  - a. Addiction
  - b. Un-Christlike conduct
35. What is your biblical grid for seeking clear guidelines and teaching on current global issues?
36. Offer an example of your pastoral response to one specific current issue (e.g., MAID, cannabis, abortion, consumerism, poverty, etc.)
37. 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 we ask these questions 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. We desire to understand how you will be influencing those under your spiritual care. We also want to see how you have addressed any difficult issues and whether you need specific support in certain life areas.

38. Describe your current relationship with God.
39. What is your usual practice of spiritual self-care?
40. How do you discern God's direction in your life?
41. Which spiritual gifts, abilities, and competencies have been affirmed in your life/ministry?
42. Describe how these gifts have been operative in your life/ministry.
43. Describe your leadership style.
44. Describe
  - a. your sense of call to the ministry role you are currently in or for which you are applying.
  - b. How has this call been recognized and affirmed by others?
45. Describe your own personal involvement in reaching those who are not followers of Christ.
46. What aspects of your present or most recent ministry role provide you the greatest satisfaction?
47. What aspects of your present or most recent ministry role have resulted in your deepest disappointments?
48. Discuss
  - a. Your theology and practice of financial management.
  - b. Describe how you practise generous living.
  - c. Do you have any financial obligations that might adversely affect your reputation and ministry? (e.g., 1 Timothy 3:8)
49. Describe your strategy for continuing education (formal and informal).
50. List periodicals and websites/blogs that you read regularly for your enrichment.
51. Identify and briefly describe the most significant books you have read within the past year.
52. Please list any blogs, articles, books that you have published.
53. What do you do to maintain your physical well-being (exercise, diet, rest, etc.)?
54. Explain
  - a. Your theology of Sabbath.
  - b. Your practice of Sabbath.
  - c. How do you maintain a balance of work and rest?
55. What are some of the activities/hobbies you enjoy?
56. What do you consider your greatest personal strengths?
57. What do you consider your greatest personal weaknesses?
58. Discuss some of your personal goals and plans for the future. (Dream a little.)
59. Describe how you demonstrate a Christian approach to family life (e.g., Ephesians 6:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12).
  - a. If you are married, does your spouse intend to be involved in your ministry? If yes, please describe how.
  - b. If you are married, discuss briefly how your current or anticipated ministry role may impact your spouse.
  - c. If you have children in your home:
    - i. How might your current or anticipated ministry role impact your relationship with your children and your role as a parent?
    - ii. How, if at all, do you anticipate that your children will participate in your ministry?

60. What do you perceive?
  - a. To be the essential work of a pastor? (Substitute your ministry role if you are not involved in pastoral ministry.)
  - b. To be the three tasks or priorities to which you allocate the greatest amount of time in your ministry role?
61. How do you relate to those leaders and groups (e.g., church boards) in authority over you?
62. Describe
  - a. a conflict situation in which you were involved.
  - b. What did you learn about yourself in regard to conflict and conflict resolution?
63. Are there any unresolved conflicts or difficult relationships in your life that could adversely affect your ministry? If yes, explain.
64. Leaders frequently acquire information that others do not have.
  - a. How do you handle information that is confidential?
  - b. 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, minimized, or denied by Christian leaders, they always diminish ministry effectiveness, 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.

65. 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 (e.g., regular uncontrolled outbursts of anger, viewing of pornographic materials, compulsive spending and greed, vindictive behaviour, use of addictive substances, etc.)?
66. 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.
  - a. Have you been involved in any non-marital sexual activity?
  - b. 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?
67. Christ invites us to place Him first in our lives above other disordered desires or lesser gods (e.g., 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 (e.g., 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?
68. 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?
69. 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)?
  - a. 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?
70. Describe how you have been growing in Christlikeness, especially in the fruit of the Spirit and the qualities identified in Colossians 3:12-17 (showing kindness, compassion, patience, gentleness, humility, forgiveness, love, peace, community accountability, speaking the truth in love, etc.).



71. 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?

## 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/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.

72. *Confession of Faith: Commentary & Pastoral Application* (Kindred Productions, 2000).  
73. *Family Matters: Discovering the Mennonite Brethren*, Revised Canadian Edition, second printing, by Lynn Jost and Connie Faber (Kindred Productions, 2019).

In addition, select one of the following and write same evaluative response as for above:

- a. *Anabaptist Essentials: Ten Signs of a Unique Christian Faith* by Palmer Becker, 2017.
- b. *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition* by Arnold C. Snyder, 2004.
- c. *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith* by Stuart Murray, 2010.

## VIII. Mennonite Brethren Conference Covenant

74. Do you affirm the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith in all its aspects?  
75. Do you agree to live according to your provincial MB Conference Code of Christian Conduct (see Appendix I below)?  
76. Are you willing to be in a relationship of mutual accountability with your provincial MB conference, and to serve in unity with fellow workers in the conference?  
77. Will you actively seek to participate in (as possible), support, and promote the initiatives, mission, programs, and ministries of the Mennonite Brethren conference?  
78. Do you have any questions or concerns about the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith or the Mennonite Brethren conference? If so, please name them here.  
79. Are there questions that you wish would have been asked, but were not? If so, what are they?