

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Office of Ministry

CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY
READINESS FOR MINISTRY (RfM) PROGRAM

The Council of District Executives (CODE) and Bethany Theological Seminary, in consultation with the Ministry Advisory Council (MAC), worked cooperatively to formulate what is called Qualities (see Section I) and Competencies (see Section II) for Ministry. Section III deals with polity and the Calling (pre-licensing) process.

1. MINISTERIAL QUALITIES

1. Themes and Scriptures

The 1999 Annual Conference paper on “Ministerial Leadership” reminds us that ministerial qualities and competencies are grounded in scripture. A partial listing of themes and scriptures is printed below:

- In Christ, the believer is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17-18).
- The believer is being changed into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).
- The believer grows toward maturity (Eph. 4:13).
- Followers of Christ live with integrity (Matt. 5:33-37).
- Christians believe that all of life is sacred (Matt. 5:21-24).
- Sisters and brothers in Christ strive for healing and reconciliation (Matt. 5:25-26, 43-48; 6:12, 14-15; 18:15-17; Rom. 12:14-21).
- Believers are committed to high values (Matt. 6:19-24).
- Followers of Christ abstain from those things that harm and destroy the body (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- New life for the believer is defined as a change from old behaviors (1 Tim. 3:2-13; Tit. 1:5-8; 2:2-8; Gal. 5:19-24).
- Sisters and brothers in Christ live in a caring community where each part of the body is valued (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4).

While these biblical qualities apply to all who are baptized, they are particularly important to those who are licensed and ordained for ministerial leadership. Qualities are more often “caught” than “taught” as they are modeled by respected and appreciated leaders. It is helpful when we can name both desirable and undesirable qualities and determine the degree to which they are present at a given moment in time. The Readiness for Ministry (RfM) program is designed to help discover these qualities in a ministerial candidate through the use of professional instruments of measurement, use of the material in the “Pre-licensing Interview Guide,” and the pre-licensing interview by the District Ministry Commission.

2. Qualities Deemed Desirable for the Credentialed Minister

No one possesses all of the following important qualities at any given time. It is also important to note that having many of these desirable qualities does not guarantee success in ministry. While it is also true that no one is totally devoid of desirable qualities, not having a majority of these desirable qualities may result in personal and interpersonal failure in ministry. It is equally important to note that the qualities listed below are limited to those that can be identified, assessed, and measured in the Readiness for Ministry (RfM) program.

1. Willing to dialogue with new ideas and experiences
2. Approachable - others feel comfortable is seeking out the leader
3. Conscientious - dependable and principled
4. Committed to one's call by God and the church
5. Interested in developing interpersonal skills
6. Altruistic - has an unselfish regard for the welfare of others
7. Empathetic - feels for others
8. Enthusiastic about one's ministry
9. Self-starter
10. Self-motivator
11. Able to learn from criticism
12. Compassionate
13. Able to cope with change
14. Has social service interests
15. Has religious interests: values, morals, ethics, scriptures, theology, prayer-life
16. Enthusiastic about writing and speaking publicly
17. If extroverted, interested in learning to process ideas/concepts internally
18. If introverted, interested in learning to process ideas/concepts with others
19. Genuine - not pretentious
20. Enjoys systems management
21. Psychologically and emotionally stable
22. Has vision and sense of direction in one's leadership
23. Patient with self and others
24. Able to forgive self and others
25. Able to accept forgiveness
26. Possesses good "people" skills
27. Self-assured and confident
28. Has a collaborative leadership style
29. Able and willing to formulate a personal faith position
30. Genuinely likes people

3. Qualities Deemed Undesirable for the Credentialed Minister

Persistent, undesirable qualities are sometimes associated with mental health concerns. Left untreated, these qualities can be detrimental to both the minister and their ministry. While healthy individuals may exhibit or act out on one or more of these undesirable qualities at any given time, *patterned* behavior around any one of the undesirable qualities listed below is a cause for concern. The RfM program helps to identify these undesirable qualities and to assist the individual in seeking therapy.

1. Exhibits avoidant behavior - overly sensitive to potential criticism or rejection
2. Dependent - relies too much on others to fulfill personal needs
3. Histrionic reaction - reacts in an exaggerated manner to minor situations

4. Narcissistic - always drawing attention to self
5. Aggressive - overly demanding of others; words and actions appear to be hostile
6. Compulsive - carries things to the extreme; has need for perfection
7. Negative
8. Paranoid - believes that one is being singled out for hurtful reasons
9. Excessively anxious
10. Depressed
11. Has delusional thoughts
12. Shows excessive anger and a hostile attitude
13. Impulsive
14. Overly vulnerable
15. Overly self-conscious
16. Prone to substance abuse
17. Prone to abusive behavior
18. Overly modest
19. Hardhearted
20. Mistrustful
21. Constantly needs approval
22. Judgmental
23. Intolerant of differences
24. Overconfident and always needs to win
25. Rigid
26. Lacks clarity about one's call from God and the church
27. Lacks self-confidence
28. Has difficulty forgiving self and others
29. Has difficulty accepting forgiveness from others
30. Has difficulty formulating a personal faith position

4. Professional Instruments of Measurement and Psychological and Personality Appraisal Objectives

The RfM instruments described below identify, assess, and measure the desirable and undesirable qualities for ministry listed in the previous section.

1. *Strong Campbell Vocational Interest Inventory*. Identifies those interest patterns most appropriate for work in the Christian ministry, the Church of the Brethren denomination in particular.
 1. Having a facility with words and using them to frame thoughts, opinions, ideas, verbally articulating them in an informative and persuasive manner;
 2. Relating socially with an interpersonal style that conveys warmth and caring without being patronizing and condescending. Sharing with others as fellow human service providers;
 3. Investing in religion with a sense of God's presence and embracing a higher meaning for life than that offered by secular society;
 4. Employing specific skills such as art, writing, music, and drama in ministry.

2. *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)*. Identifies the personality type most descriptive of candidates, which determines how they go about daily life and which can be expected to shape their basic style of leadership. This includes . . .

1. The flow of physical and psychic energy - whether one prefers to direct physical and psychological energies inwardly or outwardly;
2. The method of garnering knowledge for the environment - whether with facts or intuition or with an integration of facts and intuition;
3. The most comfortable way of processing information - cognitively or affectively (whether decisions, important or trivial, are made objectively and logically or subjectively and logically).
4. The way of structuring/organizing themselves and their environment - orderly or spontaneously.

Whatever the personality type, it is the one that the individual will use in his/her ministry. It shapes and gives flavor to all ministerial roles - administration, visiting, preaching, teaching, conflict management, group facilitation, counseling and nurturing, communication, coordination, interpersonal relationships, interfacing with other professionals, role-modeling, being comfortable with authority and authority figures, crisis intervention, evangelism, self-discipline, supporting, advising and consulting, and creating warm ministry environments, etc.

3. *New Personality Revised Inventory (Neo-PI-R)*. Assesses the major dimensions of personality, together comprising thirty (30) personality traits that will promote or hinder a person's success in ministry roles and functions.

1. Dimension 1 - calm, even-tempered, relaxed, deals comfortably with others vs. shows disruptive emotion, lacks impulse control, exhibits faulty reasoning;
2. Dimension 2 - likes people, gregarious, active, talkative, cheerful, and energetic vs. reserved, unfriendly, and independent;
3. Dimension 3 - imaginative, sensitive, attentive to inner and outer world, intellectually curious, prefers variety vs. conventional, conservative, emotionally inhibited, has narrow interests;
4. Dimension 4 - altruistic, cooperative, sympathetic, trusting vs. competitive, egocentric, and skeptical;
5. Dimension 5 - purposeful, strong-willed, determined, willing to achieve, scrupulous, and reliable vs. lackadaisical, more hedonistic, less conscientious, and less realistic.

4. *Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-II (MCMI-II)*. Assesses personality style in a more global fashion than the three previous measurements. The MCMI-II identifies the enduring and basic organization of personality and whether maladaptive psychological functioning is likely to exist.

Extreme scores on any of the thirteen (13) personality or nine (9) symptom syndrome scales usually indicate any one or all of the following conditions:

1. Has a history of personal and social maladjustment;
2. Has unusual difficulty adapting to changes in the social environment;
3. Continually relies on coping behaviors that ultimately are self-defeating and cause distress in others.

When present, personal maladjustment of this nature can be expected to create emotional and interpersonal difficulties for a minister in all areas of professional and pastoral relationships.

SUMMARY: In summary, the findings from the Readiness for Ministry (RfM) evaluation are used to identify the psychological and personality traits, characteristics, interests, and attitudes that determine the personal and emotional style a candidate for licensure will use in performing the roles of ministry and pastoral service.

5. Instruments for Measuring Competencies

Given the range of ministry education programs in the Church of the Brethren, there is no one standard set of testing instruments for determining whether the various competencies described above have been acquired or strengthened. It is important, however, that each such program develop assessment instruments that are appropriate to the program, enabling those overseeing a program of study to confirm that these competencies have been demonstrated.

Some of these instruments will be used along the way in relation to particular courses or auxiliary experiences. They may include, but are not limited to, tests, research papers, feedback forms, and narrative evaluations by instructors or supervisors. If the course objectives and course design are linked to particular competencies, as they should be, then assessment instruments for these courses will yield helpful information on the progress students are making toward the achievement of competencies.

It is also important that ministry education programs have final assessment instruments that measure the extent to which the whole range of desired competencies is evident in students preparing to graduate from the program. Some educational programs may utilize written and/or oral comprehensive examinations for this purpose. Others may involve review of an ongoing portfolio of documents from the student's program of study, culminating in some kind of integrative essay. Still others may feature a series of self-, peer-, and teacher-assessments of the student's accomplishments. Whatever instruments are used, they should be designed to test not only levels of knowledge and skills, but also the student's ability to integrate biblical and theological understandings with the practice of ministry.

2. MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

In addition to the personal qualities discussed above, it is important that ministerial leaders understand and be skilled in practicing the ministry to which the church has called them. Simply possessing competencies is no guarantee of effective ministry. Acquiring these competencies, however, is a critical part of preparation for ministry.

The paragraphs that follow name three (3) important competencies for ministerial leaders and attempt to spell out what each of these competencies involves. For those entrusted with the responsibility of designing ministry education programs, this material is intended to serve two purposes. First, it offers clues as to possible learning objectives for particular courses and auxiliary experiences. Second, it provides a yardstick for measuring whether the various competencies have been acquired or strengthened through the ministry education program.

1. Competencies for Ministry

1. Interpret Scripture, tradition, and theology, with particular attention to the heritage, values, and practices of the Church of the Brethren.
2. Communicate faith and values with contextual and intercultural awareness.
3. Demonstrate theologically informed reflective practice that anticipates an embodied ministry.

The Competencies are expressed in three areas of study and preparation. Courses through ACTS, TRIM, SeBAH, and Bethany as well as Learning Units in EFSM/EPMC are associated with the Competencies, and they also express the breadth of material to be covered during training and subsequent continuing education.

Education for Shared Ministry (EFSM) or Educación Para un Ministerio Compartido (EPMC)

A district that is considering transitioning an EFSM or EPMC minister to ordained status should request that the Brethren Academy review the minister's transcript to determine what additional courses or experiences, related to the scope of the Competencies, may be required. The Brethren Academy will report these findings to the district for consideration and/or implementation.

List of Competencies and Related Courses

1. Interpret Scripture, tradition, and theology, with particular attention to the heritage, values, and practices of the Church of the Brethren.

Courses associated with Competency:

- Intro to Old Testament/Hebrew Bible
- Intro to New Testament/Reading New Testament Contextually
- Biblical Interpretation/Intro to Biblical Studies
- History of the Church
- History of the CoB
- Intro to Theology [note: not required in TRIM]

2. Communicate faith and values with contextual and intercultural awareness.

Courses associated with Competency:

- Preaching
- Worship
- Leadership/Administration
- Teaching and Learning in the Church
- Evangelism

[Please see individual programs requirements for which course above are required and which are options within categories.]

3. Demonstrate theologically informed reflective practice that anticipates an embodied ministry.

Courses associated with Competency:

- Leadership/Administration
- Pastoral Care [not required in Bethany MDiv]
- Supervised Ministry
- Ethics Training

[please see individual programs requirements for which courses above are required and which are options within categories.]

Refer to additional expectations of training, practice, and accountability in the current Ministerial Leadership Paper.

3. POLITY AND PROCESS

1. The Complete Discernment Process

The professional instruments, which are listed and defined in Section I. E., represent only one part of the discernment process. The time spent with a calling cohort in intentional discernment helps candidates to process decisions and possible next steps in preparation for the time of preparation known as licensing (see the current Ministerial Leadership Paper). The District Ministry Commission (or an appointed interview committee) should also raise a wide variety of questions with the candidate and pay close attention to how the candidate responds to the questions in the “Calling (Pre-licensing) Interview Guide.” What is the candidate’s understanding of God, Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the universal Christian church, the scriptures, and the Church of the Brethren?

While we should recognize and appreciate different gifts, understandings, and individual freedoms, we must also ascertain whether or not the candidate is comfortable with and committed to the basic beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren. Is the candidate able to articulate the doctrines, beliefs, and practices of the Church of the Brethren? Can the candidate affirm the Annual Conference statements on a wide variety of subjects? What is the candidate’s understanding of authority and power as a leader, and is this understanding compatible with the Brethren understanding of the biblical passages listed above? What is the nature of the candidate’s spiritual formation, and what is his/her self-understanding as a spiritual leader? How does the candidate understand the role of the Bible in guiding and informing the inquirer (both the individual and the community) in discerning God’s will and

purpose for life in today's world? What is the nature of the candidate's devotional/prayer life? Is the candidate willing to accept the District Ministry Commission's counsel regarding ministerial training?

These are a few of the questions and concerns that should be raised with the ministerial candidate in the calling (pre-licensing) interview and throughout the years of ministerial training prior to ordination. *It is important for the Ministry Commission (or its interview committee) to realize, however, that those persons just entering the discernment process may have incomplete answers to some of these questions, and that is to be expected.* These questions signal the need for excellency in ministerial education. When the licensed minister's educational preparation is completed, regardless of the training track, he/she should be prepared to respond in depth to these and other related questions as part of the pre-ordination process.

In addition to the above questions and concerns that should be raised with the candidate, professional measurements listed above will assist both the candidate and the District Ministry Commission in the discernment process.

2. Polity and the Calling (Pre-licensing) Process

1. Policy and Procedure

It is the practice of the District to follow the polity and procedures for credentialing as described in the Church of the Brethren *Ministerial Leadership Manual*. This RfM material is an addendum to the established polity.

2. The purpose of the Readiness for Ministry program is to . . .

1. Assist the candidate with gaining a greater self-knowledge;
2. Assist the candidate with information that can be used in his/her career development plans;
3. Assist the candidate with the development of his/her educational plans;
4. Assist the District Ministry Commission in its guidance of the candidate as he/she develops educational plans, assuring that there is course work in areas where there might be deficiencies;
5. Assist the District Ministry Commission in making decisions relative to the candidate's suitability for the set-apart ministry;
6. Assist the District Ministry Commission in redirecting the candidate to *another area of ministry*, should it appear that he/she is not suited for the set-apart ministry.

3. Timing

The Readiness for Ministry program begins with the pre-licensing discernment period and extends to the completion of the credentialing process. The RfM instruments should be administered prior to the pre-licensing interview by the District Ministry

Commission or an interview committee appointed by the District Ministry Commission.

4. Appointment of an Evaluator

This person should be a psychologist or someone with equal qualifications.

5. Cost

Each district is responsible for determining costs and how they will be shared. It is typical for costs to be shared among the District, the Calling congregation, the candidate, and others.

6. RfM Instruments

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator *
- Neo-PI-R (New Personality Revised) *
- 16 PF (Personality Factors)
- Strong Campbell Vocational (Interest) Inventory *
- Life Style Inventory
- Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-II (MCMI-II) *
- Other

* It is beneficial to use several of the above instruments with each candidate for ministry. Those instruments with the asterisk are highly recommended.

NOTE: Another instrument that is often used in career development centers, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), *is not* recommended by those evaluators who are working with RfM programs *unless* there are indications of emotional or psychological pathology. In that case, the MMPI and other instruments should be considered and administered under careful supervision.

3. Process

1. When the District Office receives notification (by letter, email, or phone call) from the appropriate group in the calling congregation, the District Executive/Minister (or an appointee) shall schedule a meeting with the candidate and the pastor and the appropriate representatives of the calling congregation. The purpose of the meeting is to . . .
 1. Create a three-way partnership - candidate, congregation, and district - of support, ministerial training, involvement in the life of the church, etc.
 2. Become familiar with the entire process leading up to the interview with the District Ministry Commission. The process will begin with a year of intentional discernment with a calling cohort (and include completion of the “Calling (Pre- licensing) Interview Guide” and the RfM instruments.
 3. Understand the need for a basic criminal background check to provide transparency and clarity to the District Ministry Commission and future congregations of the past activity of the candidate. The candidate shall

provide the necessary information to complete the background check and sign the appropriate consent form to the District Executive/Minister. Information and consent form shall be destroyed by the District Executive/Minister upon completion of the background check.

4. Understand that the RfM instruments are to be administered under the supervision of the evaluator. The evaluator shall tabulate the results of the instruments and prepare a written evaluation for the candidate and the District Executive/Minister. The evaluator should meet with the candidate prior to the interview with the District Ministry Commission to interpret the results of the RfM instruments. The evaluator and the District Executive/Minister should confer as necessary. The District Executive/Minister may share the results and written evaluation with the District Ministry Commission.
5. Discuss the manner in which confidential material is handled by those who are involved with the RfM process:
 1. The candidate shall sign the appropriate “Release of Records Authorization” forms, granting the District Executive/Minister the right to release relevant information to the evaluator; granting the evaluator the right to release his/her written evaluation of the RfM instruments to the District Executive/Minister and the District Ministry Commission; granting the District Executive/Minister the right to place the evaluator’s written evaluation in the candidate’s permanent ministerial file; and granting the District Executive/Minister and the evaluator the right to share a verbal summary of the RfM written evaluation with the District Ministry Commission.
 2. The evaluator will discuss the findings in each of the instruments used in the RfM process, but the original RfM instruments shall be maintained in the files of the evaluator and are strictly confidential.
 3. The candidate has a right to review the original instruments with the evaluator at any time in the future.
 4. The candidate may submit a written request at any time for the evaluator to submit a copy of the written evaluation of the RfM instruments to specific individuals.
6. Discuss the normal procedure relative to the candidate’s interview by the District Ministry Commission, including notification to the congregation of action taken by the commission and scheduling the licensing service.
7. Discuss the need for the candidate to develop and submit a covenant of accountability (including an educational plan) to the District Ministry Commission, via the District Executive/Minister, prior to the calling (licensing) interview. An updated covenant of accountability shall be

submitted to the District Ministry Commission annually until the process is completed.

8. Clarify that upon the completion of the discernment period and the Readiness for Ministry process, the candidate will follow the process outlined in the current Ministerial Leadership Paper.
2. Persons from Other Denominations
Persons from other denominations seeking to have their license or ordination recognized in the Church of the Brethren will be required to participate in the RfM program as described in this document. The instruments shall be administered to the candidate in the district where the candidate is seeking entrance. Refer to the current Ministerial Leadership Paper for additional information.
3. Support for Candidates for Ministry
Congregations and Districts provide support in various ways. Bethany Theological Seminary and the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership also provide assistance. Contact one's District Office for details.

Section I, Ministerial Qualities, was developed by the Ministry Issues Committee of the Council of District Executives (CODE) during 1994-1995 and affirmed by the Council of District Executives in January 1996. This section was edited and revised November 1998 and September 2000.

Section II, Ministerial Competencies, was developed by the Ministry Advisory Council in consultation with the dean and faculty of Bethany Theological Seminary and affirmed by the Council of District Executives in May 2000.

Revised October 2000.

Revised November 2018 by the Ministry Advisory Council.

The Competencies were revised by the Ministry Advisory Council and affirmed by the Council of District Executives in July 2025.

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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

READINESS FOR MINISTRY (RFM)

Release of Records Authorization

District Executive/Minister and Ministry Commission

I, _____ [*print name*], give my permission to the RfM evaluator, _____ [*print name*], to release information to the District Executive/Minister and the District Ministry Commission relative to my participation in the Readiness for Ministry program of the District.

I understand that the information released will include the detailed written summary by the Readiness for Ministry evaluator and any verbal or written comments by the District Executive/Minister to the evaluator and verbal comments the evaluator and the District Executive/Minister may make to the District Ministry Commission. The written summary by the evaluator will be based on the results of the Readiness for Ministry instruments listed below.

The check marks in the blanks below indicate the instruments used in this RfM process:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Neo-PI-R (New Personality Revised)
- 16 PF (Personality Factors) Strong Campbell Vocational Interest Inventory
- Life Style Inventory Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory
- Other _____
- Other _____

Evaluator [*name*]
[*address*]

[*phone*]
[*e-mail*]

Candidate's Signature:

Date:

Affirmed by the Council of District Executives, 1/96

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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

READINESS FOR MINISTRY (RFM)
Release of Records Authorization

Permanent Ministerial File

I, _____ [*print name*], authorize the District Executive/Minister to place the summary of the Readiness for Ministry instruments in my permanent ministerial file. The summary was written by the RfM evaluator, _____ [*print name*], and is based on the results of the Readiness for Ministry instruments listed below.

The check marks in the blanks indicate the instruments used in this RfM process.

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Neo-PI-R (New Personality Revised)
- 16 PF (Personality Factors) Strong Campbell Vocational Interest Inventory
- Life Style Inventory Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory
- Other _____
- Other _____

I understand that my permanent ministerial file is maintained in a secure and confidential place in the District Office, that I may examine my file at any time, and that my file will be sent to another district if I relocate out of the _____ District, Church of the Brethren. I also acknowledge that I have the right to submit my written comments as an attachment to the evaluator's summary of the RfM instruments.

Evaluator [*name*]
[*address*]

[*phone*]
[*e-mail*]

Candidate's Signature:

Date:

Affirmed by the Council of District Executives, 1/96

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