***Western District Conference***

**Growing in Ministry Journey\***

**of**

**Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Introduction**

Welcome to the journey of growing “in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:18). We rejoice in the affirmation of your call to ministry.

As caretakers of ministry credentialing for Western District Conference (WDC), the Ministerial Leadership Commission offers this *Growing in Ministry Journey* as a tool for personal and pastoral development.

As followers of Jesus, we take one step at a time. Please observe that what is offered here is material for a lifetime – pace yourself, take your time with each section. You may be starting this journey with minimal educational experience, or you may be a seminary graduate. In any case, you have had some life experience and some gifting has been identified.

We invite you to document this journey as you go through it with your mentor. Let us walk together as we become “faithful minister(s) of Christ” (Col 1:7). “To him be glory both now and forever! Amen” (2 Pet 3:18).

**REFLECTING**

Use the suggestions below to prompt your thinking. You will remember things as you go along, so leave space, insert pages, or include folder(s) to store significant records, pictures, etc. If you have done some of this work earlier, copy it or include a reference here to where your material can be found. However, there can be new insights as you reflect on this early material from different stages of your ministry.

* Biographical, reflective material on home life
  + Do a genealogical chart for the past several generations and reflect on the issues that emerge.
  + Mine your childhood (favorite things, childhood memorabilia, early likes/dislikes, relationship with parents, siblings, peers) for connections between childhood interests, aspirations and your current life.
  + Describe competitive and cooperative relationships that formed you.
  + Did you ‘play church’ as a child? What were your preferred roles?
  + What were the family Bible-reading and/or family worship practices?
  + What attitude toward pastors did you experience in your home?
  + What did God shape into your heart in those growing up years?
* Beginning spiritual formation
  + Describe your earliest spiritual experiences – when did you first encounter God?
  + What Bible-reading practices did you develop?
  + Note what led to your baptism and describe your early discipleship journey.
* Early congregational influences
  + What image of a pastor do you take from your early pastor(s)?
  + Describe how you came to see different leadership personalities.
  + What were the beginning affirmations of your gifts?
  + Were there situations that made you think negatively about ministry?
  + Who would you consider mentors? What did you learn from them?
  + What roles were you given in church – Sunday school, youth group, sponsor, pastor, …
  + What were the affirmations along the way?
  + Were you given freedom to fail?
  + What did God shape into your heart through the church?
* Educational and life experience
  + Describe yourself as a student.
  + What caught your attention?
  + What bored you?
  + What were the extra-curricular things that invited you to leadership or teamwork?
  + How has your educational and life experience prepared you for ministry?
  + What did God shape into your heart through schooling and early life experiences?
* Singleness, Marriage, and Family
  + What are the blessings and challenges of singleness?
  + What did God shape into your heart through singleness? Through marriage?
  + What did God shape into your heart through children?

**GROWING IN MINISTRY**

***Reflecting with mentor***

The relationship between the pastor and the mentor is significant in the beginning of pastoral ministry and the credentialing process. Envisioned here is a time of careful discernment in which the pastor and the mentor review the areas of growth together. The pastor then chooses several areas to work with for a time (e.g., one per quarter or three for the year). After a year they will review the areas and renew the plan.

**Ministry Effectiveness Training & Experience Reflections (METER)**

The Ministerial Leadership Commission of Western District Conference offers METER as a guide for growth for all credentialed leaders. Designed primarily as a tool for interaction between the mentor and pastor, it will serve also as a guide for those serving in other than congregational ministries.

**Mission Vision:** Participating in the mission of God in the world is the core value of leaders in the church. All of our learning – whether through reflecting on life experience or through deliberate study – is guide by our passion to participate in what God is doing in the world.

Mennonite Church USA has *VISION: HEALING AND HOPE* as its vision statement:

*God calls us*

*To be followers of Jesus Christ and,*

*By the power of the Holy Spirit,*

*To grow as communities of grace, joy, andn peace, so that*

*God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.*

In METER, we invite you to reflect on the growth areas, how your mission vision is shaping each area, and how your development in each area is shaping your mission vision.

**Mission/Vision projection -** Project a personal mission/vision statement. (Attachment 1)

**Growth areas and affirmations**

* ***Biblical Story:*** As a pastorordainedin Mennonite Church USA, I want to be **firmly grounded in the Biblical story of God’s redeeming, reconciling, restoring mission in the world and preach and teach the Word of God for life transformation and church mobilization.** (Attachment 2)
* ***Anabaptist/Mennonite Story, Theology and Principles:*** As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to **understand and embody core Anabaptist values, beliefs, and practices**. (Attachment 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 life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit**. (Attachment 4)
* ***Self-understanding and Self-awareness, Emotional Intelligence:*** 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.** (Attachment 5)
* ***Missional Engagement:*** As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to grow in my ability to **provide focused missional engagement and leadership in my context**. (Attachment 6)
* ***Leadership:*** As a pastor ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to grow in my **capacity for administrative and missional leadership**. I will tend the position (office) of pastor and the tasks of ministry. (Attachment 7)

**Owning the Growth Journey**

While it may be helpful to respond to the initial discernment questions in each area, it will likely be more productive to focus on one or two areas for a period of time. As you and your mentor reflect together, make a note of your intentions for the next quarter/six months/year and set a time to reflect on the journey. (Attachment 8)

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I Thessalonians 5: 23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. (NIV)

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***Attachment 1***

**Mission/Vision Projection Worksheet**

Project an initial personal mission/vision statement.

(An example: *“Having received the love of God, I am called to be an instrument of the love of Jesus in my home, church, and the world. I seek to be formed by the Holy Spirit as I am biblically and culturally informed for leadership in my context.”*)

What difference does this make?

* How will this affect how I prioritize the use of my time?
* What gifts do I bring to this vision/mission?
* What are the resources I need to move forward?

Amended/edited/revised after first year.

***Attachment 2***

**Growth areas and affirmations**

**Biblical Story Worksheet**

As a ministerordainedin Mennonite Church USA, I want to be **firmly grounded in the Biblical story of God’s redeeming, reconciling, restoring mission in the world and preach and teach the Word of God for life transformation and church mobilization.**

**Initial discernment**

* How have you acquired your knowledge of the Bible?
* What questions do you have about how the Bible was formed?
* How are you letting the Biblical text and story form you?
* What new discoveries about the Bible have you made recently?
* What new questions are emerging?
* Reflect on the importance of interpreting the Bible through the lens of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
* Evaluate how you communicate the message of the Bible through preaching and teaching.
* How are you helping your congregation become a community that “searches the scriptures”?
* How is your preaching and teaching calling forth life transformation?

**Plan for growth [see Attachment 8]**

Resources I intend to explore include books, seminars, case studies, webinars, subscriptions, course work (online or in-person)… [See a list of recommended books at “Mentor/Mentee Resources/Resources for the Journey” at http://mennowdc.org/resources-for-pastors/.]

In addition to consultations with my mentor, I would like to be in touch with my coach, spiritual director, ministry peer group, or others who will support and hold me accountable in my ministry (list them):

***Attachment 3***

**Growth areas and affirmations**

**Anabaptist/Mennonite Story, Theology and Principles Worksheet**

As a minister ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to **understand and embody core Anabaptist principles**.

**Initial Discernment**

* How have you come to embrace the Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective as a holistic foundation for faith in Christ?
* Review your awareness of the origins of Anabaptism and the various historical streams that have been shaped by it.
* Reflect on *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and on how it informs your ministry.
* Evaluate your commitment to practice and teach the Anabaptist values of discipleship, community, and mission (e.g., integrating evangelism and peacemaking).
* How are you leading your congregation to embrace and share the love of Jesus for all?

**Plan for Growth [see Attachment 8]**

Resources I intend to explore include *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, other books, seminars, case studies, webinars, subscriptions, course work (online or in-person)… [See a list of recommended books at “Mentor/Mentee Resources/Resources for the Journey” at http://mennowdc.org/resources-for-pastors/.]

In addition to consultations with my mentor, I would like to be in touch with… (coach, spiritual director, ministry peer group, …)

***Attachment 4***

**Growth areas and affirmations**

**Christian Spirituality/Discipleship Worksheet**

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

**Initial Discernment**

* How have you been shaped by your understanding and response to God’s love as expressed fully in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?
* Reflect on your spiritual formation practices and your openness to discover what God is doing in the world.
* Evaluate your willingness and capacity to incarnate/live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed (I Peter 3) and to equip others to do the same.
* In what ways are you able to provide healthy pastoral care and counsel that leads in the spiritual formation of others?

**Plan for Growth [see Attachment 8]**

Resources I intend to explore include books, seminars, case studies, webinars, subscriptions, course work (online or in-person)… [See a list of recommended books at “Mentor/Mentee Resources/Resources for the Journey” at http://mennowdc.org/resources-for-pastors/.]

In addition to consultations with my mentor, I would like to be in touch with… (coach, spiritual director, ministry peer group, …)

***Attachment 5***

**Growth areas and affirmations**

**Self-understanding and Self-awareness, Emotional Intelligence Worksheet**

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

**Initial Discernment**

* Reflect on your call to ministry and continuing discernment of your spiritual gifts, ministry capacities and roles.
* Which ministry roles do you enjoy best?
* What have you learned about yourself from examining your family of origin?
* Give examples of how you have been able to work with your own responsiveness/reactivity.
* Under what circumstances would you consider counseling or therapy for yourself?
* Evaluate your own practice of counseling. Think through when you would plan to refer others for further professional help.
* Evaluate your ability to follow your own convictions, disagree with others without malice, and live creatively with differences and conflict. (*Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love)*
* Consider your commitment to life-long learning about life, self, and others.
* How are you managing sexual boundaries and dealing with the general stresses of ministry?
* How have you experienced your own sense of authority this month? How has this brought you comfort or discomfort?

**Plan for Growth [see Attachment 8]**

Resources I intend to explore include books, seminars, case studies, webinars, subscriptions, course work (online or in-person)… [See a list of recommended books at “Mentor/Mentee Resources/Resources for the Journey” at http://mennowdc.org/resources-for-pastors/.]

In addition to consultations with my mentor, I would like to be in touch with… (coach, spiritual director, ministry peer group, …)

***Attachment 6***

**Growth areas and affirmations**

**Missional Engagement Worksheet**

As a minister ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to grow in my ability to **provide focused missional engagement and leadership in my context.**

**Initial Discernment**

* Describe the various influences in your life up until now. What have been your cross cultural and racially, ethnically and theologically diverse experiences?
* Describe the natural, cultural, religious and world influences that are shaping your current ministry context.
* How do you help your congregation show love for your neighbors?
* How do you move from inward spiritual formation to outward mission that invites others to their own spiritual formation that leads to faith in Christ?
* Reflect on how you help each member recognize his or her mission as God’s reconciling, redeeming ambassador.
* How do you relate to those who embrace a secular worldview?

**Plan for Growth [see Attachment 8]**

Resources I intend to explore include books, seminars, case studies, webinars, subscriptions, course work (online or in-person)… [See a list of recommended books at “Mentor/Mentee Resources/Resources for the Journey” at http://mennowdc.org/resources-for-pastors/.]

In addition to consultations with my mentor, I would like to be in touch with… (coach, spiritual director, ministry peer group, …)

***Attachment 7***

**Growth areas and affirmations**

**Leadership Worksheet**

As a minister ordained in Mennonite Church USA, I want to grow in my **capacity for administrative and missional leadership**. I will tend the position (office) of minister, my ministering self, and the tasks of ministry.

**Initial Discernment**

* Describe your leadership style and the factors that have shaped it.
* How does the way you are leading affect your congregation?
* Who are the people within/without the congregation who offer constructive feedback? Whom are you asking for evaluation?
* Consider these affirmations and how these values intersect with your context.
* Leadership that is consistent with Anabaptist values will:
  + Be rooted and grounded in one’s relationship with Jesus.
  + Aspire to lead as Jesus led.
  + Cultivate an environment of trust and confidence where the gifts and ministry capacities of others are collaboratively evoked and empowered.
  + Be clear about one’s own gifts and calling.
  + Be accountable to the church that grants authority for ministry.
  + Have the capacity to competently lead the church in its public rituals.
  + Be able to speak for the church in its ecumenical relationships.
  + Have a basic understanding and appreciation for systemic and organizational dynamics.
  + Lead in collaborative congregational transformation – describe current reality, develop vision, raise the spiritual temperature of the congregation, encourage missional initiatives, develop people in ministry, and provide sustaining structures.
  + Help lead the church in fulfilling its missional calling.

**Plan for Growth [see Attachment 8]**

Resources I intend to explore include books, seminars, case studies, webinars, subscriptions, course work (online or in-person)… [See a list of recommended books at “Mentor/Mentee Resources/Resources for the Journey” at http://mennowdc.org/resources-for-pastors/.]

In addition to consultations with my mentor, I would like to be in touch with… (coach, spiritual director, ministry peer group, …)

***Attachment 8***

**Owning the Growth Journey**

**Annual Growth Plan Worksheet**

Based on your reflections, identify two or three areas of potential growth and note specific plans the next year.

1. ***Biblical Story*** (Attachment 2)

2. ***Anabaptist/Mennonite Story, Theology and Principles*** (Attachment 3)

3. ***Christian Spirituality/Discipleship*** (Attachment 4)

4. ***Self-understanding and Self-awareness, Emotional Intelligence*** (Attachment 5)

5. ***Missional Engagement*** (Attachment 6)

6. ***Leadership*** (Attachment 7)

The areas I have chosen to work with in this next year (ending month/year) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which I will work at in the following ways:

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which I will work at in the following ways:

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which I will work at in the following ways:

**After a year** **of reflecting,**

Reaffirm or revise your mission/vision statement (Attachment 1):

Choose 2 or 3 areas of potential growth for the next year:

\*”Growing in Ministry Journey” was initially developed by Owen Burkholder for Virginia Mennonite Conference. Adapted by Clarence Rempel and Marlene Bogard for Western District Conference in 2014. Revised for WDC by Heidi Regier Kreider and Kathy Neufeld Dunn in 2017.

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