

## **Minimal Education/Formation Requirements for Pastors Seeking Ordination in Central Plains Mennonite Conference**

### **A. Premise:**

For pastors called to ministry in Central Plains Mennonite Conference, ongoing education (seminars, workshops, classes for credit or audit, etc.) would be normative. Each pastor is urged to see life-long learning as a professional goal and spiritual discipline.

**The Master of Divinity degree continues to be the normative educational preparation for full-time, credentialed pastors in the Central Plains Mennonite Conference.** However, this may not be appropriate for all pastors and credentialed leaders and alternative educational paths should be planned. Commissioned pastors are encouraged to continue their educational growth as well. However, licensed pastors in preparation for ordination are required to obtain the following minimum educational requirements for ordination:

### **B. (Minimum) Education Requirements for ordination:**

1. a course in Anabaptist/Mennonite history and theology
2. a Bible survey course
3. formation seminar (vocational discernment; personality assessment, spiritual direction)
4. one course in pastoral care and counseling—preferably CPE unit
5. one course in worship, preaching
6. one course in pastoral leadership

*Note: These classes must be taken for credit (certificate, diploma, or degree) status. Classes taken as audit may be considered by action of the Central Plains Pastoral Leadership Committee.*

### **C. Avenues to achieve (minimum) education requirements:**

1. Master of Divinity (at an accredited seminary)
2. College degree plus CPMC minimum requirements (if not met in college)
3. Pastoral Ministries A. A. (Hesston College)
4. A Certificate in Theological Studies as offered by AMBS or EMS
5. Pastoral Studies Distance Education (five units)
6. Instituto Biblico Anabautista (Anabaptist Biblical Institute) - certificate or diploma. All classes in Spanish language.
7. Course of study approved by CPMC Pastoral Leadership Committee; Conference Minister recommendation

### **D. Commitment of CPMC:**

1. Work collaboratively with MC USA-related colleges and seminaries and other MC USA area conferences to develop courses, options, and procedures regarding minimum educational expectations;
2. Provide experienced Mennonite mentors for pastors in their first two years of ministry;
3. Work with candidates to discover affordable, geographically centralized, and language specific classes for pastoral candidates' needs;
4. Offer continuing education seminars, workshops, and clinics to resource pastors and lay leaders;
5. Inform MC USA of our policies; participate in the formation of guidelines for all of MC USA and adapt CPMC policies to denominational expectations.
6. Collaborate with congregations to fund educational requirements of candidate for ordination

### **E. Procedure**

1. *All candidates for licensing will complete a Ministerial Leadership Information Form, participate in an interview with the Pastoral Leadership Committee of CPMC, and prepare an accountability plan for meeting the educational requirements for ordination in the two year licensing period.*
2. *For pastors new to Mennonite Church USA but already ordained, an interview with the CPMC Pastoral Leadership Committee is expected with (potential) educational expectations outlined. In some cases, continuing education options will be required or recommended.*

April 11, 2005