

Texas Ministries of the Church of God

PROCESS FOR COMPLETING PERIODIC UPDATING PROCESS OF ORDAINED MINISTERS

All ordained ministers will complete the Periodic Updating Process in accordance with the Credentials Manual of the Church of God (see below). According to the manual, every ordained minister will conduct this process at least every five years. Four years after you have completed the process, you will be given notice to complete it again within the next year.

Steps for completing the Periodic Updating Process:

- 1) The minister will choose two other ordained ministers in good standing to serve as his or her **Ministry Update Reviewers**. The minister is encouraged to choose at least one colleague whose ministry is comparable to that of the minister participating in the Ministry Update (i.e. a senior pastor for a senior pastor's committee, a pastoral care specialist for a pastoral care specialist, etc.) One member may be ordained in a Christian fellowship other than the Church of God (Anderson, IN).
- 2) The minister will arrange a **one-time meeting** (60-90 minutes in length) with the Ministry Update Reviewers to report on the status of his or her ministerial call and commitment, and relationship to the standards for vocational ministry. *The Periodic Updating Process is not meant to be a performance evaluation* but rather an opportunity to reflect on one's ministerial practice, current assignment, professional development, and future goals for ministry. It is intended to stimulate personal and professional growth, and to strengthen collegial partnerships.
- 3) During the meeting, the Ministry Update Reviewers will offer appropriate insights, words of affirmation and challenge, encouragement and guidance. When necessary, they may confront the minister charitably. During the process, use the QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION as part of the discussions. When finished, the minister and the Ministry Update Reviewers should complete the CONFIRMATION AND BACKGROUND FORMS and send them to the Credentials Committee to affirm that the Ministry Update has taken place.

Credentials Manual, 7.12

The Credentials Committee Should Ensure A Periodic Ministry Update

A. Purpose: The periodic updating process (minimum of every five years) is to determine whether the sense of calling and commitment remain current, and whether there is active accountability and appropriate relationship to the standards and expectations of ministers of the Church of God. It is not a time of performance review. It is encouraged but not required for retired ministers. They should be contacted whenever possible so that there can be awareness of any needs or special circumstances.

B. Areas to be Explored:

1. Status of the call to ministry and how it is being lived out in personal relationship with Jesus Christ
2. Background check (including criminal check as prescribed by law)
3. Current ministry engagement
4. Connection with the Church of God

C. Follow-up: Based on responses to the above, a plan to address areas of concerns may be developed.

D. Resources for five-year update: See www.jesusisthesubject.org. Samples are included in section 8.00.

E. Implications of Non-Participation: Failure to participate in the update process brings the potential for the suspension or revocation of credentials.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Discuss 1 to 3 questions from each section below

MOTIVATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL UPDATE

- What are you most proud of as a minister of the gospel?
- What motivates you to continue serving as a vocational minister?
- How has your motivation changed or grown since you first felt called to ministry?
- In what ways are you as a minister recognized as a leader in your faith community?
- When your ministry is completed, what would you like to have said about your years of service?
- What spiritual gifts do you find in yourself that enable your present ministry?
- What are your devotional practices? Have you found these adequate to sustain your spiritual health in the midst of the many demands of active vocational ministry?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your spiritual life?

EDUCATIONAL UPDATE

God provides divine gifts to called servants for ministry. Refinement of such gifts is always needed, and other abilities and skills must also be developed. To remain vital and effective, a minister must be engaged in ongoing study to better inform and enable the call to ministry.

- In what formal or informal continuing education have you been engaged?
- As you review your recent years in ministry and present challenges, what further studies might serve you well? In what areas would you like additional instruction and knowledge?
- What book, course, conference or discovery has been especially significant to you in the last five years?
- What regular disciplines help you remain actively "learning" throughout your life and ministry years?

VOCATIONAL UPDATE

- How has your call to ministry found expression during the last five years?
- What roles or ministry positions have you held?
- What ministry experiences would you like to have that are not presently available to you?
- How have you found opportunities to minister, in spite of this?
- Have you considered a change in your present ministry role, and if so to what do you feel God may be leading you?
- How do you remain connected with your community while engaged in ministry?
- What have you learned about ministry from watching other ministers as they serve?

CONNECTION UPDATE

- In what ways are you connecting to the larger body of Christ through the Church of God?
- How have you been involved with other Church of God ministers or events during the last 5 years?
- Who do you look towards for encouragement, support or prayer? Mentors? Coaches? Colleagues in ministry?
- In what ways do you connect and offer support to others in ministry in the Church of God?

Code of Ethics for Ministers in the Church of God

Below is the Code of Ethics as listed in the Credentials Manual of the Church of God. Please read and discuss areas of affirmation, growth and possible need for development.

PREAMBLE

This Ministerial Code of Ethics establishes moral and ethical standards of behavior to be adhered to by all persons licensed or ordained in the Church of God. It is generally assumed that all ministers will behave ethically. However, reality indicates that such assumptions are occasionally incorrect. Therefore, although the following is not a legal document and cannot alone create an ethical person, we attempt here to establish our expectations for professional conduct for all persons who engage in ministry on behalf of the Church of God.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

1. My life will be lived for the purpose of giving glory to God and reflecting the character and countenance of Jesus Christ in all that I say, think, and do.
2. I will act in ways that uphold and enhance the honor, integrity, morality, and dignity of the gospel of Christ in general and the profession of a minister in particular.
3. I will maintain a life of personal and public integrity before God, the congregation I serve, and the wider Kingdom community both inside and outside the Church of God.
4. I will be known as a person of my word, always maintaining confidentiality where appropriate and being a person who speaks and lives by the truth in every context.
5. I will limit my freedoms rather than weaken ministry by refraining from all kinds of addictive, dependent, and self-destructive behaviors.
6. I will use my position to dispel gossip, resolve conflict in accordance with biblical teaching, and create a culture of trust and reconciliation.
7. I will enter into the pastoral relationship to benefit those I serve, not myself. This means that I will faithfully teach the Word of God, protect the vulnerable, and offer pastoral care to all regardless of race, gender, creed, ethnic origin, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation.
8. I will maintain appropriate boundaries between myself and parishioners, refraining from any behavior that manipulates, demeans, shames, wounds, coerces, or takes power over another person.
9. I will promote and support the ministry of my colleagues, rejoicing with them in their victories and weeping with them through their challenges.
10. I will give myself to serving the wider church as I am able and lead my congregation to be a valuable partner in the work of my Assembly of the Church of God as well as Kingdom work in my community.
11. I will always strive to grow in ministry through life-long learning and adequate preparation that will enhance my knowledge and skill levels in ministry.

12. I will honor the Church of God General Assembly's resolutions on same-sex marriage by refusing to perform or participate otherwise in the leadership of the marriage ceremonies of same-sex persons.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

1. I will demonstrate my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry.

2. I will commit myself to biblical standards as I pursue holy living in all my thoughts, words, and actions.

3. I will cultivate a consistent devotional life, practicing spiritual disciplines of study, prayer, spiritual direction, and meditation.

4. All my sexual expression--including thoughts, words, and actions--will be reserved exclusively for my spouse. If I am unmarried, my pursuit of a spouse will maintain biblical teaching regarding chastity and purity outside of marriage. That means that I will maintain high moral standards and not engage in sexual misconduct, whether in person, by reading material, telephone, computer, or any other means.

5. I will limit my freedoms rather than weaken ministry by refraining from all kinds of addictive, dependent, and self-destructive behavior.

6. I will honor my family in all ways, holding my marriage as a sacred and holy union and raising my children to know and love the Lord and His church.

7. I will maintain good financial stewardship, managing my money wisely and honestly, exercising restraint in spending, and demonstrating generosity toward the church and others.

8. I will maintain appropriate boundaries in all relationships, avoiding blurring the line between vocational and personal relationships. As a result, I will avoid exploiting others for my benefit.

9. I will give adequate attention to self-care, maintaining good health physically, emotionally, and spiritually. When necessary, I will seek help from others to see that this is done well.

10. I will actively seek and maintain high standards of accountability to my family, my colleagues in ministry, and relevant leadership both inside the congregation I serve and the Assembly of the Church of God in which I reside.

11. I will strive to live a balanced life that honors my commitments to my family and friends, providing for sufficient privacy and quality time together.

Please Print Out and Complete the Next Three Forms

Scan / E-mail to: txmofficemanager@aol.com
Or Mail to: TXM Credentials, 3715 Preston Rd., Pasadena, TX 77505

Please Print

CONFIRMATION FORM

Minister's Name: _____ Date: _____

Congregation/Place of Ministry: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Comments: _____

By our signatures below, we affirm that the above person has satisfactorily completed a MINISTRY UPDATE of his/her calling and accountability as an ordained minister in the Church of God, as required in Section 7.10 of the Credentials Manual of the Church of God. We affirm that the above minister's call and commitment are current.

Reviewers:

Place of Ministry:

1. _____

2. _____

Comments:

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM

Texas Ministries of the Church of God

I hereby authorize the Texas Ministries of the Church of God (TXM) to request, receive, maintain, and transfer upon request any and all investigative reports, applications, letters, references, forms, and any other information in regards to my licensing, ordination, and ministerial services. I understand that some of these reports could contain information about my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living, as well as information related to my criminal history, credit history, driving and motor vehicle records, education, employment history, or other background checks.

I further authorize the TXM to keep all information received as part of my professional file. I understand this file is considered permanent and is transferable to another authority within the Church of God assembly.

Print Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Signed: _____ Date Signed: _____

BACKGROUND CHECK DATA COLLECTION



SENDING AGENT: Texas Ministries of the Church of God

PLEASE PRINT

TODAY'S DATE: _____

FIRST NAME: _____ MIDDLE: _____ LAST: _____

OTHER NAMES USED: _____

Social Security No.: _____

DOB: _____

DR. LIC. # or STATE ID: _____ STATE ISSUED: _____

GENDER: _____

ETHNICITY (select ONE):

- Unknown or none below
- White
- Black/African American
- Hispanic
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Alaskan Native / American Indian

EMAIL: _____

HOME ADDRESS:

STREET _____

CITY _____ COUNTY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____