The Pacific Southwest District  
addendum to the Church of the Brethren  
“Ministerial Leadership”  
paper adopted by Annual Conference in 2014  
(This document updates the addendum passed by the District Board of Administration, 4/28/2002. Update approved 7/6/2015)

The purpose of this addendum is to note places related to the Ministerial Leadership Polity of the Church of the Brethren where the Pacific Southwest District wishes to spell out additional requirements or provide clarification as to how the polity will be implemented in the Pacific Southwest District. This addendum will not repeat sections of the 2014 Ministerial Leadership polity, and so that document should be read together with this addendum.

The District Ministry Commission delegates the duties of oversight of licensing, commissioning, and ordaining to its Nurturing and Credentialing Committee (NACC). The district ministry commission receives the recommendation of its Nurturing and Credentialing Committee with the duty to act upon its recommendation. The Ministry Commission may invite the chair of the interview committee to its meeting along with other relevant persons.

Nurturing and Credentialing Committee (NACC)
The Ministry Commission appoints and supervises the work of the NACC which is charged with overseeing the process of credentialing individuals for set apart ministry, including licensing, commissioning, and ordaining. They are responsible for meeting the responsibilities of the Church of the Brethren Ministerial Leadership 2014 polity and the additional expectations and procedures noted in the PSWD Addendum to the Ministerial Leadership 2014 polity. This includes receiving the pre-interview guides, naming interview committees, making recommendations to the Ministry Commission, and overseeing any further training or counseling that they might recommend for a ministry candidate.

The NACC shall consist of five members appointed by the Ministry Commission, each serving a five year term, with eligibility to serve two consecutive terms. One new member shall be appointed each year. The NACC shall call out from its membership a chairperson. Additionally, the Ministry Commission Chair, the District Moderator, the District Board Chair, and the District Executive Minister are Ex-Officio members of the committee.

The Calling Cohort
(addition to Ministerial Leadership Polity 2014, section IV.B.1)
Calling cohorts will include at least three persons in addition to the discerner: an ordained mentor appointed by the District; a congregational companion from the discerner’s home congregation; and a spiritual friend, trusted peer, or teacher. Additional persons can be named to the cohort, but the cohort should not have more than five additional persons.

Should the discerner and the calling cohort, upon completion of at least four meetings for Bible study, prayer, reflection, and discernment, sense the desire for continued exploration and training for ministry, they will:

- notify the District Executive Minister who will send the discerner the Pre-Licensing Interview Guide, additional denominational documents the candidate needs to be familiar with, and information on completing the Ministry Readiness Evaluation;
- begin work on the Covenant of Accountability (section IV.B.3) that would guide their work if they are licensed.
The following conditions are established as additional prerequisites for licensing:

1. The candidate is to be a member of the Church of the Brethren, and an active participant in a local congregation for at least one year.
2. Candidates serving a District approved Church Plant are immediately eligible for the licensing process and shall fill out an interview guide.
3. There is reasonable expectation that required preparation for ordination can be completed within five years.
4. If the candidate is not an U.S. citizen, she/he shall provide evidence of permanent alien resident status.

**The Process of Licensing**

**The District Office**

Connects the candidate with the Pre-Licensing Interview Guide and a copy of the “Pacific Southwest District Addendum to the Ministerial Leadership Polity 2014” and a copy of the Church of the Brethren Code of Ethics for Ministers.

Notifies the candidate that the chair of Nurturing and Credentialing Committee (NACC) will contact him or her with the interview date within one month after the Pre-Licensing Interview Guide is completed and returned.

Pre-Licensing interviews occur two times a year. The NACC may schedule additional interviews at its discretion.

Candidates who submit materials in a language other than English must allow an additional three weeks so that the district can arrange for translation of the materials. A translation fee will accompany all such applications. Churches are encouraged to help applicants cover this cost.

Sends copies of the Pre-Licensing Interview Guides to the PSWD Executive Minister, Nurturing and Credentialing Committee, and interview committee. All documents should not be reproduced and must be returned to the district office.

Creates a confidential file on the candidate. Contents of this file should not be reproduced without the written consent of the candidate and authorization of the District Executive Board.

Will inform the candidate about being processed through a professional psychological assessment for Ministry Readiness Evaluation*. The District Ministry Commission will evaluate and approve the tools being used for this assessment on a regular basis. Persons who have had their license terminated or lapsed will need to be processed through this policy to activate their license. The district is responsible for paying 2/3rd of the cost and the individual or local congregation will cover 1/3rd of cost for this service.

(*This is in light of National Readiness for Ministry Program guidelines recommended by Church of the Brethren, National Ministry Office and Council of District Executives.)

Following the interview sends to district ministry commission and the chair of Nurturing & Credentialing Committee copies of recommendations from the interview committee.

**Interview Process**

The NACC shall meet prior to the District Board of Administration’s meetings to interview candidates and prepare recommendations to the Ministry Commission.

Shall in consultation with the district Executive Minister contact candidates to be licensed with the date, place and time of examination.

Shall establish an interview committee to consist of at least five members drawn from the NACC and the Ministry Commission. The committee should include a representative of the candidate’s congregation. The interview committee should include both men and women. The District Executive Minister, the chair of the
District Ministry Commission and the chair of District Board of Administration are ex-officio and are welcome at all interviews.

The interview committee shall meet prior to the interview to review procedure and note possible themes; (If the NACC chair is unable to conduct the interview, the committee will appoint a chairperson.)

The established committee shall conduct the interview. The interviewers will be open to review any written material as well as asking additional oral questions.

The interview should include these subject areas about the candidate:
- his or her aims for the ministry
- natural ability
- moral and spiritual fitness
- willingness to prepare for the duties of ministry

The interview shall include the following ethics questions:
- from the Church of the Brethren Code of Ethics for Ministers, are there any parts you wish to discuss with the interview committee?
- Do you agree to abide by this Code?
- Have you ever been involved with or charged with ethical misconduct at any time, or if charged, have you been cleared of such charges or achieved reconciliation?

The interview should include questions about Church of the Brethren Core Values.

The interview time will begin with a 15-20 minute devotional time to be prepared and led by the candidate on a text or theme of their choosing.

Shall, following the interview, excuse the candidate so that the committee can deliberate and make its recommendation(s).

Shall inform the candidate of the recommendation by letter within seven days. The chair may verbally inform the candidate prior to writing the letter.

Shall send the signed original interview guide and recommendations to the district office to be sent to the district ministry commission for action.

**Support Systems for Licensed Ministers**

**The congregation**

The congregation, through its executive committee or commission charged with ministerial concerns, in consultation with the pastor, can be helpful in the following ways:

Continue to provide a calling cohort member for the licensee from the local congregation.

Provide ample opportunity for the licensed minister to participate in a wide variety of meaningful congregational and other ministerial activities beyond the congregation under the guidance of the pastor.

Give encouragement to him or her for adequate educational preparation for the set-apart ministry with the completion of college, seminary, TRIM, or SEBAH, as outlined in the Covenant of Accountability.

Be alert to the financial needs of the licensed minister in his or her educational preparation by assistance in securing grants or loans. Congregations should consider making funds available to licensed ministers for their education.

Arrange for the licensed minister to attend at least one meeting annually of the executive committee or commission related to ministerial concerns for mutual sharing and dialogue.
**The district will**

Establish ongoing contact with the licensed minister by appointing a mentor for mutual sharing of activities and concerns. The mentor and licensee shall file annual progress reports with the NACC. In light of this contact and regular sharing with the NACC, judgment can be made regarding the licensed minister’s progress toward commissioning or ordination.

Make financial assistance available to the licensed ministers for educational preparation.

Be responsible for an annual consultation with the licensed ministers and make recommendations to re-license or, if necessary, to terminate the license.

Counsel the licensed minister concerning his or her educational program and Covenant of Accountability.

**The Set-Apart Ministry**

As a Licensed Minister nears completion of their training for set-apart ministry, and with the affirmation of the Calling Cohort, the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee (NACC) will hold an interview with the Licensed Minister utilizing either the Pre-Commissioning or Pre-Ordination Interview Guide and the Pacific Southwest District Pre-Commissioning & Pre-Ordination Exam. Following the interview, the NACC will make its recommendation to the Ministry Commission and with their approval a recommendation to the District Executive Board.

**Commissioned Ministers**

**Requirements for Commissioned Ministers**

The Licensed Minister, their Calling Cohort, and the Interviewing Committee should give prayerful consideration to scripture study on ministry found in the Ministerial Leadership Polity 2014, section III.A.

Other qualities the Pacific Southwest District considers in commissioning ministers include:

- One or more spiritual gifts; i.e., preaching, service, teaching, administration, faith, love, healing and discernment;
- Deep commitment to Christ and the Church of the Brethren;
- Leadership ability;
- Respect and honor for the decision-making processes within the congregation;
- Ability and will to work in harmony with others;
- Passion for ministry.

Evidence of a thorough knowledge of the history, beliefs, practices and polity of the Church of the Brethren. A willingness to teach and uphold the beliefs, practices and policies of the Church of the Brethren, including the policies of ordination for the Church of the Brethren, through a verbal commitment in interviews and a public commitment at the time of ordination.

Licensing by the Church of the Brethren for at least one year prior to commissioning examination.

Completion of the professional psychological assessment approved by the District Ministry Commission for Ministry Readiness Evaluation.

**Interview Process**

**The district office shall:**

Send and receive the “Pre-Commissioning Interview Guide” and the “PSWD Church of the Brethren Pre-Commissioning & Pre-Ordination Exam.” Each candidate will also be sent for study a copy of the Church of the Brethren Code of Ethics for Ministers. Candidates for ordination must submit all written materials to the district office four weeks before their interview date. The district office will notify candidates of this deadline date.
Candidates who submit materials in a language other than English must allow an additional three weeks so that the district can arrange for translation of the materials. A translation fee will accompany all such applications. Churches are encouraged to help applicants cover this cost.

Respond to the candidate, explaining the time-line and procedures and giving a copy of the Pacific Southwest District Addendum to the Ministerial Leadership Polity 2014.

Receive transcripts and recommendations; verify them; send copies to the interview chair. Candidates must have complete post-high school transcripts and three letters of recommendation sent directly from their originating source to the district office.

Copies of the Pre-Commissioning Interview Guides and Pre-Commission/Ordination written exams will be provided to the PSWD Executive Minister, Nurturing and Credentialing Committee, Ministry Commission and, upon request, to the District Executive Board. All documents are retained by the district and may not be reproduced. Interview guides and related papers are officially private information.

Following the interview, send to district Ministry Commission and the chair of Nurturing & Credentialing Committee copies of recommendations from the interview committee.

Maintain a file of all recommendations, open only to authorized persons, including the candidate.

Following action by the district Executive Board, notify the candidate, and the congregation where the candidate holds membership by letter, of the decision of the board.

Report the ordination to denominational headquarters at the time the service occurs and annually update the district ministerial list for the denominational directory.

_The Nurturing and Credentialing Committee shall:_

Establish a Commissioning interview committee.

Authorize the NACC chair to name an interview chair from the members of the Commissioning Interview Committee.

The chair of the commissioning interview committee shall:

- In consultation with the District Executive Minister, inform the candidate of the date, place, and time of examination.
- Convene the Interview Committee and moderate the interview process, within the following four guidelines:

The Interview Committee for Commissioned minister candidates shall consist of a minimum of seven members, not to exceed ten members, from the following list of people:

- the members of the Nurturing & Credentialing Committee,
- one representative of the congregation recommending the candidate,
- the chair, PSWD Board of Administration,
- the chair, PSWD Ministry Commission,
- the other members of the PSWD Ministry Commission,
- the PSWD Moderator,
- the PSWD Executive Minister/s.

The Interview Committee shall be a fair demographic representation of our district.

All Pre-Commissioning interviews should be conducted at the District Office and be scheduled in consultation with the meeting schedule of the District Policy Board.

The District Ministry Commission will take responsibility for securing a translator if one is required.
Have the committee meet prior to the interview to review procedure and note possible themes.

Conduct the examination. The interviewers will be open to review any written material as well as asking additional oral questions.

The interview time will begin with a 20-30 minute Bible study time to be prepared and led by the candidate on a text or theme of their choosing.

Excuse the candidate after the interview so that the committee can deliberate and make its recommendation(s).

Inform the candidate of the recommendation by letter within seven days. The chair may verbally inform the candidate prior to writing the letter.

Send the signed original Interview Guide and recommendations to the district office to be sent to district ministry commission and a copy to the chair of Nurturing & Credentialing Committee.

May meet with the district ministry commission if invited to do so by its chair.

When the district ministry commission has considered the recommendation of the interview committee and determined that the licensed minister has met the requirements for commissioning, the commission shall recommend to the district Executive Board that he or she be ordained upon the receipt of a call.

The Commissioning policy of PSWD is that there be a three-fourths (3/4) majority in the Ministry Commission and a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote by a qualified quorum (2/3) of the District Executive Board to commission a candidate.

If the district board approves the recommendation, within one week the District Executive Minister shall present information of the board’s action to the candidate, with a copy to the congregation where the candidate holds membership.

Before commission is granted, approval by the congregational business meeting of the congregation where the candidate is a member shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote. A representative of the District Ministry Commission shall be present for the congregational vote. The congregation’s clerk shall notify the district office of the results of the vote.

If the congregation approves the recommendation, the person shall be commissioned to the set-apart ministry for their specific call and setting for ministry. The District Executive Minister, candidate, pastor and representative of district ministry commission shall mutually agree upon the date and arrangements for the service of commission during a congregational worship service. The initiation of planning is the responsibility of the District Executive Minister. The service shall include the laying on of hands, preferably during a Sunday morning worship service.

**Ordained Ministers**

*Requirements for Ordained Ministers*

The Licensed Minister, their Calling Cohort, and the Interviewing Committee should give prayerful consideration to scripture study on ministry found in the Ministerial Leadership Polity 2014, section III.A.

Other qualities the Pacific Southwest District considers in ordaining ministers include:

- One or more spiritual gifts; i.e., preaching, service, teaching, administration, faith, love, healing and discernment;
- Deep commitment to Christ and the Church of the Brethren;
- Leadership ability;
- Respect and honor for the decision-making processes within the congregation;
- Ability and will to work in harmony with others;
- Passion for ministry.
Evidence of a thorough knowledge of the history, beliefs, practices and polity of the Church of the Brethren.

A willingness to teach and uphold the beliefs, practices and policies of the Church of the Brethren, including the policies of ordination for the Church of the Brethren, through a verbal commitment in interviews and a public commitment at the time of ordination.

Licensing by the Church of the Brethren for at least one year prior to ordination examination.

Completion of the professional psychological assessment approved by the District Ministry Commission for Ministry Readiness Evaluation.

**Interview Process**

_The district office shall:_

Send and receive the “Pre-Ordination Interview Guide” and the “PSWD Church of the Brethren Pre-Commissioning & Pre-Ordination Exam.” Each candidate will also be sent for study a copy of the Church of the Brethren Code of Ethics for Ministers. Candidates for ordination must submit all written materials to the district office four weeks before their interview date. The district office will notify candidates of this deadline date.

Candidates who submit materials in a language other than English must allow an additional three weeks so that the district can arrange for translation of the materials. A translation fee will accompany all such applications. Churches are encouraged to help applicants cover this cost.

Respond to the candidate, explaining the time-line and procedures and giving a copy of the Pacific Southwest District Addendum to the Ministerial Leadership Polity 2014.

Receive transcripts and recommendations; verify them; send copies to the interview chair. Candidates must have complete post-high school transcripts and three letters of recommendation sent directly from their originating source to the district office.

Copies of the Pre-Ordination Interview Guides and Pre-Commission/Ordination written exams will be provided to the PSWD Executive Minister, Nurturing and Credentialing Committee, Ministry Commission and, upon request, to the District Executive Board. All documents are retained by the district and may not be reproduced. Interview guides and related papers are officially private information.

Following the interview, send to district Ministry Commission and the chair of Nurturing & Credentialing Committee copies of recommendations from the interview committee.

Maintain a file of all recommendations, open only to authorized persons, including the candidate.

Following action by the district Executive Board, notify the candidate, and the congregation where the candidate holds membership by letter, of the decision of the board.

Report the ordination to denominational headquarters at the time the service occurs and annually update the district ministerial list for the denominational directory.

_The Nurturing and Credentialing Committee shall:_

Establish an Ordination interview committee.

Authorize the NACC chair to name an interview chair from the members of the Ordination Interview Committee.

The chair of the ordination interview committee shall:

In consultation with the District Executive Minister, inform the candidate of the date, place, and time of examination.
Convene the Interview Committee and moderate the interview process, within the following four guidelines:

The Interview Committee for Ordained minister candidates shall consist of a minimum of seven members, not to exceed ten members, from the following list of people:

- the members of the Nurturing & Credentialing Committee,
- one representative of the congregation recommending the candidate,
- the chair, PSWD Board of Administration,
- the chair, PSWD Ministry Commission,
- the other members of the PSWD Ministry Commission,
- the PSWD Moderator,
- the PSWD Executive Minister/s.

The Interview Committee shall be a fair demographic representation of our district.

All Pre-Ordination interviews should be conducted at the District Office and be scheduled in consultation with the meeting schedule of the District Policy Board.

The District Ministry Commission will take responsibility for securing a translator if one is required.

Have the committee meet prior to the interview to review procedure and note possible themes.

Conduct the examination. The interviewers will be open to review any written material as well as asking additional oral questions.

The interview time will begin with a 20-30 minute Bible study time to be prepared and led by the candidate on a text or theme of their choosing.

Excuse the candidate after the interview so that the committee can deliberate and make its recommendation(s).

Inform the candidate of the recommendation by letter within seven days. The chair may verbally inform the candidate prior to writing the letter.

Send the signed original Interview Guide and recommendations to the district office to be sent to district ministry commission and a copy to the chair of Nurturing & Credentialing Committee.

May meet with the district ministry commission if invited to do so by its chair.

When the district ministry commission has considered the recommendation of the interview committee and determined that the licensed minister has met the requirements for ordination, the commission shall recommend to the district Executive Board that he or she be ordained upon the receipt of a call.

The Ordination Policy of PSWD is that there be a three-fourths (3/4) majority in the Ministry Commission and a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote by a qualified quorum (2/3) of the District Executive Board to ordain a candidate.

If the district board approves the recommendation, within one week the District Executive Minister shall present information of the board’s action to the candidate, with a copy to the congregation where the candidate holds membership.

Before ordination is granted, approval by the congregational business meeting of the congregation where the candidate is a member shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote. A representative of the District Ministry Commission shall be present for the congregational vote. The congregation’s clerk shall notify the district office of the results of the vote.

If the congregation approves the recommendation, the person shall be ordained to the set-apart ministry, following the receipt of a call. The District Executive Minister, candidate, pastor and representative of district ministry commission shall mutually agree upon the date and arrangements for the service of ordination.
ordination during a congregational worship service. The initiation of planning is the responsibility of the
District Executive Minister. The service shall include the laying on of hands, preferably during a Sunday
morning worship service.

Receiving Ministers from Other Denominations for
Term of Service in PSWD Congregations

The Ministerial Leadership Polity 2014 addresses the question of transfer of ordination from another
denomination in Section IX., which includes a paragraph on recognizing as a Commissioned Minister for
term of service a minister who does not wish to transfer their credential.

The Pacific Southwest District through the NACC will work with the local congregation and the minister
to facilitate the evaluation of the existing credential and approve for standing as a Commissioned minister
in the Church of the Brethren.

The minister seeking recognition of credential shall provide the NACC with the following information:
• a letter of support from the congregation they are serving;
• a letter of ministry standing from the denomination which holds their ordination;
• complete a background check with the District approved agency;
• provide transcripts from their seminary or other degree program;
• show evidence of a completed ministry ethics training that is acceptable to the Church of the Brethren
or complete the denomination’s ethics in ministry course.

When these documents have been received, the minister and a congregational representative will be invited
to meet with the NACC for a conversation. The conversation would include: why they are interested in
serving the Church of the Brethren congregation that has called them; talk about the minister’s faith journey
and call to ministry; share about their ministry experiences and interests; and discuss their understanding
of being a pastor. The minister will be asked to open the time with a 10-15 minute devotion on a passage
of their choosing. Conversation will also include a discussion of the need to support the Church of the
Brethren Polity in their leadership with the local congregation.

Following the conversation, the NACC will make recommendation to the Ministry Commission to
Commission the minister for their term of service in the specific congregation. The Commissioning policy
of PSWD is that there be a three-fourths (3/4) majority in the Ministry Commission and a three-fourths (3/4)
majority vote by a qualified quorum (2/3) of the District Executive Board to commission a candidate.

If the district board approves the recommendation, within one week the District Executive Minister shall
present information of the board’s action to the candidate, with a copy to the congregation where the
candidate holds membership.

The District Executive Minister, minister, and representative of district ministry commission shall mutually
agree upon the date and arrangements for the service of commission during a congregational worship
service. The initiation of planning is the responsibility of the District Executive Minister.
Pacific Southwest District Church of the Brethren
Pre-Commissioning & Pre-Ordination Exam

(This is in addition to the Interview Guide)

Please submit a typed response: Retype each question followed by your answer.**
Send completed response to: Pacific Southwest District Office, P.O. Box 219, La Verne, CA 91750-0219

A. Biblical Understanding

1. Write a brief (300-500 word) exegesis of one of the passages from each of the lists below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 1</th>
<th>List 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 15:1-21</td>
<td>Matthew 5:17-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 22:1-19</td>
<td>Mark 6:34-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 3:1-16</td>
<td>John 1:1-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Kings 18:17-40</td>
<td>I Corinthians 1:4 – 2:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 23</td>
<td>Micah 6:6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 53</td>
<td>Hebrews 4:14 – 5:14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Define and discuss briefly (100 words or less), using biblical references where appropriate, what you understand by the following terms: Choose Five (5) from the Seven (7).

1. Sin
2. New Life in Christ
3. Service
4. Justice
5. Justification
6. Repentance
7. Evangelism

B. Brethren Doctrine and Practice: Discuss your understanding of the following areas of Brethren doctrine and practice: Choose Five (5) from the Eight (8). You are encouraged to use Biblical references, if you desire. (longer is not necessarily better)

1. Baptism
2. Anointing with oil
3. Child dedication
4. Eucharist
5. Simple life
6. Peace and reconciliation
7. Love feast and feet washing
8. Laying on of hands

C. Christian Education: Discuss your philosophy of Christian Education.

D. Administration What do you feel are the major administrative tasks for which a pastor should assume responsibility in most congregations?

E. Polity: The Church of the Brethren Manual of Organization and Polity states: “Authority is held accountable within the community, which in turn diligently seeks the “mind of Christ” in study of the Scriptures, in dialogue with brothers and sisters, and in openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit.”

This being true, briefly discuss the nature of pastoral authority.

** Translation Requests:
Candidates who submit materials in a language other than English must allow an additional three weeks so that the district can arrange for translation of the materials. A translation fee will accompany all such applications. Churches are encouraged to help applicants cover this cost.

** PSWD Confidentiality Policy:
Copies of the Pre-Licensing, Pre-Ordination, Reception of Ordination Interview Guides and PSWD Church of the Brethren Pre-Ordination Exam, will be provided to the PSWD Executive Minister/s. Nurturing and Credentialing Committee, Interview Committee and, upon request to the District Board. All documents are retained by the district and may not be reproduced. All of the above documents are officially private information.