



Code of Personal and Ministry Ethics for Non-Credentialed Pastors/Leaders in BCMB Churches

Preamble

All Non-Credentialed Pastors/Leaders, paid or unpaid, in the BC Conference of MB Churches (BCMB) are spiritual leaders who are expected by their congregations to hold to a high level of personal and ministry ethics.

This code of Christian conduct outlines these expectations.

The following commitments emerge from our personal and collective calling to love God with all our being and to love our neighbours as ourselves. The Mennonite Brethren tradition emphasizes a commitment to righteousness, peacemaking and reconciliation, holy living, justice, helping those in need, and the balancing of personal freedom with sacrificial love for others.

All Non-credentialed pastors/leaders in MB Churches are accountable directly to the congregation and to other leaders who represent the congregation.

When Non-credentialed pastors/leaders fail to uphold their commitments as expressed here, other local congregational leaders in consultation with Provincial Leaders desire to deal with each failure as redemptively as possible. However, this redemptive desire does not rule out a careful investigation of the failure, required steps to move toward greater compliance with this Code, and/or the possible termination of their ministry/leadership role.

In My Personal Life, by the grace of God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, I commit to...

Maintain an **ongoing, vibrant, and healthy spiritual relationship** with God through the Holy Spirit.

Ensure **proper self-care** spiritually, physically, and relationally in order to live a healthy life as God intended and to minister effectively for the longer term in my ministry setting.

In whatever life circumstance (singleness, marriage, parenthood), **demonstrate covenantal love and care** for those in my closest circle of relationships (e.g., parents, spouse, children, etc. as applicable).

Live my personal life in a way that is **consistent** with the commitments made below for my ministry/leadership life.

In My Ministry/Leadership Life, by the grace of God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, I commit to...

Live out the **centrality of Jesus, the gospel, and God's Kingdom** in all areas of my ministry/leadership life publicly and privately, including inviting all people to become disciples of Jesus.

Place the **well-being and mission** of the congregation (or equivalent ministry group) I am serving and the well-being of each individual within my sphere of ministry/leadership **above my own personal interests**. This rules out using my ministry/leadership setting for personal, political, or financial gain beyond the terms of an employment agreement if applicable. It also involves the full disclosure to my local church leadership of any financial gifts or other perks offered to me because of my ministry/leadership role, and the submission to those leaders regarding the acceptance/rejection of these gifts/perks.

Demonstrate **respect and dignity toward all persons**, showing concern for all members in my sphere of ministry/leadership, respecting best practices regarding confidentiality, and stewarding well the authority and trust given to me by avoiding harassment, harmful discrimination, abuse, sexual/professional misconduct, and verbal or physical intimidation.

Teach, encourage, and live out in my ministry/leadership and personal life the biblical, theological, and ethical guidance articulated in the **MB Confession of Faith**. This includes but is not limited to:

- 1) Living out a commitment to the importance of **Jesus' way of peacemaking** by pursuing healthy interpersonal relationships in my life, and demonstrating a willingness to engage in conflict resolution procedures (as per biblical models) with individuals or with the larger congregation as needed.
- 2) Living out a commitment to **generosity and stewardship** of possessions, time, and giftings that reflects love, compassion, and a desire to support God's work locally and globally.
- 3) Living out a commitment to **honesty and integrity** by avoiding lying, cheating, financial impropriety, plagiarism, and all other deceptions and misrepresentations of my ministry/leadership activities and/or theological commitments. It also involves the reporting to my local leaders of any possible conflicts of interest that might arise, and the ruling out of theft or the misuse/destruction of property belonging to others.

- 4) Living out a commitment to **spoken, written, and social media communication that reflects my love for God and neighbour**. This commitment rules out gossip and slander, as well as language that is racist, sexist, abusive, vulgar, obscene, or degrading. It also rules out the use of or the sharing of written or visual materials that are degrading, dehumanizing, exploitative, hateful, gratuitously violent, and/or pornographic.
- 5) Living out **my sexuality in the way of Jesus' Kingdom** by limiting sexual expressions of intimacy exclusively to the context of covenantal marriage between a man and a woman. This also means avoiding any communication or actions (e.g., solemnizing or officiating in a marriage/civil ceremony) which is in conflict with this understanding of God's vision for the expression of human sexual intimacy.
- 6) Living out my commitment to being **filled by Jesus' Spirit** without drunkenness, drug-induced states, or harmful addictions. The only exceptions here would involve medications deemed by qualified professionals to be medically necessary to treat any existing health conditions.
- 7) Living out **respect for the governing authorities** by contributing positively to my community and by submitting to the local, provincial, and national laws in place (as long as they are not inconsistent with the ethics for disciples of Jesus as articulated in Scripture).

Demonstrate a commitment to **ongoing professional development** in my ministry/leadership life, so that I can continue to grow in the gifts that God has given me for the benefit of the Body of Christ.

Demonstrate a commitment to **active participation in our denominational family** (local, provincial, national) by attending gatherings and serving as able.

Demonstrate **respect and a willingness to submit** to the final decision making of the congregation (or equivalent ministry group) I am serving and its leadership. This includes, but is not limited to, decisions regarding the ending of ministry/leadership role. It also includes submission to the wisdom of those leaders regarding my service in the congregation after the ending of my ministry/leadership role.

Demonstrate **transparency and full disclosure** to my local church ministry leaders when I fail in the commitments I have expressed here.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name (Print): _____

Ministry/Leadership Role and Location: _____

(Version 1.1 April 2022)