



CHURCH OF GOD OHIO

## State Credentials Committee

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Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ!

The *Credentials Manual of the Church of God* requests all ordained ministers to undertake a Five-Year Ministry Update to determine if the sense of calling and commitment remain current, to establish whether there is active accountability to the Church of God, and if an appropriate relationship to the standards and expectations of ministers of the Church of God is still in place. This is done for the health of the minister and the health of the movement and is not a performance review.

This coming year will be the anniversary of your ordination. Please take the time to read the accompanying material, and the very careful steps laid out for performing your self-guided Five Year Ministry Update. Recommended dates are included to help you perform this Update over the next year. This Five Year Update is not a performance review. You will need to return to your District Credentials Committee the completed and signed Update form, your Written Reflections based on the questions included in this packet, and the completed and signed Background Check permission form.

The process may seem quite burdensome at first glance. However, with careful review, we believe you will find that this self-guided process is reasonable, fairly painless, beneficial to you, and shows that we believe in a partnership for mutual ministerial fitness as we seek to honor our Lord, together.

Although not required of retired ministers, the use of this Five Year Ministry Update is strongly encouraged because it is an effective way for the district, state, and national ministry to maintain a healthy, helpful connection with retired ministers. If you are a retired minister and do not wish to complete this Ministry Update, please inform your District Credentials Committee. When your self-guided Update process has been completed (no later than July 1 of next year), please send your completed and signed Update form, your Written Reflections, your Covenant Agreement reaffirming your Ordination, and your properly filled out Background Check form to your District Credentials Committee.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact your District's Credentials Committee, who will give guidance and assistance as needed.

Your State Credentials Committee

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## Instructions on Completing Your Self-Guided Ministry Update

Step 1: Choose three ordained ministers in good standing with the Church of God to serve as your "Ministry Update Team." These cannot be family members.

Timeline Recommendation: Select and invite the Update Team no later than October of this year; set the meeting for no later than April of the upcoming year.

Step 2: Read through and complete the Update Form, and then send a completed copy to each member of your Update Team. (A copy of the Update Form will be signed by the Update Team as part of Step 6 below.)

Timeline Recommendation: Complete and send the Update form to the Team no later than December of this year.

Step 3: Compose (write or type) brief, clear reflections on your current ministry, addressing areas of greatest challenge, potential growth, and greatest strengths. (You should consult the "Standards for Vocational Christian Ministry" in Section 2.00 of the *Credentials Manual of the Church of God* for information on these written reflections.) A series of 10 questions, based on the Standards, has been included in this packet for you to use as guides for the reflections. When you're finished, send a copy of the reflections to the members of your Update Team. (**Note:** these written reflections will be submitted to the District Credentials Committee and will be filed in the District and State.)

Timeline Recommendation: Begin writing in July of this year; do one or two reflections per week; complete the reflections no later than February of next year; send copies to the Update Team no later than March of next year.

Step 4: Arrange a one-time meeting of 60-90 minutes in length with your Update Team, in person or virtually, to discuss the status of your ministerial call and commitment, and your current relationship to the standards for vocational ministry. Again, the Five-Year Ministry Update is not a performance evaluation. It is an opportunity to reflect on your ministerial practice, current position, professional development, spiritual formation, personal and professional relationships, and future goals for ministry. This is an opportunity to engage in thought-provoking dialog about personal, professional, and spiritual health, and to strengthen collegial partnership and accountability in ministry.

Timeline Recommendation: Remind your Update Team of the date of the meeting; hold the meeting no later than April of next year.

Step 5: Invite the members of the Ministry Update Team to offer appropriate insights, to challenge thoughts or practices they find questionable, to offer guidance, and to give you encouragement. Provide them with the "Instructions to the Ministry Update Team."

Step 6: A copy of the Update Form should be signed by you and all members of your Team. If a member of your team cannot be present to sign, place their name and contact information on the line for them, then send to your District Credentials Committee, no later than June 30. (**Reminder:** your written reflections should also be sent to the District Credentials Committee.)

Timeline Recommendation: The Update Team signs the Update form no later than April; mail the Update Form, the Written Reflections, your Covenant Agreement reaffirming your Ordination, and the Background Check form no later than May.

## Ministry Update Form

CONs ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_ (CE, NE, NW, SE, SW)

(Please complete and send to each member of your Update Team. You may type on a separate page, or write on this page. If writing by hand, you may use the reverse side of this page, or a separate sheet of paper, if needed.)

1. To help determine your connectedness to the Church of God and to other ministers, please mark below all the events that apply and include the number of times and the year(s) you have attended in the last five years:

\_\_\_\_\_ North American Convention/Regional Conventions  
Year(s) attended \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Fall General Assembly of Ohio Ministries  
Year(s) attended \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ District General Assembly meetings  
Year(s) attended \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Church of God Sponsored events (please list with dates attended)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Workshops (please list with date attended)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please list what offices or positions, if any, that you hold/have held in the national church, in Ohio Ministries, and/or in your district in the last five years?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which ones in the last three years?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you currently registered with the Church of God-Anderson IN? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

4. Are you aware that failure to maintain proper contact and registration for two years will result in credentials being revoked? (See Section 7.00 of the *Credentials Manual*.) YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

5. In what ministry positions or engagement in ministry have you been involved in the last five years? Please designate which position(s) are Church of God—Anderson IN.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why do you believe ordination is needed in your current ministry?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed names and signatures and email addresses of the members of the Update Team:

\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this Update Form, the Written Reflections, your Covenant Agreement reaffirming your Ordination, and the Background Check Release to your District Credentials Committee **by June 30**.

## Questions to Guide Your Written Reflections

(You may write your answers below, or type your answers on a separate sheet.)

These reflections should be typed or written out and shared with your Update Team prior to your scheduled meeting. Give them at least one month to read your reflections in preparation for your 60-90 minute meeting. These written reflections must be submitted to the District Credentials Team along with your completed and signed Update Form, your signed Covenant Agreement reaffirming your Ordination, and the completed and signed Background Check Release form, no later than **June 30**.

1. How has God confirmed your calling to vocational ministry?
2. Describe the changes God has made to your calling (if any).
3. How are your devotional practices adequate or inadequate to sustain your spiritual health during the demands of ministry?
4. What needs to happen to make your devotional practices more effective?
5. Paul wrote that we should “walk as children of the light” (Ephesians 5: 8). How would you describe how your relationship with Christ promotes in you a daily demonstration of an authentic Christian life?

6. Describe how you balance your vocation with your family and with your physical and emotional well-being. (Areas to consider: Do you date your spouse? Do you give adequate time to your children? What family events or activities have you missed? Are you overweight? Do you have emotional outbursts? What do you do to relieve stress? How often do you take vacation? How often do you spend extended time with God alone or on retreat?)
  
7. Theology is the study of God, His word, and His work in the world. How has your understanding of theology changed in the last five years, if at all?
  
8. How would you describe how you remain prepared to do God's work? Areas to consider could be continuing education; non-ministry related activities; changes that God is making in your life; new insights God is revealing to you about His word and His work; and books you are currently reading.
  
9. Describe your current accountability, encouragement, and friendships in ministry.
  
10. When your ministry is completed, what would you like to have said about your years of service?

## Covenant Agreement for Ordination

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge my understanding that both the granting and maintaining of ordination credentials is a privilege and a responsibility. In so receiving the granting of ordination, I enter into covenant with all assemblies in the Church of God where I may serve throughout my years of ministry.

This covenant is to be recognized as my agreement that I will live my private and public life in keeping with the Word of God, the Credentials Manual of the Church of God, and in harmony and active participation with the assembly in which I am ministering.

It is further understood that should I fail to live up to this covenant or should I cease from actively participating in the ministry of the Church of God, Anderson, IN, I shall cooperate with the assembly in the region where I am living in surrendering my ordination.

This Ordination Covenant will be reaffirmed every five years.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of Ordainee*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Ordainee*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Assembly Bestowing Credentials*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Credentials Chair Bestowing Ordination*

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*Recorded at Church of God Ministries, Inc. Credentials Services*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Credentials Services Coordinator*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

This covenant is to be maintained in this minister's permanent file and attached with each transfer should he/she change assemblies during the life of his/her ministry.

## Background Check Release

(Please return by June 30 to your District Credentials Committee along with the completed and signed Update Form and your Written Reflections.)

By signing below, you, the minister undergoing a Five-Year Ministry Update, give Church of God Ohio Ministries (COGO), or any other firm as shall be determined at the sole discretion of COGO on behalf of COGO, permission to procure a consumer report, also known as a background check (known as an investigative consumer report in California), which may include personal information, criminal activity, court proceedings, tickets, fines, information about character, general reputation, characteristics, or mode of living. This report may be compiled with information from record bureaus, court record repositories, departments of motor vehicles, past or present employers, landlords, and/or educational institutions, governmental occupational licensing or registration entities, business or personal references, and any other sources required to verify your personal information, character, and suitability for ministry. You may request a complete and accurate disclosure of the nature and scope of the background verification, to the extent that such investigation includes information bearing on your character, reputation, mode of living, or suitability for ministry.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of minister undergoing Five-Year Ministry Update)

Full Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State of Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Below, please list all previous addresses and aliases used over the last five years.

Aliases: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Aliases: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Aliases: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

## Instructions to the Ministry Update Team

(This should be mailed to your Update Team at least one week before the scheduled Update meeting.)

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for agreeing to serve on a Ministry Update Team as part of an ongoing, five-year update process for all ordained ministers in the Church of God—Anderson.

The *Credentials Manual of the Church of God* stipulates that all ordained ministers complete a Ministry Update every five years to determine if 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 should be noted that this Five-Year Update is not a performance evaluation. It is an opportunity to reflect on one's ministerial practice, current position, professional development, spiritual formation, personal and professional relationships, and future goals for ministry. This is an opportunity for the individual minister to engage in thought-provoking dialog about personal, professional, and spiritual health, and to strengthen collegial partnership and accountability in ministry.

You are asked to attend a one-time meeting with the entire three-member Update Team for only 60-90 minutes to discuss the minister's ministerial call and commitment, and the current relationship to the standards for vocational ministry. During this meeting, you are invited to offer appropriate insights, to challenge the minister on questionable thoughts or practices (carefully and charitably), to offer guidance, and to give encouragement.

The minister will send you a completed Update Form and some Written Reflections prior to the meeting. Please read and review these helpful documents as you prepare to dialog about their call, commitment, accountability, connection, and more. You will be asked to sign a completed Update Form which, along with a copy of the Written Reflections, will be sent to the District Credentials Committee.

If you have any questions, the minister should be able to provide answers, or to put you in contact with the appropriate District or State Credentials personnel.

Thank you, again. Your assistance in this Ministry Update is vital and appreciated.

In Him,

The Ohio State Credentials Committee