

TRC'S REFERENCE FORM FOR MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE

Ministerial Candidate Reference for: _____

Date: _____

Your name and title: _____

How long and in what capacity have you known the candidate?

In what roles/situations does this person shine? What seems to bog him/her down?

From your vantage point, what do you think would be important for this candidate's development in order for him/her to be able to engage in healthy, effective, long-term ministry?

What ministries are currently led or served by the candidate?

How would describe this person's effectiveness in these ministries?

Please describe the candidate's maturity and skill level in the following areas. If you do not know, indicate "Unknown" in the comments section.

Please rank the candidate in the following categories.

Candidate is characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>No clear sense of ministry call. No consistent practice of spiritual disciplines. Little evidence of the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, etc.)</p> <p>Little sense of personal holiness.</p>			<p>Able to articulate vague call to ministry. May pray and read the Bible sporadically, but little discipline beyond this. Spiritual fruit seen by others as present but inconsistent. Sense of identity developing.</p>			<p>Articulates increasingly clear call to ministry. Disciplines practiced but may be limited to basics (i.e., prayer, Scripture reading/study). Spiritual fruit is increasingly consistent. Growing sense of personal holiness and firm identity.</p>			<p>Anchors identity and calling in Jesus. Does not need to be needed. Engages in an intentional plan to grow deeper, including regular use of spiritual disciplines. Evidences mature spiritual fruitfulness and personal holiness.</p>		
<p>Comments:</p>											

Candidate demonstrates a high level of self-awareness											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>Testing and observation show lack of self-awareness. Ignores how their leadership and decisions impact others. Places blame and has a tendency to go it alone. Unaware of weaknesses and unable to talk about them.</p>			<p>Developing sense of strengths and weaknesses. Beginning to take ownership of blind spots and how their leadership impacts others. Developing ability to build a diverse team to complement weaknesses.</p>			<p>Strong sense of self-awareness. Able to see strengths and weaknesses. Accepts how they impact others but limited experience building teams to complement strengths/weakness profile.</p>			<p>Deep sense of self-awareness. Able to articulate clearly both strengths and weaknesses and use that rationale to build teams around blind spots. Knows how their leadership impacts others positively and negatively.</p>		
<p>Comments:</p>											

Candidate lives a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Physical health seems disconnected from ministry. Emotional and mental health are not clearly understood as integral to spirituality. Little attention given to balance, play and recreation. Some evidence of unhealthy addiction.			Physical, emotional and mental health are beginning to get some needed attention. Occasional rest, Sabbath, play and recreation observed. Addiction and compulsion beginning to surface in the context of mentor and/or confessor.			Plan in place to address the balance of physical, emotional and mental health. Healthy margins beginning to make room for regularly observed rest, Sabbath, play and recreation. Addictions and compulsions losing their stronghold.			Physical, emotional and mental health are considered integral to life and ministry. Healthy and sustained attention given to Sabbath, retreat, play, and recreation. No evidence of addiction or unhealthy compulsion.		
Comments:											

Candidate lives a life shaped by love for others											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Demonstrates a troubling sense of self-absorption. Unaware of others. Little care given to family and loved ones. No track record of building and maintaining close relationships. Unaware of the need to confess and be accountable to others.			Emerging sense of the importance of personal relationships. Family is seen as important but does not receive the best of the candidate's time and attention. Confession and accountability is only experienced when "caught".			Family and loved ones take priority over self and ministry. Some healthy relationships can be pointed to in the life of the candidate. Sporadic confession and accountability. Growing attention given to relationships outside the church.			Family and loved ones are prioritized over self. Strong track record of healthy life-giving relationships. Regular confession and accountability are seen as essential for life and ministry. Healthy relationship both inside and outside the church are understood as crucial.		
Comments:											

Candidate models humility											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Appears arrogant and/or has issues with authority. Bristles when criticized or corrected. Places blame and gives excuses when corrected or challenged. Seems uninterested in the perspective of others.			Shows basic respect for authority but fails to internalize constructive criticism completely. May react defensively when challenged and sometimes implodes when corrected. Does not actively seek the perspective of others.			Works hard to be non-defensive and respects authority. Willing to listen to leaders, peers and followers and resists imploding when corrected. Welcomes the input of others.			Maintains a posture of non-defense towards leaders, peers and followers. Actively seeks the perspective of others and internalizes constructive criticism without imploding		
Comments:											

Candidate demonstrates biblical understanding											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Exhibits weak biblical knowledge. Unable to locate Wesleyan theology in scripture. Tends to hold propositional views of particular passages while failing to balance them with the greater biblical witness.			Somewhat narrow biblical awareness. Struggles to completely locate Wesleyan theology in the scriptures. Beginning to integrate theology and practice.			Strong biblical knowledge without major gaps. Moderate ability to root Wesleyan worldview in scripture. Moderate integration of theology and practice.			Possesses holistic biblical knowledge. Able to deal with the whole of scripture with integrity. Is able to locate Wesleyan theology in the scriptures. Total integration of theology and practice.		
Comments:											

Candidate demonstrates a Wesleyan theological integration											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Shows little understanding of our History, Polity, Articles and core values. Unable to articulate the Wesleyan distinctive and unaware of our relational theology. Weak theological integration.			Rudimentary understanding of the Wesleyan distinctive. Rudimentary understand and/or embrace of our History, Polity, Articles and core values. Developing theological integration.			Growing understanding and embrace of Wesleyan theology. Beginning to articulate with a sense of ownership our theological distinctive and relational orientation.			Demonstrates deep understanding and enthusiastic embrace of Wesleyan theology. Knows and embraces our Polity, History, Articles and cores values. Embraces wholeheartedly our relational theology. Strong theological integration.		
Comments:											

Candidate has a theological education commensurate with ordained ministry											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Has little or no education. Displays a reticence to take advantage of the opportunities they have making little use of books, online courses and other ways of gaining knowledge and experience. Intellectually lazy.			Has begun their formal education but does not readily connect the importance of it to ministry. Shows moderate effort when challenged to read, study and learn. Does the minimum to get by.			Has completed or nearly completed an undergraduate degree. Seems willing but reluctant to embark on graduate work in theology due to a less than full integration of education and ministry.			Displays a deep passion for life-long learning. Has completed an undergraduate degree as well as some graduate work in theology. Fully integrates the importance of education and ministry.		
Comments:											

Candidate has ecumenical posture towards the Church and the world											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>Unable and unwilling to value and affirm other Christian traditions. Remains dogmatic and defensive of their particular experience. Doesn't see the need for building bridges with people of other Christian traditions.</p>			<p>Growing awareness of the value of other Christian traditions, but numbers few people of other traditions among their friends. Still mostly comfortable among people of similar belief system.</p>			<p>Strong sense of the interconnectedness of the Body of Christ. Increasing action towards building bridges to other Christian traditions. A growing ability to articulate our tradition in spaces where others are present.</p>			<p>Values and affirms other Christian traditions while enthusiastically embracing our own. Builds and maintains bridges with people of other traditions and embraces the humanity of all regardless of belief system.</p>		
<p>Comments:</p>											

Candidate possesses the ability to practically apply learning											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>Seems unable or unskilled at connecting book/head learning to everyday situations. Experiences a language barrier when trying to communicate theological/biblical truths to regular people. Struggles to connect life experience with faith.</p>			<p>Is beginning to see connections between complex theology and everyday life. Has an increasing awareness of the distance between their theological language and the masses. Is beginning to see connections between faith and everyday life.</p>			<p>Works hard to make complex theological concepts accessible to others. Sees a connection between everyday life and the theology they are studying, but still struggles to span the gap between everyday experiences where people live and deep truth.</p>			<p>Has an ability to communicate deep and complex truth in ways that everyone can understand. Finds evidence of the redemptive activity of God in normal everyday things. Sees a strong connection between normal life and deep faith.</p>		
<p>Comments:</p>											

Candidate demonstrates fruitfulness in ministry											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Has no real track record of transformational teaching/preaching/leading? Awkward when doing personal evangelism and inexperienced at building healthy diverse faith communities.			Has led someone to Christ, but struggles to point to real lasting fruit when it comes to leading faith communities towards health and diversity. Personal engagement of evangelism is sporadic and lacking in passion. Beginning to find their voice in teaching/preaching/leading.			Has limited but promising experience in teaching/preaching/leading others towards healthy and diverse communities. Has some limited experience in personal and corporate evangelism?			Has a strong track record of transformational teaching/preaching/leading? Effective and fruitful at personal and corporate evangelism. Track record of building healthy and diverse faith communities.		
Comments:											

Candidate embraces wholeheartedly the ministry of justice and compassion											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Struggles to see where social injustice and discrimination impact people in the real world. Unaware of local and/or global need. Fails to understand the connection between ministry and the margin of society.			Beginning to see injustice and discrimination but unable to put a local face on it. Aware of international/global needs, but unable to see those who suffer within enslaving structures right around the corner. No sense of personal connection to the enslaving systems.			Growing awareness of people who exist in enslaving structures. Increasingly sees the local broken and poor as central to mission. Willing to address injustice and discrimination, while just beginning to understand the systemic implications.			Strong sense of connection between injustice, discrimination and the systems that uphold them. Willing to challenge every kind of institution that enslaves, seeing this as a natural and necessary concern of ministry.		
Comments:											

Candidate operates as a servant leader											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Has a self-serving attitude when it comes to ministry? Spends the majority of their effort promoting self instead of others. Only serves the local church to see what they can gain. Creates competitive and unsafe spaces around ministry tasks. Is judgmental towards others.			Is beginning to see the need to serve selflessly but struggles to focus on others. Still hesitates when asked to do tasks that will not advance their personal agenda. Tries to develop others but mostly ends up calling them to embrace their vision, not the vision of the person being developed. Is beginning to deal with being judgmental.			Serves the local church with increasing passion and selflessness, and is willing to serve and develop others as needed with moderate success. Actively learning how to create opportunities for others to unfold and develop. Increasingly moving away from judgment and blame.			Sees the development, advancement and deployment of others as primary to their personal mission. Serves the local church by actively seeking to develop others. Creates healthy and safe space for others to unfold in. Leads without judgment and blame.		
Comments:											

Candidate empowers others to discover and function within their God-given design											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sees women and minorities as complementary but not essential to the ministry and call of white men. Fails to embrace a multicultural mandate when building the local church. Fails to recognize the brilliance in others.			Is beginning to see the value of women and minorities in roles of leadership. Appreciates multiculturalism but does not understand how to foster it. Sees brilliance in others but does not know how to identify and release it.			Understands and embraces the value of women and minorities in senior leadership roles but has a thin personal track record of developing and releasing them personally. Appreciates multiculturalism. Sees the brilliance in others and sometimes makes room for it to shine.			Enthusiastically promotes women and minorities in senior leadership roles. Embraces and promotes multiculturalism in the local church. Sees the brilliance in others and understands that one of the key roles of a leader is to see it, say you saw it, and open up a pathway for that brilliance to shine.		
Comments:											

Candidate leads with creativity and vision											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Ministry approach antiquated and stuck. Runs the same old ministry plays whether they continue to work or not. Speaks often of a "gilded age" when people knew how to obey God. Is unable to articulate a compelling future for the church.			Adapts some ministry techniques but remains unable to see how some contexts have changed. Lacks creativity and vision when talking about the future of the church. Has few strategic plans that motivate people to move forward.			Has a growing sense of what works and what doesn't. Is willing to change approaches and adapt models to accommodate changing contexts. Can envision a better future and has begun to motivate others towards that vision.			Remains flexible and creative when developing ministry. Can always see an alternative to an old style or model that no longer works. Casts vision with passion and develops strategic and practical plans that motivate people to accomplish that vision.		
Comments:											

Please provide any other insights that you think might be helpful in understanding this candidate's strengths and growth areas.

Return this document to TRC's MEG Coordinator, Tim Auw at themeg@theriverconference.org