

# **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

## **Brethren Leadership Institute**

South/Central Indiana District  
Church of the Brethren

**2017**

Brethren Leadership Institute has applied for certification as an Academy Certified Training System through the Brethren Academy of Ministerial Leadership

| <u>Topic</u>  | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| BLI – Task Team and Mission Statement.....                      | 1           |
| Admission procedures, costs and expectations.....               | 2           |
| Expectations for successful completion of the BLI program.....  | 3           |
| How Brethren Leadership Institute came to exist.....            | 4           |
| Spiritual Formation of Brethren Leadership Institute.....       | 7           |
| Mission of Brethren Leadership Institute.....                   | 8           |
| Ministerial Leadership Training Program and Learning Goals..... | 9           |
| Program Information – Orientation.....                          | 10          |
| TWELVE COURSES.....   | 10-14       |
| 1. Beliefs and Practices  |             |
| 2. Biblical Interpretation                                      |             |
| 3. Evangelism and Outreach                                      |             |
| 4. History of the Church  |             |
| 5. Introduction to Pastoral Care                                |             |
| 6. Introduction to Theology                                     |             |
| 7. Ministerial Leadership and Administration                    |             |
| 8. New Testament Survey   |             |
| 9. Old Testament Survey   |             |
| 10. Preaching   |             |
| 11. Teaching and Learning in the Church                         |             |
| 12. Worship   |             |
| Practice of Ministry Days.....                                  | 15          |
| Ministry Formation.....   | 15          |
| Broader Church Participation.....                               | 15          |
| Portfolio.....  | 16          |
| Student Portfolio Guidelines.....                               | 17          |
| Evaluations.....  | 20          |
| Brethren Academy and BLI Policy on Plagiarism.....              | 21          |

# BRETHREN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE ACADEMY CERTIFIED TRAINING SYSTEM STUDENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Brethren Leadership Institute which is in the process of being an Academy Certified Training System of Bethany Academy. You may be exploring ministry, answering a call to ministry, and/or seeking further education. We will prayerfully support you on this journey.

This handbook will be a reference guide for you as you complete the BLI requirements. It is current as of August 2017.

Brethren Leadership Institute Task Team

Larry Fourman larryfourman@gmail.com

Erin Huiras erh.bige@gmail.com

Marie Willoughby mariewilloughby@yahoo.com

Tina Rieman, Administrative Assistant scindcob@gmail.com

Beth Sollenberger, District Executive Minister bsollenberger@brethren.org

## **Our Mission Statement**

Brethren Leadership Institute exists to prepare and equip men and women to serve as ministers and leaders in Church of the Brethren congregations and missions.

The Brethren Leadership Institute will support the mission statement of the South/Central Indiana district board:

Serving the Body of Christ, we continue the work of Jesus — peacefully, simply, together:

**Peacefully** . . . by nurturing faith, peace, wholeness, and reconciliation;

**Simply** . . . by calling leadership and sharing our resources to empower local congregations; and

**Together** . . . by encouraging all congregations to grow in discipleship, denominational identity, and unity.

# **ADMISSION PROCEDURES COSTS AND EXPECTATIONS**

An **APPLICATION FORM** may be secured from the District Office.

A **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK** must be completed through the district office before the first class registration can be accepted.

## **REGISTRATION FOR CLASSES**

There will be notification of upcoming classes through the following:

- A. Mailings from the district office
- B. Announcements in each class in which you are participating
- C. Postings on the district web page

## **COSTS**

- \$50 - Must accompany completed application form sent to district office
- \$15 - Background check (unless a background check is already on file)
- \$50 - Orientation Day fee
- \$75 - Per course (plus textbooks and materials)
- \$25 - Late registration fee for a class (where applicable)
- \$150 - Three (3) PRACTICE OF MINISTRY DAY fees (\$50 each day)
- \$50 - Graduation fee
- \$40 - Fee for auditing a class
- \$10 - Additional fee for CEU certificate

Travel to and from classes. Unless otherwise scheduled, classes will be held in the Marion Church of the Brethren.

This program does cost money; however, when you compare BLI fees with college fees or seminary fees, the cost is minimal. Consider this is an investment in YOUR future and the future of the CHURCH. It is possible that a congregation or the district will make financial contributions towards your expenses. This support might be in the form of a scholarship or grant that would help pay a percentage of your total cost. The Ministry Excellence Project will also consider grant requests from installed pastors.

## **SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM**

### **CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

- Participation in 16 or more contact hours per course
- Attend each class unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances, as approved by coordinator and instructor
- Must attend all class sessions to receive credit with distinction (in addition to work of exceptional quality)
- 35-40 hours of course work outside of class meeting
- A minimum of 200 pages of required reading
- Completion of a research project(s) outside of class time
- Satisfactory response to any quizzes and/or final examination test
- Completion of class work within time parameter set for the course

### **IN ADDITION TO THE COMPLETION OF THE 12 COURSES, ALL STUDENTS WILL:**

- Attend one (1) orientation day preferably before classes begin or attend the following summer in order to take additional classes.
- Attend three (3) Practice of Ministry Days
- Attend at least one (1) Annual Conference, one (1) District Conference and one (1) significant ecumenical, interfaith or intercultural event.
- Complete a portfolio of ministry experiences and personal growth.
- When in the licensing process students will meet with a mentor at least four times a year. Students are responsible for making certain these meetings occur.
- Complete a supervised ministry experience.
- Participate in a ministry formation program annually (12 hours) to strengthen the peer group element of formation.

**The Brethren Leadership Institute is in the process of being fully certified as an Academy Certified Training System by the Brethren Academy. BLI will prepare and equip individuals to serve as ministers and leaders in Church of the Brethren congregations and mission projects. BLI is for those students whose life circumstances prevent them from participating in seminary or traditional ministry training sessions.**

**I. Overview:** As an Academy Certified Training System, the Brethren Leadership Institute provides a certified ministerial training program. Yet, as its name implies, it is also available to all who wish to enhance their spiritual lives and experience Christian growth. Thus, Christian spiritual growth is the primary reason for the institute's existence. It is assumed that those men and women who would desire to attend classes at the institute's centers will have experienced a spiritual rebirth. They must have already experienced a sense of God's calling them to faith in Jesus Christ, to baptism, and to active membership in a Church of the Brethren congregation. Similarly, it is assumed that a person who senses God's call to the ministry studies the Scriptures and has an established life of prayer. Still, the students who come to participate in the Brethren Leadership Institute are motivated by a desire to come to a deeper spirituality. Thus, the following plan outlines the central spiritual purpose of the institute.

**II. Biblical/Historical Perspective:** The scripture, both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, assumes that education and study are central to growth in faith, knowledge and obedience. Among the examples of the importance of teaching in the Hebrew tradition are:

- A. God's call to Moses includes a promise to teach (Exodus 4:12).
- B. Moses' father-in-law's admonition to teach the people God's laws and decrees, to show them the way to live (Exodus 18:20).
- C. Moses' request that God teach him the divine ways in order to have a deeper relationship with God and a greater ability to lead the people (Exodus 33:13).
- D. Moses' command to the people to teach their children God's law (Deuteronomy 4:9, 11:19).
- E. Ezra is an example of one who studied and observed the law, and taught God's people to do likewise (Ezra 7:10).

The development of the rabbinic tradition in Judaism led to a high regard for the educational and spiritual formation of those set apart to lead. To the teaching of

the written law, the Torah, with its 613 commandments, was added the oral law as a “hedge around the Torah” and the application of these laws to every possible realm and possibility of human existence. Rabbis were and are highly trained in the thought and practice of Judaism.

Jesus is considered the Master Teacher of the Christian faith. This is seen not only in his sayings, but in the example and meaning of his life. The Lord taught as one who had authority and his teaching amazed those who heard him (Matthew 7:28-29). His disciples spent much time receiving his instruction and observing his methods. He used various teaching techniques such as parables, object lessons and illustrative technique (for instance, from the lesser to the greater in Matthew 6:26, 29-30). He integrated field education, reflection and peer evaluation in sending forth his disciples (Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-11).

The pedagogy of the Apostolic Era of early Christianity appears to have been based on 1) the teachings and example of trusted leaders (including the apostles and others), and 2) the study of the Old Testament (II Timothy 2:15). Early church leaders often mentored young leaders onsite and through missionary journeys. The pre-Constantinian church developed informal rubrics and standards for calling, developing and recognizing ministerial leadership.

The post-Constantinian church became more hierarchical and standards became more defined. The development of religious orders, educational centers and formal standards over the centuries strengthened the faith and ministry of Western Christianity. The reformation of the early 1500's with the Lutheran emphasis on sola scriptura and the Enlightenment emphasis on education led to the development of Protestant seminaries. At the same time, the post-Tridentine Roman Catholic Church continued to develop and refine the seminary training of priests. Since both Catholicism and Protestantism were “state” churches, the placement of priests and pastors was underwritten by the taxes levied for that purpose. The dissenting churches formed their leadership under different conditions and with lesser formal training after the first generation.

The early Brethren bias against trained, paid clergy serving as pastors and the widespread dispersal of the membership in frontier conditions in America did not dispose the denomination to the development of ministry training institutions. Those who were called out to serve as ministers in the plural ministry context

seem to have been mentored by the counsel and example of the elders present in their situation. It is obvious that, as time passed and conditions improved, some read and traveled widely.

With the rise of an industrial society and an interest in missions, both domestic and foreign, individuals within the denomination began to express interest in higher education. Some began to initiate schools aimed toward a Brethren constituency including primary, secondary and preparatory levels. This movement accelerated following the division of 1881-83 and the beginnings of urban congregations that did not follow the plural ministry pattern. By 1909, Bethany Biblical Seminary was founded in Chicago by E. B. Hoff and Albert Wieand. The formation of the General Ministerial Board in 1921 gave rise to the movement toward a professionally trained clergy model. This was underwritten by generous subsidies from the denominational and district boards. Nevertheless, the professionally trained clergy model was never completely implemented due to cultural, economic and local conditions. The Three-Year Reading Course was authorized by the Annual Conference in 1951 for implementation by the districts in the training of those persons, who because of various circumstances, could not follow the course of college and seminary training or attend the Bethany Training School. This course consisted of twelve units covering a broad range of ministerial related topics in a general manner. It was last revised in 1995 by the Bethany Academy for Ministry Training. Following the passage of the 1999 Ministerial Leadership Paper by the Annual Conference, it was superseded by the Academy Certified Training System.

The Brethren Leadership Institute is the successor to the former Three-Year Reading Course. Its origins lie in the need for more locally specific district ministry training in the South/Central Indiana District. We believe BLI will be valuable for congregations who, because of size and/or economic conditions, cannot obtain pastors with graduate training.

We happily give credit to Christian Growth Institute in the Virlina and Shenendoah Districts for helping us with this record of the history leading up to Brethren Leadership Institute. Much of the information and organization for BLI came from the work of those creating Christian Growth Institute and was shared with us to use in our efforts to receive certification for the Brethren Leadership Institute as an ACTS program. We are grateful for their support and encouragement.

## **THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF THE BRETHERN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

A. Prayer is and always has been an important part of the process of discerning God's will in the spiritual formation of the church. In the Brethren Leadership Institute:

1. Prayer will initiate and end all its meetings, classes, and the studies of its officers, staff members, instructors and students.
2. Its Task Team will prayerfully consider its leadership of the institute.
3. Its center coordinators will prayerfully schedule courses and perform their other duties as outlined below.
4. Its instructors will prayerfully plan their classes.
5. Its students will prayerfully complete all their assignments.
6. An attitude of prayer will pervade all meetings, classes, Practice of Ministry workshops, retreats, and other activities sponsored by the Institute.

B. The Brethren Leadership Institute will introduce its students to the spiritual disciplines of prayer, meditation, study, fasting, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance, and celebration through its Ministry Formation program. The leaders of the Institute will model these Christian disciplines for the students, and for the other faith communities they serve.

C. The Institute's coordinators will provide spiritual leadership in meetings and will work creatively with the other leaders to incorporate these disciplines into the meetings, classes, and other learning activities sponsored by the Institute. We seek to incorporate these disciplines into our work not merely as a means of fulfilling a certification requirement, but as a means of earnestly seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit. For we desire that our goals be in line with the will of God whom we serve.

D. The Task Team for the Brethren Leadership Institute will be responsible for seeking the prayerful support of the districts, congregations, centers and student groups that are served by the Institute. They will accomplish this by periodically circulating news reports and prayer requests to each of these groups.

## MISSION OF THE BRETHREN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

- I. **Overview.** The Brethren Leadership Institute will support our stated mission to prepare and equip men and women to serve as ministers for Church of the Brethren congregations. In order to execute this plan, the Brethren Leadership Institute is established to:

A. Provide an alternative means to train ministerial leaders in addition to those already provided by Bethany Theological Seminary and the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. The Brethren Leadership Institute program is intended for those students whose life circumstance may prevent them from taking advantage of those ministerial training programs. Its students will be trained to:

1. Serve as pastors to congregations in the Church of the Brethren.
2. Develop a practice of spiritual disciplines as outlined in the Spiritual Plan.
3. Preach.
4. Teach.
5. Perform ministerial services/preside at ordinances practiced by the Church.
6. Be a representative of the faith communities that they serve.
7. Serve with and among brothers and sisters who are not licensed or ordained, but who are called to service and ministry through baptism.
8. Develop the leadership skills necessary to accomplish the mission of ministerial leaders as outlined in the learning plan.
9. Develop a sense of knowing that learning is a life-long process that only begins with the completion of the programs and classes provided by the Institute.

B. Help the members of the Church of the Brethren congregations to deepen their spiritual walk with God and enhance their relationships with God's people.

C. Provide education opportunities for members who seek to grow.

D. Provide continuing education for ordained ministers.

**II. These goals will be achieved through enrollment in and successful completion of a series of classes, learning days, retreats, and seminars that are designed to be completed within three years. However, students have the option to take as long as six years to complete the program.**

## MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

**LEARNING GOALS:** In keeping with our mission to prepare and equip ministers for service within the Church, the Brethren Leadership Institute will lead students to develop the competencies outlined in the current Ministerial Leadership Manual, Church of the Brethren (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press), sections 230.6-9.

- 1. Familiarity with the biblical sources of the Christian community and competency in interpreting those sources.*
- 2. Familiarity with and ability to reflect theologically in the history and social context of Christianity.*
- 3. Awareness of the contextual character of particular Christian traditions, especially as found in the North American setting and in the global setting of developing Christianity.*
- 4. Familiarity with and ability to reflect theologically in the Anabaptist/pietist heritage.*
- 5. Ability to articulate faith in language that is theologically informed and culturally persuasive.*
- 6. An understanding of the congregation informed by both theological heritage and learnings from the human sciences.*
- 7. Ability to articulate a vision of ministry congruent with one's sense of vocation and appropriate to the ministry context in that that vocation will be practiced.*
- 8. Ability to nurture and reflect critically on the spiritual formation of self and others, including ethics for ministry and life in community.*
- 9. Skills in interpersonal relationships, in mediating conflict, and in building community.*
- 10. Ability to provide effective leadership in congregational and other church-related arenas of ministry.*
- 11. Ability to integrate biblical and theological understandings with the practice of ministry.*

These areas of competency provide a framework to guide ministry preparation in the Brethren Leadership Institute. Beyond the specific area of emphasis named above, the educational vision for Academy Certified Training Systems asks that ministers respond to the challenge to develop spiritually, emotionally, relationally, intellectually, and physically. These attributes are constituent of a whole person and a whole minister. Students in the BLI will plan a course of study that will address each of these aspects of their lives during ministry training. Thus each of the learning components of the BLI, its class requirements, practice of ministry workshops, and the student's individual Ministry Portfolio will focus on developing these necessary competencies and responding to the challenges of developing as a whole person engaged in ministry.

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

BLI's program is designed to be completed in three years. Components of the program include: an orientation, twelve classroom courses, a portfolio of ministry experiences and personal growth, three practice of ministry days, supervised ministry, a ministry formation program and broader church experiences.

**ORIENTATION:** a required one-day event for new students that introduces the BLI program; all matriculated BLI students will be assigned a mentor. Students may begin classes at any time but must attend the next available orientation day.

**TWELVE COURSES:** each course includes sixteen (16) contact hours, required reading, and written or oral assignments such as research papers, book reviews, exegetical papers, sermons, test, etc.).

With prior approval by the BLI Task Team, students may take one course per year from an approved institution. Each individual request will be handled by the Task Team.

Instructors will be primarily from within our district but may be procured from across the denomination and will have at minimum an MDiv degree and experience and expertise in their teaching area. BLI will procure background checks for instructors unable to provide current records.

Learning Objectives for the twelve courses include:

### **1. BELIEF AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**

A. Be able to recount the origin and development of the Brethren from 1708 to the present day including important historical figures. This includes familiarity with the history and activity of the Brethren in his or her particular community or region.

B. Be able to articulate the beliefs, basic values, and special emphases that are characteristic of Brethren faith and life.

C. Become familiar with the way these values and beliefs have expressed themselves in organization and ecumenical expressions.

D. Be able to describe and conduct the various ordinances of the Church of the Brethren.

## **2. BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION**

- A. Be familiar with some of the basic tools or resources needed for in-depth biblical study.
- B. Be able to identify and discuss various critical or exegetical procedures used to interpret a biblical text.
- C. Be able to demonstrate skills in exegeting a particular biblical passage and in using that exegesis as the basis for a sermon or teaching outline.
- D. Be able to describe the contributions of at least three contemporary scholars who enriched our understanding of the biblical materials.
- E. Be able to compare the strengths and weaknesses of a half dozen or more present-day translations and paraphrases of the Bible.
- F. Be able to articulate the role of the faith community in the process of biblical interpretation as understood in the Anabaptist tradition.

## **3. EVANGELISM/OUTREACH**

- A. Be able to articulate a theology of the missional church that is biblically based and informed by recent discussion of mission philosophy and strategies.
- B. Be able to describe some major developments in the history of evangelism and at least one contemporary area of evangelism where the church's witness is taking shape in a new and challenging manner.
- C. Be able to discuss ways in which the church's evangelism is both personal and social and how both dimensions of evangelism are related to the gospel.
- D. Be able to assess the extent to which his or her congregation is an inviting community and to define desired next steps in light of that assessment.
- E. Be able to indicate and evaluate ways in which faith sharing occurs in his or her life and ministry.

## **4. HISTORY OF THE CHURCH**

- A. Be able to place at least two dozen key figures and events on a timeline of the history of the church.
- B. Be able to construct a family tree of the church's story, showing different branches of Christendom and how various denominations relate to those branches.
- C. Be able to name some significant emphases of both the Anabaptist and Pietist movements.

- D. Be familiar with the life and thought of at least one Christian leader in (a) the church prior to 1500 and (b) the church since that time.
- E. Be able to identify one or more episodes in church history that shed light on events or issues in the church today.
- F. Be able to trace the development of the ecumenical movement and assess its significance for the life of the church.

## **5. INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL CARE**

- A. Be able to articulate a beginning understanding of pastoral care in the congregation and define the care-giving roles of both the pastor and the laity.
- B. Be able to identify basic characteristics of his or her personality and how these bear on the care-giving ministry.
- C. Be familiar with several basic types of pastoral care and the values and limitation associated with each.
- D. Be able to describe some of the critical points in family life and personal development for which ministries of care and counseling are often needed.
- E. Be able to distinguish between problems appropriately dealt with by pastoral and lay counselors and those that call for referral for professional help.
- F. Be able to define components or characteristics of a positive counseling role for a pastor or lay leader.
- G. Be able to demonstrate skills in pastoral conversations with church members.

## **6. INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY**

- A. Be able to identify four areas of current theological debate, place them in an historical context and identify appropriate ways of addressing the issues.
- B. Be able to identify four major Christian theologians, place them in an historical context and identify the contributions they have made to an understanding of the church's faith.
- C. Be able to identify the major theological streams of his/her congregation and articulate how beliefs and faith are formed in the congregation.
- D. Be able to define the relationship between theology and practice and the relationship to a particular life issue.
- E. Be able to articulate a "theological confession of faith" that expresses the student's basic convictions regarding the Christian message.

## **7. MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

- A. Be familiar with the way the Brethren are organized for ministry at the local, district, and denominational level, and with the way Brethren work together with other Christian communities. This would include familiarity with the most current polity manual.
- B. Be able to define the different areas of congregation life and how the pastor relates to each of these areas.
- C. Be familiar with at least one process or program of congregational self-study and goal-setting.
- D. Be able to demonstrate skills in conducting a meeting and/or leading a group in planning and executing a task.
- E. Be able to discuss the issue of conflict and ways of dealing with conflict in the church, and to assess how he or she personally responds to conflict.
- F. Be able to articulate an understanding of stewardship that is both biblically rooted and informed by current denominational stewardship efforts.

#### **8. NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY**

- A. Be able to identify each of the books of the New Testament in terms of their literary genre, origin in life of the early church, and basic issues or themes.
- B. Be able to describe the formation of the New Testament canon and its authority for the church's faith and life.
- C. Be able to identify some of the basic features of Jesus' ministry and message and to compare the different portraits of Jesus in the four Gospels.
- D. Be able to place at least two dozen key figures and events on a timeline of the era of Christian origins.
- E. Be able to take a selected text of the New Testament and demonstrate its use as a resource for a particular area of ministry.

#### **9. OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY**

- A. Be able to locate each of the books of the Old Testament as arranged in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian canon.
- B. Be able to identify these books in terms of their literary type, origin in Israel's story, and basic issues raised in each book.
- C. Be able to place at least two dozen key figures and events on a timeline of the history of Israel.
- D. Be able to articulate the significance of the Old Testament as a resource for the Christian community.

E. Be able to take a selected text of the Old Testament and demonstrate its use as a resource for a particular area of ministry.

## **10. PREACHING**

A. Be familiar with at least three ways of constructing a sermon and the values and limitations of each.

B. Be familiar with the lectionary recommended by the Church of the Brethren and with the use of the lectionary as a resource for preaching.

C. Become familiar with available resources for constructing a sermon. This includes commentaries, Bible helps, on-line resources and current scholarship.

D. Develop sermons that are part of an overall worship flow.

E. Develop discernment skills that allow one to understand congregational needs in the area of preaching.

F. Be able to demonstrate skills in preaching. This will include practice sermons observed by fellow students.

G. Be able to identify one's preferred preaching style with an understanding of both the strengths and limitations.

## **11. TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CHURCH**

A. Be able to describe some of the formal and informal ways in which teaching and learning take place in the Christian community.

B. Be able to demonstrate skills in preparing and conducting a class session with a particular congregational group.

C. Be able to identify some of the stages and passages of life that affect learning and faith development.

D. Be familiar with some of the educational programs offered in the Church of the Brethren, including People of the Covenant and various curriculum series.

E. Be able to articulate the role of the pastor in the educational ministries of the congregation.

F. Be able to assess strengths and weaknesses of the educational programs in his or her congregation.

## **12. WORSHIP**

A. Be able to identify and compare four major worship traditions in the church, including the free church tradition.

B. Be familiar with two or three collections of worship resources, at least one of that exhibits ways of working at inclusive language in worship.

- C. Be able to define the basic components of worship services and create or select related worship resources.
- D. Be able to demonstrate skills in leading worship. This would include leading worship as part of a classroom experience.
- E. Be able to identify one's preferred method of leading worship and its accompanying strengths and limitations.
- F. Become familiar with the current forms of worship and develop worship services that demonstrate familiarity with each form.

## **PRACTICE OF MINISTRY DAYS**

Practice of Ministry Days are annual day-long events based on a specific theme such as rites and passages, Church of the Brethren polity, death and grief, ministerial ethics, conflict and reconciliation; they provide an opportunity to bring in seminary teachers and other national leaders on specific themes. Students are expected to participate in three such days to complete the program. Students are expected to sign the attendance sheet at the beginning of the day.

## **MINISTRY FORMATION**

A. The philosophy underlying the Brethren Leadership Institute includes a strong belief in the importance of peer group formation for potential ministers. In addition to the normal relationships that are formed in class groups of five to thirty-five members, an intentional effort will be made to have four discrete sessions or one retreat with twelve-hour contact time annually to strengthen the peer group element of formation.

B. The purpose of these sessions will be to deepen the involvement of students in the spiritual disciplines of prayer, meditation, study, fasting, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance and celebration.

## **BROADER CHURCH**

Attendance is required at least for one Annual Conference, one district conference, and a significant ecumenical, interfaith or intercultural event. Credit will be given upon receipt of the one page summary paper following the guidelines listed in the Portfolio checklist.

**PORTFOLIO:** Each student will maintain a ministry portfolio during the course of his or her training in the Brethren Leadership Institute. The portfolio will hold materials that illustrate the student's development in the competency areas, as well as how well he or she is responding to the challenges of developing as a whole person engaged in ministry. It will contain the following components:

- A. A journal that will track the practice of spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, retreats, spiritual direction, Bible study, service projects).
- B. A plan for exercise and improved health will be recorded in the portfolio (daily walks, regular exercise, or some form of care for the health and well being of the student as an individual).
- C. Actual materials used in ministry situations such as lesson plans, sermons, worship bulletins, prayers, summaries of pastoral care events).
- D. Class assignments (an exegesis, theological reflection, historical research, sermon, etc.), demonstrating growth in ministry studies.
- E. Evidence of participation in one Annual Conference, District Conference and in an ecumenical, interfaith or intercultural event.

Students, in consultation with their mentors, are responsible for selecting samples of work, or developing specific plans (e.g., area B), to meet the goals in each area named above. The portfolio is not meant to be an exhaustive repository of all work; rather, it is a record of the work the student is capable of doing and a written account of the student's growth in ministry training and spiritual maturity.

Two copies of a portfolio should be maintained: a) the student's personal copy, and b) a copy maintained at the District Office during the course of the student's tenure in the BLI. The District copy will be a closed file, not to be removed from the premises of the District Office, and will be available for review by the: the student, the student's mentor, the Ministry Interview Committee (MIC), and the District Executive. Students will receive the District Copy of their portfolio within three months of their graduation from the Brethren Leadership Institute. Students not completing the Institute's course of study will receive their portfolios within three months of their formal withdrawal from the program.

The BLI will provide a portfolio guide for each student at the orientation meeting. Credentialed students will be assigned a mentor by the MIC who will relate to the student as the portfolio is built.

## STUDENT PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

A. Consistent with the mission of the South/Central Indiana District, the goal of the Brethren Leadership Institute (BLI) is to prepare and equip men and women to serve as ministers of Church of the Brethren congregations. BLI guidelines call for students and ministers in training to grow in faith in Jesus Christ, to increase intellectual understanding of biblical, theological and practical disciplines, to strive for emotional and spiritual maturity, to develop social and leadership skills, to broader participation in church life, and to maintain a healthy body and mind.

B. The student portfolio has been designed as an integrative tool to help students and their mentors evaluate and reach these goals. While the portfolio does represent some additional work, it is work with a purpose. That purpose is three-fold: 1) to enable a thoughtful, intentional sense of personal growth in ministry: a sense of overview, evaluation, and purpose; 2) to encourage the steady practice of the spiritual disciplines that have grown and sustained the church for centuries; and 3) to provide a collection of the student's work for review and discussion with others (for example, the student's mentor and the district's Commission on Ministry). Since the District Commission on Ministry is requiring students and mentors to meet on a quarterly basis, it is important that these meetings have some specific content and agenda. The Student Portfolio is the map for these student-mentor meetings.

C. This document outlines the specific requirements for developing and maintaining the Student Portfolio. There will be two copies of the portfolio: 1) the original that will stay with each student/minister; and, 2) a copy that will be placed in the district office and will be closed except to the following: the District executive, the Commission on Ministry, the Institute Task Team, and the student's mentor. Each copy of the portfolio should be updated on a quarterly basis. Students will receive the District Office copy of their portfolios within three months after graduation from the Institute. Students not completing the Institute's course of study will receive their portfolios within three months of their formal resignation from the program.

D. Components. The portfolio offers students the opportunity to document, reflect on, and integrate their growth during their course of study in BLI.

Remember, the portfolio must not be done all at once; it is a work in progress reflecting growth over time. Specifically, the portfolio contains the following:

1. A brief set of goals for ministry. Some students have very specific goals for ministry or employment and this section should name those. If a student does not have clear ministry goals, it remains important to name why the student is entering BLI. Furthermore, the goals should include specific skills or competencies that are of special interest to the student. What are areas of enjoyment? Where are the growing edges? These ministry goals should be updated on a regular basis. The earliest set of goals and all subsequent editions of these goals should remain in the portfolio

2. A brief set of goals for service and volunteering in a local community. An example of this may be a one day per month commitment to working in a soup kitchen, as a tutor in a local school, as a visitor in a nursing home, etc. If time is too tight to allow this kind of service activity on a weekly or monthly basis, the student can set a goal of practical service for sometime in the future. For example, participation in a disaster response team, or taking the youth group to work camp. Be creative.

3. A journal that gives evidence of the student's practice of spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, retreats, spiritual direction, personal Bible study, and so forth. The journal does not need to be daily; it may reflect periods of disciplined writing on the experience of a spiritual disciple, but there needs to be a journal! In addition, each student is expected to make time for at least one week-end spiritual retreat during his or her enrollment in BLI. This might be a Pilgrimage retreat at Camp Mack, time at a monastery, or another example of guided spiritual reflection away from the normal activity of life. Students who have participated in a Pilgrimage or other retreat prior to enrollment in BLI should seek an additional type of retreat during the BLI course of study. Any retreat should be arranged in conversation with the student's mentor.

**Note:** Specific journal entries included in the portfolio are left to the discretion of the student. A central purpose of journal writing is the writer's freedom to say what she or he wants without worry that others will see or sanction what is said. Since significant spiritual growth often involves occasions of struggle in deeply

personal areas of the writer's life, the student has complete control over the journal entries included in the portfolio.

4. Class assignments such as an exegesis, theological reflection, historical research, sermon, etc., that shows growth in the discipline of ministry studies. Usually one example of each type of work is enough, though the student is free to have multiple examples. The student is encouraged to continue to update the materials of the portfolio by placing their current "best" work in the collection.

5. Specific materials used in ministry situations such as lesson plans from Sunday School classes, sermons, bulletins, prayers, Love Feasts, verbatim transcripts of pastoral conversations, funerals, etc.

6. A plan for exercise and good health. A sample health plan is available for review, but students may state simply the specific steps they plan to take to protect or improve their health. Ministry is a whole life vocation and that should be reflected in the student's self care of body, mind, and spirit.

7. A collection of materials that provide evidence of the student's participation in the larger church. These events include: one Annual Conference, one District Conference, and a description of participation in an ecumenical, interfaith or intercultural type of event. Ecumenical means more than one Christian group is represented at an event or experience (Presbyterians, United Methodist, Church of the Brethren, Lutherans, Baptists, etc.) Interfaith means more than one faith group is represented at an event or experience, such as Christians, Muslims, Jews, etc. Intercultural typically means interacting with people from a different country or ethnic group.

E. The Brethren Leadership Institute Student Portfolio will be a living document reflecting each student's growth in ministry preparation and ministry situations. It is especially important that student and mentor work closely in the review and selection of these materials. Through the process of dialogue and review of these materials the possibility of fresh insight and increased understanding is enlarged. Furthermore, the Ministry Interview Committee will have a less abstract, more specific understanding of each student/minister's work.

## EVALUATIONS

Students will be evaluated by the instructors in each individual class and through regular review of the student's ministry portfolio. The ministry portfolio will be put together in coordination with the student's District mentor. The District mentor will be asked to make written semi-annual reports on the portfolio and to evaluate the progress of each student. Each student will speak to the Brethren Leadership Institute directors annually about the progress of the portfolio and his or her personal growth in ministry. Both the student's mentor and directors will look for evidence of the student's growth in the eleven competencies named in the Ministerial Leadership Manual. The portfolio may also be part of what the student brings to his or her annual interview with the District Commission on Ministry.

### **Students will be evaluated by the instructor for each class on the following:**

- Student's attendance and class participation
- Statement of student's reading comprehension and understanding of ideas
- Evaluation of student's writing skills
- Summary of student's meeting class assignments and course goals

### **Students evaluate each class based on the following:**

- Best Part
- Worst Part
- What could change
- Other Comments (Name optional)

## **Brethren Academy and BLI Policy on Plagiarism**

A. Integrity is central to life in community. In the Christian academic community, integrity means giving proper credit to people for the ideas and information we receive from them. It also means that the work we submit and represent as our own is really work we ourselves have done. The Church of the Brethren 2008 Annual Conference Ethics in Ministry Paper (2008) Part III Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders states: "I will give credit for all sources quoted or extensively paraphrased in sermons and prepared papers. I will honor all copyrights" (p.8, Letter M).

B. Plagiarism is using the work of other people without giving them credit, whether in written assignments, oral reports and sermons. A glaring example of plagiarism would be submitting an entire essay or preaching a sermon written by someone else and claiming it was your own. It is also plagiarism to use, without giving credit, someone else's ideas or phrases. This definition applies to words and images, to manuscripts, and to ideas gleaned from spoken communication.

C. The consequences for plagiarism will vary according to the extent of the offense. These may range from rewriting the assignment, non-crediting the assignment, or non-crediting the course. The instructor will report any instance of plagiarism to the student and to those supervising the instructional programs. Students who wish to challenge the charge of plagiarism could contact their district executive and/or the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry.

D. A course, COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY, may be offered for students who need remedial work on writing. It would be an option for some students and mandated for some students. The class is presently under consideration for development.