

A photograph of three people in a living room setting. On the left, a Black man in a light-colored button-down shirt is smiling and looking towards the center. In the middle, a woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a black top, is gesturing with her hands as if speaking. On the right, a woman with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a black skirt, is listening attentively. They are seated on a black leather sofa. In front of them is a dark wooden coffee table with a large, dark brown leather-bound Bible resting on it. A lamp with a white shade is visible in the background behind the woman in the middle.

Connect with Christian
Leaders Credentialed
Ministers

Minister Credential Handbook

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Minister Credential Handbook

This Minister Credential Handbook details how the [Christian Leaders Alliance](#) uses the training of the [Christian Leaders Institute](#) to credential ministers for the local church and Kingdom. This handbook lays out a “Mobilization of Local Ministers” process.

This handbook will be of interest to:

- A Christian Leaders Institute student considering becoming credentialed through the Christian Leaders Alliance.
- A pastor, senior pastor, or church leader who serves in a local church and is mentoring or connected to a Christian Leaders Alliance minister candidate.
- A supporter or vision partner interested in the Christian Leaders program for mobilizing more ministers.

Before we get into the minister training and credentialing process, let's first look at how the early church mobilized more ministers starting in the book of Acts. This history has inspired this minister credentialing process.

Early Church History

After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, the movement of Christianity was underway. The movement spread quickly, founded on the message of forgiveness of sins and victory over death after the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles (Acts 1:8).



On the day of Pentecost, as we read in Acts 2, Peter preached that this movement would include called Christians: men and women, the older and the younger, of every rank, would be the prophets! (Acts 2:17-18).

Large numbers of people were being added daily (Acts 2:47). The Holy Spirit was calling these Christians and gifting them!

As with every movement, including Christianity, needs arise that must be addressed. Leaders must be raised, appointed, and commissioned to meet those needs. As the number of new Christians increased, we read in Acts 6 that the office of deacon/minister was born around a specific need. The need was food distribution to the widows. Racism was rejected with no favoritism in the sharing of food. Seven ministers were appointed to oversee this work while the Apostles stayed busy with their work – the ministry of the Word.

Interestingly, the appointment of the ministers/deacons was a watershed moment of finding needs and filling them with called and qualified ministers. One of those appointees, Stephen, was the first minister who was martyred (Acts 7).

Robert M. Johnson, in a published article titled “Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years,” points out,

There was only one appointive ministry. The book of Acts records no other. Since there was only one, we could call the officer either diakonos (suggested by diakonein in Acts 6:2), a word describing function, or presbyteros, a word describing dignity (maturity)...



...when the appointive ministry was first begun, when it was only one without any ranks in it, we would not go far wrong to refer to the office by a hyphenated term, “elder-deacon.” [Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/2 \(Autumn 2006\): 2–17](#)

He is saying that the elders and deacons in the book of Acts were the same people. They were ministers called to churches and called to respond to the needs of the early Church. These were to be the second-generation leaders appointed Christian leaders after the Apostles.

As the church expanded, the minister’s office became more distinctively separated to be Bishop and Deacon. Instead of elder-deacon, it became elder/bishop and deacon.

The first indication of a distinction between elder and deacon is in the salutation of Phil 1:1, mentioning “bishops and deacons.”²³ This is now a two-tiered ministry, indicating that “bishop” was still synonymous with “elder.” That “elder” and “bishop” were synonymous terms can be demonstrated from several New Testament passages. In Acts 20 the same people are called elders (presbyteroi) in verse 17 and episkopoi in verse 28. See also Titus 1:5-7, where Paul speaks of appointing elders and then immediately lists the qualifications of “bishops,” and 1 Tim 3:1; 4:14; 5:17,19. ²⁴ The distinction between deacon and elder/bishop is hardened in the pastoral epistles, especially in 1 Tim 3:1-13. ²⁵ [Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/2 \(Autumn 2006\): 2–17](#)

In other words, deacons were the typical and newer ministers,



while bishops were the movement ministers, the senior ministers of the early church. As the movement spread, the Elders/Ministers/Bishops organized and appointed Ministers/Deacons.

Takeaways:

1. As the movement of Christianity spread, specialized needs became opportunities for mobilizing more ministers. The specialized need for ministers in Acts 6 and appointing deacons to meet that local need is still a hallmark of growing Christianity.
2. There seems to be a soft distinction between the mature, well-trained, and seasoned ministers in charge of the whole and those who are called to minister in specific need areas. The early church appointed mature ones as Bishops and as Deacons. Today, we often think of the senior ministers and their team of staff ministers as occupying the Mature/Elder/Bishop/Minister roles as full-time paid staff. The Mature/Deacon/Minister roles are often the volunteer or part-time staff members.
3. Local needs can create an opportunity for ministry as in Acts 6. The early church met the needs of the widows and the poor. By addressing those needs, this ministry helped spread Christianity as the hope of the lowly in society.
4. These Mature/Elder/Bishop Christian leaders often became movement leaders. A great case in point is Stephen or Philip, both deacons in the Book of Acts. Often a new minister starts as a specialized Deacon/Minister but will become a Bishop/Minister over time.



Today, Christian Leaders Alliance seeks to train and credential leaders in core minister roles with over 30 specializations that meet more and more needs. General and specialized ministry needs exist in every community. As churches identify needs in the community, Christian Leaders Alliance will serve those churches to train and credential ministers to meet those needs and increase the impact of that local church. Many of these specialized ministers will become movement leaders (bishops types). These movement leaders will recruit new ministers, many of whom come into ministry as volunteers or part-time ministers in a specialization.

Christian Leaders Alliance offers a “Minister Mobilization Process” to help find ways to mobilize more ministers in local communities.

MINISTER MOBILIZATION PROCESS

This handbook addresses how to implement the mobilization of Christian Leaders Alliance candidates in local churches.

Mentoring Future Leaders

Many local pastors/ministers are being contacted by Christian Leaders Institute students who ask them to mentor them as they prepare for ministry. The local church leader may wonder about Christian Leaders Institute and how they offer tuition-free ministry training. The local student may show the leader the website. They find out that the teaching is Biblical and doctrinally sound as they check out the Statement of Faith and the courses.

This mentorship relationship often develops into a possibility for



local ministry. Sometimes, the student seeks a minister credential role with the Christian Leaders Alliance. Then, they need an endorsement from their mentor. This handbook is a resource for the local ministry leader interested in continuing the process or even wanting to mobilize more ministers through the ministry of the Christian Leaders Institute and Christian Leaders Alliance

Needs Assessment

A minister mobilization process starts with a needs assessment. What needs are you called to address through ministry in your community? What are your strengths now? What are some opportunities? How does the vision and mission of your church impact the passion for addressing those needs?

There are different ways to approach this. You can find specialized leaders who are called to address a specific need and mobilize them or identify leaders willing to address those needs.

Questions:

1. What needs come to mind in our church or community that align with our vision and mission as a church?
2. What type of organization is in need? Do we have a budget to hire staff ministers, or do we need to recruit volunteer ministers?
3. Do we have people called to the ministry that we can mobilize to meet some needs in our church or community?
4. Does a minister candidate come forward with gifts that could serve to address a local need and that will benefit the church?



There are so many needs that can be met with a ministry. However, you cannot do everything. What can you do? Are there leaders available to you?

Connection to Christian Leaders Alliance

The Christian Leaders Alliance can help the church leaders identify minister candidates that can serve their church staff and address more local needs. The Christian Leaders Alliance program has five minister roles and over thirty specializations.

Church leaders may already be mentoring these potential candidates. There could be a discernment process already underway.



What Credentialed Roles are Available?

Christian Leaders Alliance has established five core minister roles. Each core role includes appropriate training and local endorsements.

Officiants – The Officiant role begins with training and credentialing to perform local weddings. This would allow your church to launch a wedding ministry in your community. A wedding officiant must gather one recommendation.

Commended Ministers – The Commended Minister program consists of several mini-courses and complete courses that prepare a volunteer minister for fruitful service in a local church. A commended minister must gather one recommendation. This program would be ideal for local elders and deacons.

Coaching Ministers – The Coaching Minister program comprises many ministry courses, coaching, and life coach training for ministry application. Coaching ministers in a local church offer your church and community another way to help people live well in Christ. This program requires two recommendations.

Licensed Ministers – The Licensed Minister program consists of a well-rounded program of ministry courses, including mini-courses and college-level courses. Licensed ministers are often considered ready for part-time employment in a local church. This program requires two recommendations.

Ordained Ministers – The Ordained Minister program has more



extensive training in ministry, including more college-level ministry courses. Ordained ministers often become pastors and are employed part-time or full-time at local churches. This program requires the gathering of three recommendations.

What Ministry Specializations Currently Exist?

Kingdom Minister – Minister to the community through the local church, such as blogging or serving in a soup kitchen.

Bible Study or Small Group – Lead Sunday school classes or small groups.

Advanced Bible Study or Small Group – Teach Bible studies with more extensive training.

Women's Ministry – Minister to women. This role includes a specialized course in the best practices of women's ministry.

Men's Ministry – Minister to men in your local church or community.

All Abilities – Serve those with disabilities and show how a local church can empower people of all abilities.

Youth Ministry – Serve the parents and youth to empower the next generation in Christ.

Evangelism – Evangelize your local community through your local church.

Visitation – Minister not only in hospital settings but also in shut-in situations.



Marriage Ministry – Minister in a wide range of marriage care topics.

Sex Education and Conversations – Advocate and teach Christian marriage intimacy as an officiant, minister, or coaching minister.

Matchmaking – Create God-glorifying marriages not only in the local church but also in the community.

Senior Adult – Serve seniors in this stage of their lives.

Pastoral Care – Serve in the pastoral care needs of a congregation.

Church Revitalization – Serve on an existing church growth team.

Prayer Ministry – Serve in a prayer ministry not only in the local church but also in the community.

Navigating Conflict – Serving to not only resolve conflict but bring the peace of Christ to others.

House Church Planting – Plant a house church out of a local church.

Preaching Ministry – Lead more effectively as a preacher and teacher of the Word of God.

MinistryBiz – Create enterprising businesses out of your local church.

Church Planting – Be sent to plant a new church or be on a team for church planting out of a local church.

Executive Minister – Be an administrative minister in a local



church.].

Worldview Minister – Minister in the public square and teaching programs through the local church.

Administration – Serving as an organizing minister at a local church.

Associate Chaplaincy – Perform chaplain functions in and out of the local church.

Senior Minister – Mentor a future senior pastor with an extensive program of study.

Ecuministry Credentials

Christian Leaders Alliance partners with called ministers in training and with their local church or ministry and the existing leaders mentoring them. Christian Leaders Alliance coined the word “Ecuministry” as a combination of two words. One part of the word is “ecu” which refers to “church” from the word “ecclesiastical.” The word “ministry” refers to keeping the focus on shared ministry as the goal. This word is different than the word ecumenical, which seeks to agree on the various Christian traditions.

Ecuministry seeks to find agreement in the places we can do ministry together. The fact is that there is much room for agreement and room to agree to disagree on many issues in Christianity. Ecuministry credentials often function as co-credentials with the local church. A called ministry candidate completes a minister credential program at Christian Leaders Alliance, and they receive a minister credential. The credential is signed by a representative



of the Christian Leaders Alliance. There is also a place for the signature of a local church or ministry leader.

We are part of a denominational church: what then?

If you are part of a denominational church, you will not need to involve the larger denomination in this process. Denominational churches often ordain this leader as a “deacon or elder” as it relates to the local church. Still, as it relates to their community recognition, they are also credentialed through the Christian Leaders Alliance.

The local church and leaders recognize their journey in ministry training and recommend them to a local ministry. The Christian Leaders Alliance recognizes the training process at the Christian Leaders Institute and the recommendation process at the Christian Leaders Alliance. The Christian Leaders Alliance posts these leaders as credentialed ministers.

We are a non-denominational church; what then?

Your church simply recognizes the Christian Leaders Alliance Credentials as accepted. You mentor the minister candidate through the process, grant local approval, and schedule a commissioning service.

Administering the Mobilization of a Minister

We recommend a few more steps in mobilizing a Christian Leaders Alliance minister. These are helpful administration



procedures that complete the mobilization process.

Develop Volunteer or Part-time Minister Position Job

Descriptions - A job description in the work world outlines the expectations and parameters of a work role. A minister position description does similar things for volunteer or part-time positions for the local church.

Schedule a Commissioning Service – The Commissioning Service publicly recognizes the local minister’s training and ecumenism credentials. Ministers trained and credentialed with the Christian Leaders Alliance are encouraged to be commissioned at a local church event. Their credentials are signed by President Reverend Henry Reyenga from Christian Leaders Alliance. An ordained leader must also sign them from the local church.

Schedule Effectiveness Meetings – Depending on the role, there is an expectation that these local credentialed ministers meet with church leadership for mentorship and effectiveness monitoring.

What is the “Christian Leaders” Organization?

In 2001, Henry Reyenga and the late Rich DeVos founded [Christian Leaders](#) as a Non-Profit to raise Christian leaders. One of the goals was to raise grassroots leaders who would help church leaders reach more people. The strategy was developed to create training and credentialing programs around ministry topics. These are useful for local pastors and churches



to mobilize more local ministers for further local impact. Christian Leaders does business as Christian Leaders College, seeking accreditation with ABHE as a United States Department of Education-recognized credentialing body. This accreditation applies to the tuition-free Christian Leaders College courses. The Minister Credentials are overseen through the Christian Leaders Alliance, which has a **Global Ministers Commission**, which is an international commission of licensed and ordained ministers.

What is the Global Ministers Commission of the Christian Leaders Alliance?

This Commission is the spiritual covering for the certification, licensing, and ordination process and program at Christian Leaders Alliance. We understand that many credentialed through the Christian Leaders Alliance also have local or denominational oversight for local ministry.

[Global Ministers Commission](#) provides credentialed ministers with a connecting point to encourage, inspire, and support current and future Christian Leaders Alliance minister members in their daily walk with Jesus Christ from a ministering credentialing point of view.

This [Commission](#) is led by Henry Reyenga, president of Christian Leaders, NFP., and Brian DeCook serves as the General Secretary. In serving the church worldwide, the Commission honors the diversity of opinions on women as credentialed ministers.



What is the Statement of Faith?

Christian Leaders Alliance Statement of Faith

This Statement of Faith was settled on when Christian Leaders Institute began offering classes in 2006. Since that time this Christian Leaders statement of faith has guided the development of the classes and worldview.

The Bible

The Bible is God's inerrant, infallible, reliable Word, the only final authority for faith and life. (*Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 8:20; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21*)

Who is God?

God is Trinity; an eternal, loving unity of three divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (*Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 14:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

God Created The World

God created the universe ex nihilo, from nothing, and made all things very good. (*Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11; Hebrews 11:3*)

God Created Humanity

God created humanity in his image to glorify and enjoy God and to be stewards of creation. (*Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8; Isaiah 43:7; Revelation 4:11; Psalm 37:4*)

The Fall

Humanity has fallen into sin, and we are totally unable to save ourselves. (*Genesis 3; Romans 3:12, 23; Romans 5:12*)



Who is Jesus?

Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, is fully God and fully man. (*Matthew 1:21-23; John 1:1,14; 20:28; Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:14*)

Jesus' Life and Victory

Jesus was born of a virgin, obeyed God perfectly, worked great miracles, died on a cross, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and reigns over all things. (*Luke 1:26-35, Hebrews 4:15; John 14:11, Luke 23-24, Ephesians 1:20-23*)

Salvation is a Work of God

God's salvation is merited only by Jesus' perfect obedience and substitutionary atonement. (*Isaiah 53; Hebrews 7:26-27; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Acts 4:12*)

Salvation is Not Our Work

Salvation is entirely God's gift, not our achievement, and is received by faith in Christ, not works. (*John 3:16; Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 2:16-21*)

The Holy Spirit was Sent to Earth and Fills Us

The Holy Spirit gives new birth, unites us to Christ, assures us of His love, leads us in His truth, forms us in His character, equips us with His gifts, and empowers us to be His ambassadors. (*John 3:3-8; Acts 1:8; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 3:16-21*)

The Church

The church is the one body of God's people throughout all generations and from all nations. (*Romans 12:5; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 1:22-23; Revelation 7:9*)



Angels of God

God's holy angels defend and help God's people. (*Psalm 34:7, 91:11; Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:14*)

Fallen Angels

Satan and other fallen angels are dangerous but doomed. Christ is the victor. (*Ephesians 6:10-18; Colossians 2:15; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10-12*)

Christ Will Return and the Dead Will Be Raised

Christ will return visibly. The dead will be raised. Christ will rule the world and make all things new. (*Matthew 24:30; 1Cor. 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 21:1-5*)

New Heaven and New Earth

God's people will rejoice forever in the new heaven and new earth; God's enemies will suffer forever in hell. (*Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 22:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 1:9*)

God Designed Marriage

Sexual intimacy is for marriage only. Christian marriage is a lifelong union of a man and a woman. (*Genesis 2:22-25; Matthew 5:27-32; Matthew 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-11*)

God Relates to Families

God's covenant addresses not only individuals but also their families. (*Genesis 17:7; 18:19; Deuteronomy 7:9; Joshua 24:15; Psalm 103:17; Acts 11:14; 16:15,31*)

We Are Able to Walk with God

As individuals, as couples, and as families, we need a daily conversation with God through Bible reading and prayer. (*Psalm 1; Daniel 6:10; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17*)



We Love Because He Loved Us

God calls us to a holy life of love, as depicted in the Ten Commandments. (*Exodus 20:1-17; Mark 12:30-31; John 14:15; Romans 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 13*)

We Honor Christ in Everything

God calls us to a worldview and way of life in which we seek to honor Christ in every area of thought and action. (*Psalms 24:1; Colossians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 10:5*)

We Share the Good News

God calls us to spread the gospel to people who don't yet follow Christ. (*Psalms 96:3; Matthew 5:14; Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15*)

