



# **Christ For The Nations**

n e t w o r k

## **Credential Handbook**

REVISED MAY 2024

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Why should I get credentials?**

The possession of ministry credentials is both empowerment and enablement for you to fulfill the work God has called you to.

As a credential holder with CFN Network, the benefits granted to you can look like:

- Tax benefits for those employed in ministry.
- Credentials offer you the ability to administer sacraments (weddings, funerals).
- Credentials offer you the ability to access certain ministry opportunities, such as ministering in prisons and in hospitals.
- Increased credibility by identifying with a 70-year-old international ministry with proven integrity.
- Support, encouragement and assistance from those with like vision and calling.
- Upon retirement, the IRS allows credentialed ministers of all established church denominations to declare a housing allowance on distributions from their 403(b) retirement accounts.

### **What is the difference between being licensed versus ordained?**

The CFN Network offers two types of credentials; a Minister's License or Ordination.

We define eligibility for licensing or ordination as follows:

#### **LICENSE**

A License to Minister is granted to the candidate who has demonstrated in their application process a call to ministry and the kind of character growth and development that will be required in ministry.

Holding a Minister's License helps open the door for you to go out and function, learn, grow, and begin bearing fruit in your ministry. This is the standard "first step" with pastoral and evangelistic ministry, administration of the ordinances of the Church, and to solemnize marriage vows in conformity with the laws of the state.

#### **ORDINATION**

Ordination is granted to either the candidate who has held an active Minister's License for at least 2 years preceding the application **OR** to the candidate who possesses at least 5 years of senior level church leadership experience (senior pastor, executive pastor, director, full-time pastor, etc.) **in addition to** the qualifications as outlined in the New Testament scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:7-9)

### **What is the application deadline?**

We have two seasons in which we open up applications:

*For the Fall term*, applications must be completed by the **first week of November** in order to be credentialed for the December Credential Celebration.

*For the Spring term*, applications must be completed by the **first week of April** in order to be credentialed for the May Credential Celebration.

## **How much do credentials cost?**

*First time candidate for credentials: \$238.50 (\$138.50 credential + \$100 application fee)*

*Annual Credential Renewal: \$138.50*

*Upgrading to ordination from license: \$238.50 (\$138.50 credential + \$100 upgrade fee)*

*Reinstatement of lapsed credentials: \$238.50 (\$138.50 credential + \$100 reinstatement fee)*

## **What do I receive when I get my credentials?**

During the Credential Celebration, CFN Network issues a certificate recognizing the status of its ministerial members, as well as a wallet-sized identification card (with an expiration date) verifying their ministerial and membership status.

These items verify that you, as a minister, are recognized by and are affiliated with an organization that has national and international scope.

## **What is the Credential Celebration?**

The Credential Celebration is a dynamic and powerful night where we solemnize your new membership status into the Network and celebrate this new season in your calling.

You will be able to meet fellow Network members, participate in a time of worship and word, as well as receive one-on-one prayer from our Spiritual Leadership.

You will also receive your credential documents (certificate and card) as we take a moment to honor and recognize each new incoming member.

## **Do I need to wait for the Credential Celebration to obtain my credentials?**

No; although we expect every member to make every effort to come to the Credential Celebration as the officialization of their membership status, in the event you need to possess your credentials beforehand, please contact our office so we can assist you.

## **Do I need to be a CFNI graduate/alumni to apply?**

No! You do not need to be a CFNI graduate or alumni in order to apply for credentials with the CFN Network.

## **Can I submit a physical form instead of an online one?**

No; our application process has been entirely digitized. Kindly make the arrangements you need to meet this expectation.

## **How long are my credentials valid for?**

Credentials are valid for 1 year, and must be renewed annually to maintain your licensed or ordained status.

Renewal deadlines are either December 1<sup>st</sup> or May 31<sup>st</sup>, according to the respective season in which the member was initially credentialed (i.e., if you were licensed in May 2024, you will need to renew by May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025).

## **What happens if I do not renew my credentials?**

If you do not renew your credentials by the renewal deadline, you will be assessed a \$100 fee on top of the cost of your renewal, up to 3 months after expiration. Credentials that have been lapsed for more than 3 months are subject to reinstatement application. Credentials that have been lapsed for more than 1 year are subject to a reinstatement application **and** a new interview with one of our Spiritual Leaders.

## **Is housing available on campus?**

The CFN Network has an exclusive benefit to credential holders of our Emmanuel Retreat apartment. Located on CFNI's campus, the purpose of this apartment is to offer our members a place to refresh, reset, and seek the Lord.

When you are a credentialed member of the CFN Network, you are allotted a **3-night stay per year** at the Emmanuel Retreat. There is an additional cleaning fee of \$60 to support the care and maintenance of the apartment for guests to come.

Should you desire accommodation that exceeds 3 nights, this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the CFN Network office directly for availability.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The CFN Network is the official credentialing arm for Christ For The Nations.

We exist as a networking body to connect churches, ministries, and individuals globally.

Our scope of care provides networking, pastoral care, mutual accountability, ministry resources, and fellowship for our credential holders, partnering churches, and ministries.

Our mission as the CFN Network is to be a fellowship of people who have purposed themselves to be faithful in stimulating one another to glorify God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ and to obey Christ's mandate to preach the Gospel and to make disciples of all nations.

To this end we are committed to serving and equipping our members in carrying out their respective missions. To ordain qualified ministers of the Gospel and license qualified local church elders and leaders in the body of Christ. To be a network for local churches and fivefold ministers and ministries who decide to affiliate with CFN Network.

## **WHAT WE BELIEVE**

### **Statement of Faith**

CFN Network holds to the Statement of Faith provided and adhered to by Christ For The Nations while recognizing the diversity of beliefs among Spirit-filled Christians of scriptural integrity. Therefore, we open the arms of this Fellowship to include and embrace all who hold to the foundational truths of the Christian faith.

- 1. The One True God:** There is one living and true God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19).

2. **The Scriptures Inspired:** The Bible is the only infallible, inspired, authoritative, written Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16).
3. **The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ:** We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, in His personal future return to this Earth in power and glory to rule a thousand years (John 1:1).
4. **Original Sin and the Fall of Man:** We believe that man, created in the image of God, by voluntary disobedience fell into the depths of sin and iniquity, therefore passing on sin's nature and consequences to all mankind, with their accompanying loss of intended meaning and purpose (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 5:12).
5. **The Salvation of Man:** The only hope of redemption and salvation from the power of sin is to willingly choose repentance and faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is possible for a believer to lose his or her salvation by willfully turning away from the provisions of salvation which Christ has made. Salvation is a free gift from God and is available to any and all who call upon the Name of the Lord (Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:8,13, 15; 10:9, 13; Jas. 1:21; Eph. 2:8; Heb. 3:12, 6:4-6, 12:15; Matt. 13:22; 2 Tim. 4:10; 1 Tim. 1:19).
6. **The Church and its Mission:** We believe in the Great Commission to go into all the world to make disciples (Matt. 28:19).
7. **The Ordinances of the Church:**
  - a. Baptism in water in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All who repent of their sins and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. This is a declaration to the world that they identify with Christ in His death and have been raised with Him in newness of life (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47, 48; Rom. 6:4).
  - b. The Lord's Supper consisting of the elements—bread and the fruit of the vine—is the symbol expressing our sharing the Divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:4), a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Cor. 11:26), and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Cor. 11:26), and is enjoined on all believers until He comes!
8. **The Baptism in the Holy Spirit:** The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit with evidence by speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives utterance (Acts 2:4). With the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes power for life and service in the ministry of the Body of Christ. We believe in corporate prayer with the believer's prayer language (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; 2:11; 10:46; 1 Cor. 12:131).
9. **Divine Healing:** Divine healing was provided for all in the Old Testament (Ex. 15:22-26; Ps. 103:13; Isa. 53:4, 5) and in the New Testament it is an integral part of the Gospel (Matt. 8:16,17; Acts 5:16; Jas. 5:14-16).

**10. The Final Judgment:** We believe that all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ: the redeemed to be delivered unto everlasting life, and the unrepentant unto everlasting punishment (Rev. 20:11, 12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

## **Statement of Position of Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

The CFN Network fully embrace the teachings of the traditional biblical view with regard to the goodness of our sexuality, the importance of chastity and the place of heterosexual marriage as God's intended context for complete sexual expression to occur (Gen. 2:21-24).

CFN Network believes that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We also believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between one man and one woman, who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman.

Therefore, any form of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual behavior, bestiality, incest, and use of printed, videoed, or virtual pornography is sinful (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9, 10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of CFN Network, and to provide a biblical role model to the members of CFN Network and the community, it is imperative that all members of CFN Network, those employed by CFN Network in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement and Position on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mk.12:28-31; Lk. 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of CFN Network.

A change in marital status by means of divorce by an active credentialed member does not constitute an automatic cancellation of credentials. However, it is required to inform our offices if there has been a change in marital status.

## **PROCEDURAL INFORMATION**

*An application for **new credentials** with the CFN Network is divided into 4 steps:*

### **1. Submission**

You must fill out our [CFN Network Application Form online](#). During this application, we ask for thoughtful answers, and accurate contact information. Be prepared to also provide a pastoral contact that may be contacted to issue a recommendation on your behalf.

You may save this application and your answers as you go in the event you decide to not complete it all at once. At the end of your application form submission, you will also complete the payment for your application.

### **2. Recommendation**

With the pastoral contact you provided; we will send your contact a recommendation form on your behalf. Kindly partner with us in this process by informing your recommender that we will be reaching out. Only upon receiving your recommendation from your pastoral recommender will you be eligible to move onto the next step of an interview.

**3. Interview**

The final step for your approval is an interview hosted by a member of our Spiritual Leadership. This interview will review your application submission and the pastoral recommendation we received. The Spiritual Leader conducting your interview has all discretion to approve or deny your application.

**4. Celebration**

If approved for your credentials, you will be contacted with the details to prepare you for our Celebration Ceremony. Celebration Ceremonies are hosted in either early December or early May. During this ceremony, you will be issued a certificate recognizing your credential, as well as a membership card. This ceremony encompasses a time of prayer, worship, and word to celebrate this new chapter in your life. It is the expectation of the CFN Network that every member makes every effort possible to be physically present for the Credentials Service.

**Application Cost:**

*Credential (\$138.50) + Application Fee (\$100) - \$238.50*

An application for **credential renewal** is divided into 2 steps:

**1. Submission**

You must submit your credential renewal form through either [THIS LINK](#), or you can request a mail-in form. Please provide accurate contact information in this form so may have the most up-to-date way to reach you if you needed. At the end of the renewal form, you will also submit your payment to finalize your renewal.

**2. Receiving your card**

Once you have submitted your credential renewal form, our office will produce your new, updated membership card and mail it to the address you provided in your renewal form. Please provide an accurate address so your card reaches you.

**Renewal Costs:**

*Annual Credential Renewal - \$138.50*

*Annual Spousal Renewal\* - \$230.00*

*\*For couples where **both** are active members of the CFN Network*

An application for an **upgrade to ordination\*** is divided into 2 steps:

**1. Submission**

You must submit your upgrade to ordination form through [THIS LINK](#).

Upon submission of your form, our office will contact you regarding the status of your upgrade. Another interview is *not* required for the upgrade.

**2. Celebration**

Once approved for your upgrade, you will be contacted with the details to prepare you for the Credential Celebration in either December or May. Although attendance is not required, we **strongly** encourage you to attend as this will be a moment of blessing with the laying of hands and prophetic prayer as you step into this new season as an ordained minister. Should

you be unable to attend, please inform our office so that we can coordinate getting your credential documents sent to you.

*\*Upgrade to ordination only eligible for current CFN Network members that have maintained an active license for at least 2 years preceding their application for upgrade.*

**Upgrade Cost:**

Credential (\$138.50) + Upgrade Fee (\$100) - \$238.50

An application for **reinstatement of lapsed credentials** is divided into 2 steps:

**1. Submission**

You must submit your upgrade to ordination form through [THIS LINK](#).

Upon submission of your form, our office will contact you regarding the status of your reinstatement, and *if needed*, to schedule an interview with one of our Spiritual Leaders.

**2. Receiving your card**

Once you have submitted your reinstatement form, our office will produce your new, updated membership card and mail it to the address you provided in your renewal form.

Please provide an accurate address so your card reaches you.

## **OFFICE CONTACT**

Our office is located at 350 W. Kiest Blvd. Dallas, TX 75224.

Should you like to visit us, we strongly encourage that you set up an appointment so that we may be prepared to serve you to the best of our capacity.

You may reach us by phone at **214-302-6456**.

You may reach us by email at [admin@cfnnetwork.org](mailto:admin@cfnnetwork.org).

Office hours are Monday – Friday from 9am – 5pm.

Hours subject to change at the discretion of the office.