

MISSION ORDER OF ST PAUL

Constitution and Structure

The Mission Order of St Paul is a missional order within the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. It is a covenantal, episcopally overseen, order with an organic, relational structure comprising cells, chapters, and networks between these. Its provincial unit is the annual Convention.

The Vision and Charism of the Order

The Mission Order of St Paul seeks to participate in the general mission of God alongside other ministries of the universal church, yet seeks to be obedient to the specific expression of this mission which it understands as its distinctive charism - vision, task and call.

While recognising the validity and importance of the ministry, gifting and calling of all Christians, The Order intentionally seeks to identify, train, disciple and release Missional Leaders¹ (both lay and ordained) who have committed their lives first of all to Jesus. This is facilitated, alongside personal discipleship, by context based accountability relationships formed and supported in member cells. Missional Leaders go forward in their missional activity as members of the Order, but are always expected to operate in community and as teams.

The task of all members is to initiate and inspire new expressions of church, and to establish and resource missional communities. They are expected to understand and engage with the culture in which they live and serve, particularly reaching out to the emerging generation. They operate under the authority of their local Presbyter and under the oversight and covering of the Provincial.

The Covenantal Commitment and Principles of the Order

In making a covenant to The Order, members undertake a dedication to realise their baptismal commitment to discipleship as shaped by their Anglican identity and cultural context, accepting the particular opportunities and challenges of the Order as a true part of God's gracious call to them.

Members make a covenant to express their intentional commitment to God's mission of manifesting the biblical 'Kingdom of God' through a commitment to these Pauline principles:

- **Jesus as Lord** - to affirm an orthodox Christology understood in terms of St Paul's understanding and experience of Jesus
- **Mission as priority** - to share St Paul's passion for mission and church planting
- **Personal holiness and accountability** - to seek to live the Holy Life as St Paul describes it in his epistles to the Church

[Covenant affirmation and initiation liturgy to be composed and appended]

¹ Leaders for whom mission is a primary focus of their minister and are committed to initiating and leading mission projects.

Accordingly, Members of the Mission Order of St Paul are committed to a life of covenanted faithfulness that has a two-fold emphasis:

- A Pauline Christology and Missiology
- The embracing of a life that is both holy and accountable², that expresses purity of living and servant ministry.

The Structure and Function of the Order

The Order's structure is that of a network of Anglican missional communities that together comprise a missionary movement within the Anglican Diocese of Nelson, the wider community and network of evangelical Anglicans in Aotearoa Zealand and Polynesia, and potentially further afield.

The *provincial relational* unit of membership is the annual **Convention**.

The *local administrative* unit is the **Chapter**. All Members are members of their local Chapter, which is convened by the Presbyter at least semi-annually to receive new Members and renew covenantal commitments.

The basic *relational* unit is the **member cell**. The functions of the cell are

- Hospitality to inquirers
- Mutual mentoring/accountability, discipling, and support
- Discerning and equipping of Missional Leaders
- Together with other local cells, envisioning and facilitating mission projects

The local Presbyter has both oversight of and direct involvement in cells within his/her locality

Leadership

Leadership within the Order is structured through the **Provincial** and **Presbyters**. Members are accountable to both their local Presbyter and the Order's Provincial. The intention is to avoid cumbersome hierarchical structures that hinder the dynamic, apostolic move of the Kingdom, whilst maintaining a transparency of leadership throughout the Order.

Episcopal Oversight: The Provincial

It is recognised that fellowship (*koinonia*) in the context of community cannot be effectively maintained without oversight (*episcopate*), which in the Anglican Church is Episcopal in nature. Accordingly, the Order's Provincial will be an Anglican Bishop and, given the Order's origin and evangelical ethos, will normally be the Bishop of Nelson.

The role of the Provincial is to carry, guard and develop the spiritual vision and charism of The Order. The Provincial is called to be the overseer leading by the example of life as well as words, watching over

² **Accountability** is choosing to live life in submission to the Lordship of Jesus. This is expressed by

- Obedience to the principles of the Order and the oversight of its Provincial and Presbyters.
- Involvement in mutual mentoring: inviting others to walk with, challenge and correct, and to call each other to account regarding the internal and external realities of their lives.

Mutual accountability is one of the regular functions of member cells.

the Order to ensure that it conforms to the teaching of the Church as expressed within Anglican orthodoxy, and the Creeds of the Church. In all things the Provincial is to encourage the members of the Order towards a reflective dependence on the Bible and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Provincial is

- Accountable to the Presbyters of the Order according to the Order's understanding of ministry as mutual accountability and the imperative to model this to members.
- A parental figure (patron) caring for the spiritual health of the Order with the help of the Presbyters.
- In the primary instance, as the Order's Founder, deemed to be appointed; thereafter to be appointed by Convention to serve for a period of six years and shall always be re-eligible.

In the case of the death, permanent incapacity or resignation of the Provincial, one of the Presbyters, with the agreement, support and encouragement of other Presbyters and the Visitors will assume responsibility until a new Provincial has been appointed.

Presbyters

Presbyters are the Provincial's representatives as leaders of the Order and may be either lay or ordained and will be appointed by the Provincial. In making Presbyter appointments the Provincial will take into account the character and gifting of each leader, the nature of the task, the demands of stability, and the Order's responsibility to the church and the world.

The Provincial may, in consultation with Visitors and other Presbyters, make changes to the appointments at any time.

Presbyters will be

- Convenors of Chapters
- Involved in initiation and renewal of covenantal commitment
- Be a part of, or lead, a discipleship cell
- Directly accountable to and in regular contact with the Provincial.

Visitors

The role of the Visitors is to see that the Order is faithful to its calling and to seek to ensure that The Order is soundly led and accountable to the wider church. They are not members of the Order but have a dynamic relationship with the leadership and membership of the Order. They are invited to Order Conventions and are often in communication with the Provincial and Presbyters. Visitors are chosen and invited by the Provincial in consultation with the Presbyters.

The Order will seek to have Visitors offering the general oversight expected of their respective positions in the wider church. There should ideally be at least three Visitors.

A Visitor's tenure will be renewable after three years.

Their role is to see that the Order is faithful to its Principles and Constitution.

They are guarantors to the church at large of the Order's sound administration and stability. They shall hold formal visitations to the Order at their discretion. Visitations will be instigated by the Visitor and will be in the form of meetings with Presbyters and available/invited Chapter Members.

Every Member, or any group of Members, has a right of appeal to the Visitors in case of a dispute with the Order, its Provincial, Presbyters, or Members.

The Visitors have a particular responsibility to guide and advise the community in the appointment of a Provincial.

Membership

- Members may be lay or ordained.
- Inquirers should attend a local cell on a ‘taste and see’ temporary membership basis for at least six months before making the commitment to covenanted membership.

Associate Members

Associate Members are those individuals and organisations (such as the Church Army – and including churches) that wish to support the calling and work of The Order without the responsibility of covenantal commitment or where (as in the case of a corporate body) that commitment would be inappropriate.

- They (or their representatives) are encouraged to attend the Annual Conventions of the Order and engage in accountable relationships within the community.
- They are welcome to give whatever gifts and offerings, talents and skills they desire to the work, ministry and mission of the Order.

The Missional Community

Members of the Order will always function from within a local church and seek to be alongside that church in fulfilling the mission of God.

The following are distinctive marks of a Missional Community

1. *Pattern of Life*

- A life lived according to Paul’s vision of Jesus as Lord and the primacy of mission
- Lived out personal holiness and accountability

2. *People for Life*

- Deliberate sharing life with others in the Order
- Prioritising and serving the annual Conventions
- Being accompanied in the journey with The Order
- Accompanying others in their journey with The Order

3. *Purpose in Life*

- Intentionality in mission
- Active membership in a cell
- Involving others in cell membership.

Corporate structures

Chapter

The Chapter consists of all those who are Members in its region (geographical area of diocese or deanery). While the Chapter serves an administrative role, its primary task is that of initiation and renewal of membership, and its primary aim is to facilitate the development of missional expression of church (such as a church plant or mission project) in its region.

- The Chapter will be chaired by the local Presbyter and will meet at least semi-annually.
- Any member of the Order will be welcome to and notified of the meetings.

Convention

Order Conventions are an opportunity for growing in the vision and practice for missionary community as well as the occasion of the Order's Annual General Meeting.

- Convention will be an annual event for all Members convened by the Provincial.
- The Visitors will be invited to the Convention.
- Guest speakers/presenters may be invited.
- The Convention is responsible for appointing the Provincial and as such must recognise the need for the Order to be nurtured and served by someone who will faithfully guard and develop the values and charism of the Order.
- Every member is free to propose business for the Convention AGM. Such proposals are made to the Provincial, who is responsible for the agenda, or their delegated representative.
- A decision of the Convention AGM represents the highest authority of the Order.
- The Convention makes decisions regarding:
 - The finances of the Order
 - Any legal action
 - Any alterations to the Constitution. Any changes in the constitution agreed by the Convention will not come into effect until the next Convention.
- Members are under an obligation to respect the confidential character of AGM business.
- The Constitution may be changed by a majority vote of the Convention where there are important structural changes at issue. Other revisions of a functional nature may be made by the Trustees in the interim if it is not advisable to leave these until the next Convention.
- Any Member attending the Convention has the right to raise any matter pertaining to the health and well-being of the Order and to be present at any Standing Committee meeting.

The Work, Ministry and Mission of the Order

- The Order will seek not to employ anyone or own anything apart from that which is immediately necessary for the sound administration of the Order.
- Overseeing the work of the Order and that of each member is the particular responsibility of the Provincial and the Provincial's representatives.
- No Member is free to undertake commitments on their own authority in the name of the Mission Order. This is important both for the common good of the Order and for the well being of each member. However, each Member should be ready to make suggestions for the development of their own work and that of the Order. *It should be noted that commitment to the Order cannot override the requirement for clergy of canonical obedience to their Diocesan Bishop.*
- The Order needs grace to recognise each Member's gifts, and discernment is needed on how they may best be used.
- The Order recognises the importance of life-long learning, which may include training for specific tasks or roles. Training will be carried out through the Order's partnership with BTC (Bishopdale Theological College).
- The Provincial may, after due process, ordain a member into a Missional Diaconate (a ministry outworked within the order). It will take place only after discussion with, and the agreement and involvement of, the relevant diocesan bishop within whose jurisdiction this takes place. These candidates will have completed an appropriate qualification with a missional focus.

- Matters of licencing arising out of the Order’s deployment of these and other Order clergy in initiating new expressions of church and/or establishing missional communities in areas beyond Nelson Diocese will be resolved through mutual agreement between the Provincial and the Diocesan Bishop in question.

Other matters

Review

- Every Member, or any group of Members, has a right to request a review of procedures and activities at any level of the Order. This request may be directed to one of the Visitors.

Resignation from the Order

Members may resign from the Order following a meeting with their presbyter, followed by a formal letter of resignation to the Provincial.

Dismissal

The Provincial may after consultation with relevant parties remove any Member from the Order on the following grounds:

Behaviour or belief that is incompatible with and contrary to the Mission Order covenant and the Trinitarian and Biblical faith of the historic Christian Church.

Persistent failure to exercise accountability within the order

When necessary the Order is responsible for assembling the evidence, which constitutes the grounds for dismissal and forwarding it to the Visitors and the Member concerned.

The Visitors may be involved in arbitration and counsel regarding dismissal from the Order.

Financial Considerations

- Members of the Order may be supported financially by:
 - The local church in (or in relation to which) they function as missional leaders
 - Their own means
 - Their Diocese.
- Members are expected to support the Order financially, as God calls, by way of annual contributions to the work of the Order.

‘Legal’ structure and establishment of the Order

The Order will be incorporated as a Charitable Trust.