

The Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa

Administration Division
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CHRISTCHURCH

Information Leaflet No. 3

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<p>SELECTION CRITERIA FOR DIACONAL CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY</p>

The selection criteria set out herein were prepared in 1991 and encompass the Church's understanding of the place of the Mission Statement, and its commitment to the bi-cultural journey and issues of inclusiveness.

This leaflet should be read in conjunction with Leaflet No. 1, which sets out the process for assessment and selection.

DIACONATE SELECTION CRITERIA

PREFACE

The Church welcomes candidates from a wide range of theological positions for assessment and selection into training for Methodist diaconal ministry. It will look for persons who are well-balanced and mature and who give evidence of experience, skills or potential in a number of areas of ministry within the church.

(Note: The Mission Resourcing Board replaces the Board of Ministry in all Candidating procedures)

A candidate must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident and meet the current criteria as set out in the Law Book (**S2.3.1-3.14.2-see below**).

CANDIDATES (Reproduced here for your convenience)

3. 1 A Candidate may offer for the general work of a Presbyter or Deacon or for a specific sphere of ministry, either of which may be full or part-time ministry, and either fully, partially or non-stipended. Candidating shall be for ministry in a specified language setting.
3. 2 Candidates for the ministry of Presbyter or Deacon in the Methodist Church shall:
 - (a) have been baptised;
 - (b) have been confirmed, and in active membership in the Church;
 - (c) give evidence, in the case of a Candidate for the presbyterate, of their acceptability and potential as a preacher;
 - (d) be persons finding general acceptance in the community and in the Church;

- (e) be persons who live out a commitment to the Methodist Church of New Zealand, including its Mission Statement, and bicultural journey;
 - (f) be persons whose gifts, insight into the Gospel, and ability to relate to people indicate a potential acceptability in this vocation; and
 - (g) have a general understanding of the role of the Presbyter and Deacon in the Methodist Church.
- 3.3 A person desiring to offer for the Presbyteral or Diaconal ministry shall be referred by the Superintendent of the Parish in which membership is held to the Synod Candidates Convenor.
- 3.4 Where a Candidate has resided for less than two years in the Parish from which s/he is candidating, adequate enquiries shall be made in previous Parishes and reported to the Parish Meeting and Synod Candidates Committee.
- 3.5 Candidates shall have read:
- (a) the "designated" sermons of John Wesley, or any other early Methodist documents, as set out by the Board of Studies.
 - (b) the Laws and Regulations of the Church and declare willingness to accept the polity and discipline of the Church.
- 3.6 Procedures regarding the selection and acceptance of Candidates for the Presbyterate and Diaconate shall be determined from time to time by the Mission Resourcing Board. The Mission Resourcing Board shall from time to time publish regulations for the implementation of the procedures. These procedures shall include provision for:
- (a) determining the degree of support of the local Church which will be conveyed in a report prepared by the Synod Candidates Convenor to the District Ministerial Synod;
 - (b) encouragement and guidance for prospective Candidates through the Candidate's support group;
 - (c) the presentation of the Convenor's report to a Ministerial Synod which may comment on or add to the report, and the adoption of the report's recommendations regarding the Candidate. The Synod Ministerial Meeting shall vote on the Report. The number voting for, against and neutral in a particular case shall be recorded and reported to the Mission Resourcing Board only if the Ministerial Synod so decides;
 - (d) each Candidate to attend a National Assessment Event as arranged by the Mission Resourcing Board;
 - (e) a process of Appeal against the recommendation of the National Assessment Event, the appeal to be solely on the grounds of abuse of and/or incorrect use of candidating procedures.
- 3.7 Each Candidate shall complete an application form as prescribed by the Mission Resourcing Board. The form shall seek:
- (a) information regarding prior learning experience;
 - (b) commitment to the Methodist Church of New Zealand and its Laws and Regulations;
 - (c) a police report, on the approved form;
 - (d) a medical report (if requested by the Mission Resourcing Board);
 - (e) proof of New Zealand residency qualification;

- (f) competency in English, in the language in which they will minister and, if necessary, in Te Reo.
3. 8 Candidates shall provide personal financial information as required by the Mission Resourcing Board in order to satisfy the Conference as to their ability to meet any necessary financial obligation during the total period of training.
 3. 9 At the March meeting of the Synod Ministerial Committee, and on other suitable occasions, the names of prospective Candidates shall be brought to the attention of the Ministry.
 3. 10 The Synod shall appoint a Synod Candidates Convenor who shall provide guidance to Candidates and to the Synod about the Candidating processes, and shall make a recommendation to the Synod regarding the Candidate.
 3. 11 The Synod Candidates Convenor shall see that the requirements of the Mission Resourcing Board with respect to Candidates have been fulfilled. The Synod Candidates Convenor shall confirm to the Mission Resourcing Board that a Candidate has met the requirements laid down in 2.3.5-8 above and that the Ministerial Synod has agreed to a Candidate continuing their candidature.
 3. 12 Prior to the acceptance of any Candidate who offers to exercise a full or part-time ministry, which may be partially or non-stipended, in the Parish from which they have Candidated, the Mission Resourcing Board shall arrange for consultation with the Parish to determine Parish strategy implications.
 3. 13 The Mission Resourcing Board will receive all reports concerning Candidates, including those of the Candidates Assessment Team. The Mission Resourcing Board will present its recommendation to the Conference. Each Candidate who is accepted for training in the Theological College shall, through the Mission Resourcing Board, give an undertaking to observe the rules of the Theological College.
 3. 14.1 A Candidate who is informed by the Ordination Assessment Team that he or she will not be recommended for acceptance may, within twenty one (21) days, lodge an appeal through his or her District or Regional Superintendent to the Mission Resourcing Board.
 3. 14.2 The Directors, Mission Resourcing shall establish an Appeals Committee, approved by the President, of three people who shall hear the appeal before the convening of the Conference in that year, and who shall make a final and binding decision to the Board of
Ministry. The only basis for an appeal is abuse and/or incorrect use of candidating procedures.

In addition, candidates will be assessed using the comprehensive criteria set out below.

GENERAL ABILITY

- Possess adequate academic capabilities and a good measure of common sense.
- Demonstrate competence in present career and in daily life.
- Have a wide range of interests and abilities.
- Be capable of drawing on a variety of resources for ministry and study.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, SPIRITUALITY & THEOLOGY

- Be a person of natural and deep spirituality with a personal faith in Jesus Christ and a mature prayer life.

- Have a good working knowledge of the Scriptures.
- Be able to articulate a clear call to ordained ministry.
- Give evidence of having a gospel to model and a vision for the church.
- Be able to reflect theologically on life and show a relationship between theology and personal life.

PERSONALITY

- Be a person of good physical, emotional and psychological health, with a good sense of self-worth.
- Co-operate and work well with others, be sensitive to and accepting of others' needs and situations, and be able to find, accept and give support.
- Show evidence of recent personal growth, and openness to further growth and change.
- Be able to survive crises and resolve conflicts in a healthy manner.

MINISTRY SKILLS

- Demonstrate skills in:
 - Communication
 - Administration
 - Pastoral care
 - Group life
 - Motivation and leadership.
- Be aware and accepting of the church's commitment to mutual and inclusive ministry.
- Be an enabler of others with the capacity to help others to develop their gifts and ministries.
- Be sensitive to, and able to work within other cultures and with other denominations (especially those within the Act of Commitment).

ROLE UNDERSTANDING AND MOTIVATION

- Have a clear understanding of the present and likely future role of a Methodist deacon.
- Be committed and loyal to the Methodist Church, its ethos, polity and discipline, and give evidence of some years' experience in parish life.
- Be accepting of the multi-ethnic nature of the Church and its commitments to ecumenism, the bi-cultural journey and other significant issues of church and society.
- Give evidence of wider community involvement.
- Show ability to change and adapt to meet the future demands of the church.
- Be available for stationing.

These criteria set high standards, but it is accepted that candidates will excel in some areas, yet have room for growth in others. It is also recognised that additional criteria would be required of candidates for special work, eg. in non-stipended ministry, or in a particular ethnic situation. Candidates for both non-stipended and itinerant ministry will be assessed to the same standard. What is essential is that a candidate shows that after the appropriate training period she/he will, under the grace of God, meet the high standards the church expects of its deacons.

THE VOCATION OF THE DEACON

Deacons are called to a ministry of service, leadership and pastoral care. The Deacon represents the churches calling as a servant in the world. By struggling in Christ's name with the diverse needs of societies and persons, deacons exemplify the interdependence of worship and service in the church's life. Of recent years this service has been symbolised by the bowl and the towel. All Christians are called to servant leadership but the bowl and towel serve as reminders that for the disciples Jesus' act of foot-washing was a radical break with tradition which empowered and enabled the disciples to see the truth of Jesus' way.

Deacons are a focus for the church's mission in the world. They exercise a ministry of love within the wider community, help in the teaching of the congregations, fulfil certain administrative tasks and may be elected to particular leadership responsibilities. They may participate in leadership of the worship of the congregation, for example by reading the scriptures, preaching and leading the people in prayer. Deacons need qualities of leadership and need to be seen as leaders of the church in their chosen field.

It is the particular calling of the deacon to engage in forms of enabling, empowering service which invite the church into the world.