

Selection Criteria for Candidates for presbyteral and diaconal ministry

Basic Information

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolution	The Council agrees to the use of the revised version of the selection criteria for the connexional year 2010-11, and directs that further work be undertaken on them in the light of the project <i>Fruitful Field</i> previously commissioned.
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	None

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	In 2003 the Conference approved a set of criteria to be used in the selection processes regarding candidates for presbyteral and diaconal ministry. In the developing of a handbook for candidates a lightly revised version of those criteria has been published on the website. Those revised criteria are therefore in use in the selection processes this year, but have not been approved by the Conference. The Council is therefore asked on behalf of the Conference to approve their use during this year. In the meantime, work is underway on the <i>Fruitful Field</i> project which will also look at the selection criteria.
Main Points	• The Selection Criteria as approved by the Conference in 2003 • The Selection Criteria as published for this year's selection process
Background Context	
Consultations	Discernment & selection; Discipleship and Ministries; Governance Support

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	N/a
Faith and Order	N/a
Financial	N/a
Personnel	N/a
Legal	N/a
Wider Connexional	N/a
External (e.g. ecumenical)	N/a
Risk	People will have an automatic justification for appeal against the decisions of the Selection Committees if they are judged on criteria other than those approved by or on behalf of the Conference

SELECTION CRITERIA APPROVED BY THE 2003 CONFERENCE

Selection Criteria for Ordained Ministry in the Methodist Church

1. Vocation (call and commitment)

- 1.1 All candidates should be able to speak of a sense of call to discipleship and to lead the people of God to share in that calling in worship and mission: and of a personal focus of that calling in
 - a) diaconal ministry and membership of a religious order, or
 - b) presbyteral ministry,
within the discipline of the Methodist connexion
- 1.2 They should also be able to speak of the extent to which others have confirmed that sense of call. The sense of call should be obedient, realistic and informed.
- 1.3 The starting point is the calling of all God's people to share in the continuing ministry of the Body of Christ, expressed in worship, mission and service before God and in the world. All God's people are called to servant ministry: service to God in service to the Church and the world. The ministries of presbyters and deacons are representative: each distinctively focussing, expressing and enabling the servant ministry of the whole people of God.
- 1.4 Candidates should therefore show awareness that to be in ordained ministry is to be in a representative role. Ordained ministry is a public function in a plural, culturally diverse society. The ordained are called to represent God-in-Christ and the community of the Church in the world, and the world and the community of the Church in Christ before God. They are also, by ordination, called out to be representative to the Church. They represent to the Church the demands of the Gospel – embodying the quest for holiness, the call to the unity of humankind and the universal nature of that Gospel - by which every Christian is commissioned, through baptism, to ministry and service.
- 1.5 Candidates for diaconal ministry should in particular show
 - understanding of the servant nature of Christ's ministry
 - evidence of the capacity to become a representative of Christ and the Church particularly through
 - a ministry of service: in pastoral care, in reconciliation and healing, in acts of mercy and of justice and being or acting as a prophetic sign
 - a ministry of word: in evangelism, apologetics, theological and prophetic interpretation, teaching, the articulation of faith and human experience and in leading worship, which may include preaching (for those duly accredited)
 - willingness to accept a commitment to membership of a religious order involving the following of a rule of life and exercising mutual accountability and responsibility
- 1.6 Candidates for presbyteral ministry should show

- understanding of the prophetic, reconciling and healing nature of Christ's ministry
- evidence of the capacity to become a representative of Christ and the Church, particularly through
 - the ministry of word (preaching, evangelism, apologetics, theological and prophetic teaching and the articulation of faith and human experience)
 - the ministry of sacrament (in acts of celebration and devotion, especially in baptism and eucharist) and
 - the ministry of pastoral responsibility (oversight, direction, discipline, order and pastoral care)

2. Being in relationship (with God; with self; with others)

- 2.1 All candidates should be sufficiently mature in faith and self-awareness to demonstrate that their relationships with self, others and God are characterised by integrity and authenticity. Candidates should show evidence of commitment to a disciplined spiritual life involving individual and corporate prayer and worship. Their spiritual life should be such as to sustain and encourage them in their daily lives; and everyday experiences should influence their spiritual life and practice. Their actions should demonstrate a valuing of self and others that is grounded in God's loving acceptance. They should demonstrate that they regularly engage with the means of grace (sacraments, prayer, and meditation on life in the context of God's word) and show evidence of the effects upon them of that engagement. They should have the necessary stability and well-being to be able to sustain the demands upon them of being a representative person in ministry and to face in a flexible and balanced way the change, conflict, pressures, ambiguity and, sometimes, loneliness which are entailed in being set apart in ordination.
- 2.2 Candidates should demonstrate the capacity to develop open and healthy personal, professional and pastoral relationships as presbyters or deacons. This capacity for developing relationships will show both in public behaviour and in private relationships. They should respect the understanding of the Church on matters of morality. They should be able to relate naturally and easily alongside a wide variety of people, demonstrating the ability to empathise with people of different socio-cultural backgrounds and different mental, emotional, spiritual characteristics. They should provide evidence of the capacity to relate to the same people in a number of different roles (e.g. as friend, counsellor, mentor, leader) without confusion. They should show the ability to respect others, being aware of levels of closeness and distance in their relationships, being the stranger or visitor in the community of faith, being at home in the wider world.
- 2.3 Candidates for presbyteral ministry should be able to offer appropriate direction, guidance and counsel to people and communities, each according to their particular need.
- 2.4 Candidates for diaconal ministry should demonstrate an ability to identify with those who are marginalized and disadvantaged both within and outside the Church. They should show evidence that they have the capacity to sustain spiritual, pastoral and practical disciplines in relationship with peers in a way

which will enable them to be members of the Methodist Diaconal Order as a religious order.

3. The Church's ministry in God's world

- 3.1 All candidates should be aware of a variety of approaches to theology, mission, ministry and practice within the Methodist Church. They will be expected to work with these different traditions and approaches. They should demonstrate willingness to work with other churches and Christian traditions, and a capacity to relate to those of other faith or none. They should show understanding of the world of work and be able to make connections. Candidates should be prepared to acknowledge that Methodism is part of a pluriform and multi-cultural society and be prepared to work beyond and across boundaries. They should demonstrate in their behaviour and attitudes their commitment to opposing discrimination and injustice which are encountered as barriers in issues such as those of race, religion, gender, poverty, disability, and sexual orientation. They should be able to articulate a vision of the Church in mission and worship; be prepared to act in personal and prophetic ways of witness which may involve risk and vulnerability, enabling the church to respond to the needs of the world. They should be ready to challenge the world with the gift of the gospel and be committed to support the Church in its calling to make followers of Jesus.
- 3.2 Candidates for diaconal ministry should demonstrate commitment to pastoral work at the inter-face of church and society, communicating love and faith through action and word. Their lives should indicate a bias towards working for justice both in individual and corporate dimensions. They should show a consistent orientation to work creatively at and beyond the boundaries of the Church and an ability to deal with situations of ambiguity, uncertainty and conflict both within and outside the Church. They should demonstrate the capacity both to acquire the skills that are necessary for developing communities and also to initiate pioneering mission projects. They should be aware of the sacramental nature of life and be alert to possibilities for worship, especially in situations outside the Church.
- 3.3 Candidates for presbyteral ministry should show the ability to make connections between the community of faith and the community at large. They should show the capacity to act sacramentally in ministry, looking for opportunities for rituals, sacraments and rites of passage in the lives of individuals and the local community.

4. Leadership and Collaboration

- 4.1 All candidates should show the capacity to be a representative leader of the church in worship and mission, and in service and ability to exercise leadership in the Church community and to some extent in the wider community. This ability includes the capacity to offer an example of faith and discipleship and to collaborate effectively with others, as well as to guide the life of the Church community as it shares in God's mission to the world. They must demonstrate willingness and ability to work co-operatively as a member of a team, inspiring, enabling and empowering others. They should show evidence of the ability to work under direction and with supervision; to work

with peers; to direct and supervise others; and to develop necessary management and administrative skills. They should also demonstrate the capacity to accept responsibility and exercise appropriate authority

- 4.2 Candidates for presbyteral ministry should show an understanding of 'pastoral responsibility'. They should demonstrate the capacity to oversee the management and direction of the work of the Church and to be responsible for drawing together visions and ensuring that plans are made and decisions co-ordinated and executed.
- 4.3 Candidates for diaconal ministry will show an understanding of what leadership and authority mean in terms of servant ministry. They must demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively and a propensity to act as an encourager and enabler of others' development in servant ministry. They should show a disposition toward teamwork and a capacity for operating in multi-disciplinary, inter-agency contexts.

5. Learning and Understanding

- 5.1 All candidates should have the necessary quality of mind and intellectual capacity to undertake satisfactorily a course of preparation for ministry, including theological study, and to be able to cope with the demands of ministry. They should appreciate the significance of theology to the Church. They should demonstrate a commitment to on-going personal and professional development, having intellectual curiosity and being open to new ideas. Their awareness of, and interest in, knowledge should extend beyond formal, narrowly religious fields.

6. Communication

- 6.1 All candidates should demonstrate the ability to express faith naturally and effectively in ways that are appropriate, accessible and sensitive to the situation. They should show evidence of being able to use biblical and theological understanding in discussion of people's questions about the world. They should be aware of the variety of approaches to mission and evangelism. Candidates should show evidence of ability to select the most appropriate media and approach for a broad range of teaching/nurturing situations and for specific groups. Their use of language in oral and written communication and in worship should be sensitive and non-discriminatory. They should show understanding of symbols and gestures and how to make proper use of space.
- 6.2 Candidates for presbyteral ministry must demonstrate an ability to lead worship and preach in a variety of settings. They should also show evidence of competence in helping communities and congregations use information effectively.
- 6.3 Candidates for diaconal ministry must show evidence of ability to articulate Christian faith in everyday situations; to help groups to communicate effectively, both within the group and in relation to others; and to appreciate how to act as a facilitator in creating opportunities for worship (especially in unconventional situations), encouraging everyone to use their distinctive gifts.

SELECTION CRITERIA PUBLISHED FOR 2010-11

1. Rooted in faith

It all starts with the grace of God made known in Jesus by his coming, life, death and resurrection – “All this for you, before you could ever know it”. Discipleship is the response to the overflowing transforming grace of God and it is out of this relationship with God that the sense of call grows.

So when we think of candidating we are looking for people who are sufficiently mature in faith and self-awareness to demonstrate:

- commitment to a disciplined spiritual life of individual and corporate prayer and worship
- a spiritual life which sustains and encourages Christian witness
- regular engagement with the means of grace (sacraments, prayer and meditation on life in the context of God’s word) revealing an impact in daily life
- stability and well-being which are able to sustain the demands of being a representative person in ministry.

For reflection:

- *To people who don’t know you well – how would you describe your call to ordained ministry?*
- *Try writing down your Christian journey and the key moments that bring you to this place. You could do this as piece of text, or if you prefer a rough sketch or a timeline.*
 - *What stands out for you?*
 - *What have you discovered along the journey?*
- *If you had a prophetic word for the Church and/or the world what would you say?*

2. Called by God

A call to ordained ministry grows out of being centred in Christian faith and discipleship, creating a desire to lead the people of God as they share in worship and mission. Such a call will be focused in God and be obedient, realistic and informed.

As a candidate you are offering yourself to God and the Church, and the Church seeks to test that call. It will:

- include an understanding that it is a representative role
- embrace a public function in a plural, culturally diverse society
- seek to represent God-in-Christ and the community of the Church in the world
- present to the Church the demands of the gospel which is for all humankind
- embody the quest for holiness
- encourage the Christian community to engage in ministry and service.

Candidates for diaconal ministry, will in particular show:

- understanding of the servant nature of Christ’s ministry

- evidence of the capacity to become a representative of Christ and the Church particularly through:
 - a ministry of service: in pastoral care, in reconciliation and healing, in acts of mercy and of justice and being or acting as a prophetic sign
 - a ministry of word: in evangelism, apologetics, theological and prophetic interpretation, teaching, the articulation of faith and human experience and in leading worship, which may include preaching (for those duly accredited)
- a willingness to accept a commitment to membership of a religious order involving the following of a rule of life and exercising mutual accountability and responsibility.

Candidates for presbyteral ministry, will show:

- understanding of the prophetic, reconciling and healing nature of Christ's ministry
- evidence of the capacity to become a representative of Christ and the Church, particularly through:
 - the ministry of word (preaching, evangelism, apologetics, theological and prophetic teaching and the articulation of faith and human experience)
 - the ministry of the sacraments (in acts of celebration and devotion, especially in Baptism and the Eucharist);
 - the ministry of pastoral responsibility (oversight, direction, discipline, order and pastoral care).

3. Relating to others

We are looking for people whose relationships are characterised by integrity and authenticity, whose actions demonstrate a valuing of self and others, and are grounded in God's loving acceptance.

These will be people who:

- have the capacity to develop open and healthy personal, professional and pastoral relationships. This capacity for developing relationships will show both in public behaviour and in private relationships.
- are able to relate naturally and easily alongside a wide variety of people, from different backgrounds and with varying mental, emotional, spiritual characteristics.
- have the capacity to relate to the same people in a number of different roles (eg friend, counsellor, mentor, leader) without confusion.
- show the ability to respect others, being aware of levels of closeness and distance in their relationships, can be the stranger or visitor in the community of faith, and are at home in the wider world.

For reflection:

- *How do others see you? Imagine one of the people who knew you best were to describe you to a panel – what would they say?*
- *What is it that sustains your devotional and spiritual life?*
- *The work of an ordained minister has both a private and a public role. What are the boundaries that you would need to ensure your well-being?*

- Candidates for diaconal ministry will demonstrate an ability to identify with those who are marginalised and disadvantaged both within and outside the Church. They should show evidence that they have the capacity to sustain spiritual, pastoral and practical disciplines in relationship with peers in a way which will enable them to be members of the Methodist Diaconal Order as a religious order.
- Candidates for presbyteral ministry will demonstrate an ability to offer appropriate direction, guidance and counsel to people and communities, each according to their particular need.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work and speak and think for thee
Still let me guard the holy fire
And still stir up thy gift in me.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

4. Engaged in God's world

We are looking for people who are seeking to follow God's mission in the world, doing justice and preaching grace so that more people will come to a living faith and become disciples of Jesus Christ.

People who are able to:

- make connections between the world of work and the Christian faith
- challenge the world with the gift of the gospel supporting the Church in its calling to make followers of Jesus
- act in personal and prophetic, creative and vulnerable ways of witness, enabling the Church to respond to the needs of the world
- oppose discrimination and injustice in issues such as those of race, religion, gender, poverty, disability, and sexual orientation
- work with other Christian traditions, and have a capacity to relate to those of other faiths or none
- acknowledge that Methodism is part of a plural and multicultural society and be prepared to work beyond and across boundaries.

For reflection:

- *Think about your present role(s). How are these attitudes and values (above) worked out now, in the work you do, and leisure pursuits you have?*
- *What would need to change for them to be seen in you now?*
- *As you explore your vocation, what do you think you need to learn to be become sufficiently centred as candidate for ordained ministry?*

Candidates for diaconal ministry should demonstrate commitment to pastoral work at the interface of church and society, communicating love and faith through action and word. Their lives should indicate a bias towards working for justice both in individual and corporate dimensions. They should show a consistent orientation to work creatively at and beyond the boundaries of the Church and an ability to deal

with situations of ambiguity, uncertainty and conflict both within and outside the Church. They should demonstrate the capacity both to acquire the skills that are necessary for developing communities and also to initiate pioneering mission projects. They should be aware of the sacramental nature of life and be alert to possibilities for worship, especially in situations outside the Church.

Candidates for presbyteral ministry should show the ability to make connections between the community of faith and the community at large. They should show the capacity to act sacramentally in ministry, looking for opportunities for rituals, sacraments and rites of passage in the lives of individuals and the local community.

5. Show leadership potential

Christian leadership is courageous, prophetic and offered with a servant heart. It is focused on working collaboratively with others for the good of all.

Candidates should show an example of faith and discipleship and the capacity to be a representative leader of the Church in worship, mission and service. This ability includes the capacity to:

- guide the life of the Church community as it shares in God's mission to the world
- offer leadership in the wider community
- demonstrate a willingness and ability to work cooperatively as a member of a team, inspiring, enabling and empowering others
- work under direction and with supervision and to develop necessary management and administrative skills
- accept responsibility and exercise appropriate authority
- face, in a flexible and balanced way, the change, conflict, pressures, ambiguity and, sometimes, loneliness which are entailed in being set apart by ordination.

For reflection:

- *What is your experience and observation of different types of leadership?*
- *Think of a team you are part of. What are the roles that you and others play? Is anything missing and how could the team benefit from change?*
- *What is the best example that you have seen for the exercise of authority?*

Candidates for diaconal ministry will show an understanding of what leadership and authority mean in terms of servant ministry. They must demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively and a propensity to act as an encourager and enabler of others' development in servant ministry. They should show a disposition toward teamwork and a capacity for operating in multi-disciplinary, inter-agency contexts.

Candidates for presbyteral ministry should show an understanding of 'pastoral responsibility'. They should demonstrate the capacity to oversee the management and direction of the work of the Church and to be responsible for drawing together visions and ensuring that plans are made and decisions co-ordinated and executed.

6. Eager to learn

Awareness of, and interest in, knowledge should extend beyond formal, narrowly religious fields.

Therefore all candidates should:

- have the necessary quality of mind and intellectual capacity to undertake satisfactorily a course of preparation for ministry, including theological study, and to be able to cope with the demands of ministry
- appreciate the significance of theology, biblical and mission studies to the Church
- demonstrate a commitment to on-going personal and professional development, having intellectual curiosity and being open to new ideas.
- be aware of a variety of approaches to theology, mission, ministry and practice within the Methodist Church and expect to work with these different traditions and approaches.

For reflection:

- *Think of a film or novel that you have read/seen recently. What themes struck you?*
- *What courses, seminars, reading suggested by your minister or district candidates secretary can prepare you as you candidate? Ask around and try and make opportunity of them.*
- *If you have been part of an EDEV programme (or Foundation Training), what have you learnt about yourself, the Church, the world?*

7. Able to communicate

All candidates should demonstrate the ability to express faith naturally and effectively in ways that are appropriate, accessible and sensitive to the situation.

This means:

- showing evidence of being able to use biblical and theological understanding in discussion of people's questions about the world
- being able to articulate Christian faith in everyday situations and to help others to communicate effectively
- being aware of the variety of approaches to mission and evangelism
- showing evidence of the ability to select the most appropriate media and approach for a broad range of teaching/nurturing situations and for specific groups
- using language in oral and written communication and in worship that is sensitive and non-discriminatory.
- understanding symbols and gestures and how to make proper use of space.

For reflection:

- *How easy do you find it to talk of your faith?*
- *Try to explain your faith in a paragraph without using 'religious' language. Test it out on a friend.*

Candidates for diaconal ministry must show evidence of ability to articulate Christian faith in everyday situations; to help groups to communicate effectively, both within the group and in relation to others; and to appreciate how to act as a facilitator in creating opportunities for worship (especially in unconventional situations), encouraging everyone to use their distinctive gifts.

Candidates for presbyteral ministry must demonstrate an ability to lead worship and preach in a variety of settings. They should also show evidence of competence in helping communities and congregations use information effectively.

- “Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”
- (1 Peter 3:15)

For final reflection after reading the seven areas:

- *Talk with someone who knows you and whose opinion you trust. Ask them where they think your strengths lie.*
- *What are the areas which you think need development?*