



THE  
ORDER of  
MISSION

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ORDER OF MISSION

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## **1. The Charism of The Order of Mission**

The Order of Mission (TOM) is a global network of missional leaders bound by covenant in proclaiming the Kingdom of God in the world. The Order adheres to the Nicene Creed and aligns itself with the Cape Town Commitment. Its Rule of Life and Vows are set out in the Appendix.

## **2. Initiation into The Order of Mission**

Potential Explorers need a member of TOM, usually a Permanent Member, to accompany them in discerning a call.

Explorers must be baptised and free from external obligations that might constitute an impediment to their membership of TOM.

Explorers will be invited to take temporary vows by a Guardian following a time of discernment. If it is felt that an Explorer should not take temporary vows they will be informed by a Guardian and a plan of action agreed.

## **3. Temporary Membership**

Temporary initiation into TOM takes place at a gathering of TOM Members and is for a minimum of three years, to test God's calling regarding Permanent Membership. This may be extended for a further three years.

Temporary Members should be actively seeking out accountable relationships and make commitment to the TOM community a high priority.

A Temporary Member unable to discern a call to permanency within six years will either leave the Order or become an Associate Member.

## **4. Permanent Membership**

Permanent Membership of TOM is a serious covenant that implies lifelong commitment. Permanency is marked by a continued commitment to live according to the Vows and Rule of Life of TOM. Permanent Members form the Chapter of the Order.

Permanent commitment takes place in the presence of the Senior Guardian and other Members of the TOM community. Permanent Vows are binding for life. In order to support the marriage covenant, therefore, a married person cannot become a Permanent Member unless their spouse is at least an Associate Member.

After consulting the Regional Chair of Guardians, the Senior Guardian may prevent a Temporary Member from proceeding to final profession, or terminate their Temporary Membership, if there is behaviour or belief incompatible with the covenant of the Order and its Rule of Life.

If, after a period of discernment with other TOM Members and TOM Guardians, Permanent Members decide to leave the Order, they may do so at any time, by written notice to the Senior Guardian. However, they should first have honoured their commitment to accountability by processing such a decision under God and in community.

## **5. Associate Members**

Associate Members are those who wish to support the calling and work of TOM and live according to its Rule of Life, but without the responsibility of vows. They are encouraged to attend gatherings and celebrations of the Order and to engage in accountable relationships within the community.

In order to ratify their association, they are expected to attend an Exploration Retreat. Once someone has become an Associate Member, an Accompanying Member is no longer required.

Associate Membership must be approved by the Regional Chair of Guardians. An Associate Member may resign at any time by notice to the Senior Guardian.

## **6. Leadership and Accountability in the Order of Mission**

Leadership within the Order is exercised by the Senior Guardian and the Guardians. The Senior Guardian is elected by the Chapter, and the Guardians are appointed by the Senior Guardian.

Accountability to the wider church is maintained through a Senior Visitor to the Order. The Senior Visitor and Senior Guardian shall establish a regular pattern of meeting and accountability.

Each other established region where the Order is active may also appoint a Regional Visitor.

## **7. The Senior Guardian**

The Senior Guardian's role is to carry, guard and develop the spiritual vision and charism of The Order of Mission. The Senior Guardian is called to be the spiritual head and overseer, leading by example and watching over the Order so that it conforms with the Constitution and the Rule of Life.

The Senior Guardian is elected by majority vote to serve for six years, and is eligible for re-election. The Senior Guardian shall:

- be a Permanent Member.
- be a leader with an apostolic calling.
- be accountable to the Chapter, the Guardians and the Senior Visitor.
- be a parental figure caring for the spiritual health of the Order, with the help of the Guardians.
- encourage the Members of the Order towards a reflective dependence on the Bible and the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- always bear in mind their special responsibility for the welfare and vocation of each Member and the good of the whole Order.
- always be present (in person or by delegating to the Regional Chair of Guardians) on the occasion of Permanent initiation as a Member of the order.

## **8. The Guardians**

The Guardians are the Senior Guardian's representatives as leaders of the Order. In making appointments the Senior Guardian 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.

## Guardians

- will be involved in Exploration and Initiation.
- will huddle Members of the Order or prospective Members.
- are directly accountable to and in regular contact with the Senior Guardian.
- can initiate Temporary Members. Two Guardians must be present for Temporary Initiation.
- may be removed from office by the Senior Guardian, in consultation with the Regional Visitor (if one has been appointed) and the Regional Chair of Guardians.
- may resign at any time after consultation with the Senior Guardian.

Guardians may be appointed to serve regionally based on geographical location, or for spheres of activity in the Order. A Chair of Guardians may be appointed from among the Guardians by the Senior Guardian to oversee the team of Guardians in each established region where the Order is active.

In each such region there shall be a Guardian for Permanent Members who cares for the well-being and vocation of Permanent Members.

## 9. The Chapter

A decision of the Chapter represents the highest authority of the Order. The Chapter is to receive the annual accounts of the Order, and must be consulted regarding:

- any legal action
- any proposed alterations to the Constitution or the Rule of Life

The Senior Guardian, or the Guardians by majority vote, may call a Chapter meeting whenever required. Any Member may propose business for the Chapter by notice to the Secretary, who shall be responsible for the agenda.

Members of the Chapter must respect the confidential nature of Chapter business.

## 10. Visitors

The role of the Visitors (Senior Visitor and Regional Visitors) is to see that TOM is faithful to its calling and to seek to ensure that the Order is soundly led and accountable to the wider church. Visitors are not Members of TOM. At least one Visitor must be a serving bishop in the Church of England.

The Senior Visitor should be a leader of national or international standing in the church who is in sympathy with the values of the Order. Each established region where the Order is active may seek such a Regional Visitor appropriate to the Membership of the Order within that region.

The Senior Guardian will choose a Senior Visitor to the Order after prayerful reflection and in consultation with Regional Chairs.

The Senior Visitor should be available to meet regularly with the Senior Guardian and at least once a year face-to-face for organisational and personal accountability.

Regional Visitors should be appointed by the Regional Chair of Guardians in consultation with the Senior Guardian and the Guardians for that region.

A Visitor's tenure will be renewable every 3 years.

The Senior Visitor may carry out visitations at their discretion, but TOM should initiate formal visitations to the Order at a minimum of every five years. Because of the dispersed nature of the Order, visitations will be held by meeting with Guardians and invited Chapter Members. The Senior Visitor may invite Regional Visitors to participate in any visitation.

At least once a year, the Senior Visitor will fulfil the Visitor's functions in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. If the Senior Visitor is not a serving bishop in the Church of England, then the Visitor who is a serving bishop in the Church of England shall fulfil those functions within the geographical jurisdiction of the Church of England.

Visitors should be invited to attend Regional and Global Gatherings.

## **11. Appeals to the Senior Visitor**

All Members should make every effort to preserve unity and the bond of peace in accordance with the Rule of Life. However, Permanent Members have a right of appeal to the Senior Visitor in the case of a dispute with the Order, its Senior Guardian or Guardians that cannot be resolved in any other way.

Appeals must be made in writing to the Secretary, who shall refer them to the Senior Visitor or, if the Senior Guardian considers it appropriate, and the dispute does not involve the Senior Guardian personally, to the appropriate Regional Visitor.

The Senior (or Regional) Visitor will make an initial decision on whether an appeal has sufficient weight to merit the Senior Visitor's involvement.

If the Senior (or Regional) Visitor considers that it does, they will decide what procedures should be followed. These may include delegating the matter to a third party to make a recommendation.

The Guardians shall take due note of any recommendations made by the Senior (or Regional) Visitor in determining any appeal. The method of implementation will be decided by the Senior Guardian acting with the advice of the regional chairs.

## **12. The Secretary**

Following each Global Gathering, The Senior Guardian shall appoint a Secretary to the Order from the Permanent Members, to be responsible for the proceedings of the Chapter, including the keeping of a register of Members, the election or re-election of the Senior Guardian, or any proposal to amend this constitution or the Rule of Life.

## **13. Order Gatherings**

In each established region where the Order is active, Members should gather at least annually, where possible with the Regional Chair of Guardians. Gatherings will always be led by Guardians but may be hosted by Members of the Order.

Members living in other regions may attend whichever regional Gathering is most accessible.

## **14. Global Gatherings and the Election of the Senior Guardian**

Every six years, in conjunction with the end of the Senior Guardian's current term of office, there shall be a Global Gathering which as many of the Members of the Order as possible should attend, and prior to which a new Senior Guardian will be elected.

At least nine months prior to the Global Gathering, the Secretary shall invite all Permanent Members to begin a process of discerning who the next Senior Guardian should be. As part of this, the Senior Guardian should indicate whether he or she is willing to be re-elected.

Six months prior to the Global Gathering, the Secretary shall invite nominations for the post of Senior Guardian. Nominations will close five months prior to the Global Gathering, must be signed by the Member standing, and must be seconded in writing by at least ten Permanent Members. The Secretary shall communicate all nominations to the Chapter.

If there is only one candidate for Senior Guardian, the Secretary shall formally certify their election to all Permanent Members as soon as possible after nominations have closed.

If there is more than one candidate, the Secretary shall hold an election by secure electronic communication, organised as the Secretary may determine. The election shall take place no fewer than six weeks and no more than eight weeks after the close of nominations. The Secretary shall facilitate electoral communication between candidates and Permanent Members.

Upon the election of a new Senior Guardian, the Secretary and Guardians shall resign. The elected Senior Guardian shall then select new Guardians and a Secretary as set out above.

All candidates for Senior Guardian or Guardian must qualify for election under Section 16 (safeguarding), before they can take up their positions.

## **15. Casual Vacancies**

In the case of the death, incapacity, resignation or dismissal of the Senior Guardian, one of the Guardians, with the agreement of the majority of the Guardians, will assume responsibility until a new Senior Guardian has been elected. The Secretary shall then arrange for the election of a new Senior Guardian, following the procedure described above.

## **16. Safeguarding**

The Senior Guardian shall appoint a Permanent Member to be responsible for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

For those Members and activities within the geographical jurisdiction of the Church of England, Members and officers of the Order (including the Anglican Visitor) must fulfil duties that are equivalent to those imposed by or under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duties in relation to safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults).

For those Members and activities beyond the geographical jurisdiction of the Church of England, Members and officers of the Order must abide by the highest level of safeguarding practice and policy according to their context, denomination and local laws and customs.

In each established region where the Order is active, the Senior Guardian will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Person to have particular responsibility in relation to the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults in that region, and to notify any safeguarding allegation, concern, investigation,

discipline measure or prosecution involving any TOM Member to the Permanent Member responsible for safeguarding and to the Senior Guardian within seven days of receiving or becoming aware of it.

Where a safeguarding issue takes place within geographical jurisdiction of the Church of England, the UK Designated Safeguarding Person shall also report it to the relevant Church of England Safeguarding Adviser.

## **17. Dismissal**

After consulting with Guardians, the Senior Guardian may remove a Permanent Member from Membership:

- for persistent behaviour or belief that is incompatible with the covenant of the Order and the Trinitarian and Biblical faith of the historic Christian Church, or the Constitution or Rule of Life; or
- on the advice of a TOM Designated Safeguarding Person or of the Church of England's or another denomination's Safeguarding Advisor, where the Senior Guardian considers that a Permanent Member's behaviour constitutes a serious and ongoing safeguarding risk to others.

Before any Member is removed, they must be allowed an opportunity to present reasons against such a removal.

A Permanent Member who is removed may appeal to the Senior Visitor, whose decision shall be final.

## **18. Recall of Senior Guardian**

A Chapter vote to dismiss the Senior Guardian may be required in writing or by secure electronic communication to the Secretary, provided it is signed by not less than fifteen percent of the Members of the Chapter, and gives the reasons why dismissal is sought.

Upon receiving such a petition, the Secretary shall notify the Senior Visitor, and shall within forty five days hold by secure electronic vote a poll of the Chapter as to whether the Senior Guardian should be dismissed.

If at least two thirds of the Chapter vote for dismissal, the appointment of the Senior Guardian shall then terminate and a new Senior Guardian be elected as provided above.

## **19. Finance and Property**

The Order will not employ people or own property except as necessary for good administration.

All Members should invest financially, as God calls, in the work of the Order. Members may not make commitments on behalf of the Order on their own authority.

The Order may set up charitable bodies in the different countries in which it operates, either to comply with local regulations or to facilitate giving. These charitable bodies will normally include Guardians as their trustees.

Each established region where the Order is active must manage finances accountably, to support the ministry and development of the Order in that region. Accounts must be regularly audited or externally examined and submitted to the appropriate Gathering of the Order and the Senior Guardian.

In each established region where the Order is active, the Guardians must prayerfully consider their

annual financial contribution to the Secretariat to support the work of the Order.

If the Senior Guardian is paid a stipend, the amount must be agreed by the Chairs of Guardians and shown in the accounts of the Order.

## **20. Amendments to the Constitution and the Rule of Life**

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Chapter, either at an Order Gathering or through electronic communication. The Senior Guardian has the right to delay any proposal to change the constitution proposed by the Chapter for a maximum of 3 months.

The Rule of Life may, at the request of the Senior Guardian and after consultation with the Chapter, be modified by a two-thirds majority vote of the Chapter, either at an Order Gathering or through electronic communication. Minor modifications to the Rule of Life may be made by the Senior Guardian with the agreement of the Guardians, subject to notification to the Chapter at least one month before they take effect.

Proposed modifications to the Constitution or the Rule of Life must also be notified to the Senior Visitor.

Provided that before a decision is taken to amend the constitution or Rule of Life so far as it provides for any of the matters required by Section 16 (safeguarding), the proposed amendment must be notified to the House of Bishops and regard must be had to advice given by the House of Bishops in relation to the proposal.

## **21. Dissolution of the Order**

If, in consultation with the Senior Visitor, the Chapter of the Order decides to dissolve the Order, it shall make appropriate provision for the application of any property or funds in keeping with the charism of the order.

# **Appendix**

## **Rule of Life of the Order of Mission**

## **Vows of the Order of Mission**