

**STATUTES
OF THE MISSION PROVINCE IN SWEDEN**

(Organization Number: 802428-5176)



STATUTES OF THE MISSION PROVINCE IN SWEDEN

(Organization Number: 802428-5176)

Adopted 17 April 2004

by

**The Association to Support the Mission Province Annual Meeting
and the Province Convention.**

Updated on 15 January 2005.

**Revised 30 September 2006, 14 November 2009, 18 September 2010,
13 October 2012, 2 March 2013 and 14 October 2017.**

PREFACE

1 § The Mission Province in Sweden was constituted on September 6, 2003 by representatives for koinonias and mission organisations, members of the pastoral collegium and designated delegates from the Association to Support the Mission Province.

2 § The purpose of these statutes is to state the doctrine, purpose, structures and procedures of the Mission Province, and to promote and guard the unity among the worshipping communities.

3 § These statutes shall continuously be evaluated and reviewed by the Convention of the Mission Province.

4 § In applying these Province Statutes, the doctrinal basis of the Mission Province has precedence in interpreting and applying the valid law.

Guidance for the interpretation and completion of these Province Statutes may be found in the legal tradition of the Church of Sweden as it, on the basis of Laurentius Petri's Church Order of 1571, has been developed and summarized in the Church Act of 1686 together with additional provisions and case law. Where guidance cannot be found in these legal precedents, ecclesiastical custom applies.

CHAPTER 1. DOCTRINAL BASIS

The Mission Province's doctrine, faith and confession are founded on God's Holy Word, the Old and New Testaments' prophetic and apostolic scriptures, summarized in the three chief Creeds: the Apostolic, the Nicean and the Athanasian, together with the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530, affirmed and recognized at the Uppsala Council of 1593, and explained in the entire Book of Concord.

It is the responsibility of the Mission Province's organs to explain and apply this confession.

CHAPTER 2. IDENTITY

The Mission Province is a part of "the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." It is a free province of the Church and Congregation of God in Sweden, on the foundation of the unaltered Evangelical-Lutheran Confession. It stands in continuity with the spiritual tradition which has developed and been preserved in accord with this Confession within the Church of Sweden, and regards itself as a non-territorial diocese in this tradition.

The Mission Province seeks good relations with ministers, lay people and congregations within the Church of Sweden who are faithful to the Bible and the [Evangelical-Lutheran] Confession.

CHAPTER 3. PURPOSE

1 § The Mission Province wishes to obey Jesus' mission commandment and to help people in our land to come to faith in Him and to be able to worship in Spirit and truth.

2 § The Mission Province's task is to support affiliated worship communities and to assist in the formation of new ones, and to support worship communities that are served by pastors in the Mission Province.

3 § To meet the needs of the affiliated worship communities, the Mission Province shall examine and ordain ministers of the Word according to Apostolic faith and order.

4 § The Mission Province shall encourage and support mission, diaconal ministry and teaching.

5 § Congregations, mission associations and mission organizations, etc., within the Church of Sweden can support The Mission Province and request to be served by it.

6 § The Mission Province seeks international cooperation on an Evangelical Lutheran basis and develops contacts with other church traditions as appropriate.

CHAPTER 4. WORSHIP COMMUNITIES / KOINONIAS /FREE CONGREGATIONS

PREFACE

"The Church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered." (Augustana VII).

This church is both visible and invisible:

- The visible Church is manifested in worship, mission, diaconal ministry, teaching, services, institutions, buildings, etc.
- The invisible Church consists of the members of Christ's body, the saints, known by God alone, and will be revealed on the great Judgment Day.

This catholic Church takes local form in a worshipping fellowship. All mission proceeds from this fellowship, through the universal priesthood into which all Christians are inducted through baptism and faith in Jesus Christ.

KOINONIAS

1 § The term used here for worshipping fellowships and free congregations is "koinonia," which means communion (with the saints or the Holy).

A koinonia is a community of people who worship together on a regular basis, if possible each Sunday.

A koinonia can be a part of a congregation within the Church of Sweden.

2 § The koinonias affiliated with the Mission Province are independent, local worshipping communities with the responsibilities and rights set forth in these Statutes. They enjoy fellowship and support within the Mission Province.

3 § To be an individual member of a koinonia, one shall be baptized and embrace the Evangelical Lutheran Confession in faith and life.

4 § A koinonia shall adopt statutes clearly regulating local requirements for membership, operations and financial administration.

5 § A koinonia's pastor shall be a member of its board or council.

6 § A koinonia shall keep a record of members and/or communicants and a record of baptisms and other official acts.

7 § The koinonia's worship services and official acts shall follow the tradition of the Church of Sweden.

8 § Members who do not meet the requirements for membership according to §3 of this chapter can, after dialog and admonition, be expelled from the koinonia or barred from communion for a certain period. The decision shall be confirmed by the Consistory.

9 § A koinonia or a member of a koinonia who believes that a pastor/deacon/deaconess is not fulfilling his/her assigned duties, or not living in accordance with his/her ordination vows, can report this to the bishop.

If the accuser believes that the bishop has not handled the report in a satisfactory manner, the accuser may request that the Consistory review the matter.

NATIONWIDE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

10 § A nationwide community of faith gathers individuals who wish to belong to the Mission Province without being affiliated with a local koinonia.

Sections 1-9 of this chapter apply to the nationwide community of faith *mutatis mutandis*.

CHAPTER 5. OFFICE AND MINISTRIES

THE OFFICE

The Mission Province affirms and follows the teachings and example of Jesus and the apostles concerning the office [of the ministry], ministries and duties within the congregation.

To serve in the congregation, Jesus ordained men to be ministers of the Word for the proclamation the Word and the administration of the sacraments. In addition, men and women are also called to special ministries and tasks in the Church.

God's call to the ministry of the Word occurs through an inner call that consists of a desire to proclaim the Gospel in faithfulness to God's Word. This inner call is tested by the external call of the congregation and confirmed through ordination and installation by the Church's office bearers.

QUALIFICATIONS

1 § Qualifications for the **Office of Preaching the Word** within the Mission Province are that the man who is baptized and confirmed, is living out his faith and confession in the worshiping congregation, and has training approved by the Consistory.

2 § Qualified as **bishop** is a man ordained to the Office of the Word who is deeply rooted in the Evangelical Lutheran faith and confession.

3 § Qualified as **pastor** is the man who, after a call and examination, has shown himself to possess personal qualities, theological understanding and experience considered necessary for the office.

4 § Qualified as **deacon** or **deaconess** is a man or woman who, in faith, confession and life, maturity and experience, shows himself or herself suitable for the service and who has training approved by the Consistory.

5 § Qualified as **preacher** is a man who in faith, confession and life has shown himself adequate for the task, has good theological insights, and is trusted within the part of the Mission Province where he will work.

6 § Qualified as **missionary** or other worker is a man or woman who, in faith, confession and life, shows himself or herself suitable for the task.

7 § Those who serve in the Mission Province shall be an example of a worthy life according to apostolic teachings.

DUTIES

8 § The **Bishop's** duties are

1. to be a sign of unity with Christ's worldwide Church and the spiritual unity within the Mission Province;
2. to supervise that the Word of God is proclaimed purely and that the sacraments are rightly administered;
3. to lead the building up of the Mission Province;
4. to support the koinonias with supervision and encouragement;
5. to examine and ordain pastors, deacons and deaconesses, and to bless preachers and other workers for service in the koinonias or for mission.
6. to appoint deans;
7. to be *pastor pastorum* for pastors and other ministers by means of supervision and soul care;
8. to organize meetings of pastors and continuing education for pastors, deacons, deaconesses, preachers, etc.;

9. to encourage and minister to congregations and groups within the Church of Sweden who request this;
10. to be spokesman on theological issues vis-à-vis the leadership of the Church of Sweden and of other church bodies;
11. to be “a watcher on Zion’s walls” and to monitor the spiritual situation.

9 § Mission Bishop

A Mission Bishop leads the Mission Province. He is assisted by the number of auxiliary bishops that the Province Convention specifies.

The Mission Bishop is elected as provided in Chapter 5, § 16.

Auxiliary bishops carry out their duties in place of the Mission Bishop as he assigns.

10 § The Pastor’s duties are

1. to be a shepherd in God’s congregation and to take care of people’s salvation;
2. to proclaim all of God’s Word purely and clearly;
3. to administer and distribute the Holy Sacraments as Christ instituted them;
4. to administer other official church acts;
5. to exercise soul care (pastoral counseling) of individuals;
6. to make home visits and to serve the sick with Holy Communion;
7. to be responsible for teaching within the koinonia;
8. to keep in close contact with the bishop and other pastors and koinonias;
9. to study God’s Word constantly and to develop his knowledge.

A pastor may not conduct a wedding of divorced persons without special review by the Consistory as provided in Chapter 6, § 9.7.

11 § The Pastor of a koinonia, as its shepherd, shall lead its operations, together with chosen laymen and, where applicable, assistant pastors, deacons and/or deaconesses.

12 § The Deacon’s and Deaconess’s duties are

1. to be responsible for the Province’s or a koinonia’s diaconal work;
2. to carry out diaconal work in society, either individually or together with co-workers.

Diaconal work consists primarily of charitable work. The work can also include pedagogical, administrative and liturgical tasks.

The deacon/deaconess’s duties can include organizing worship activities. The deacon/deaconess performs his/her duties under the pastor’s or bishop’s leadership.

13 § The **Preacher's** duties are

at the direction of the bishop or pastor, to lead or assist in another manner in the koinonia's worship services and other activities.

14 § The **Missionary's** and other workers' tasks are

at the direction of the bishop, pastor or koinonia, to lead or assist in the Province's or a koinonia's mission work, evangelization and instruction.

15 § Bishops and pastors are members of the **Mission Province's Pastoral Collegium**.

Deacons and deaconesses can form a collegium around the bishops in a corresponding manner.

ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICEHOLDERS

16 § Election and consecration of **bishop**

1. Election of bishop

- a) The Mission Council selects an election committee for the election of bishop.
- b) Candidates for the bishop election are nominated by the Pastoral Collegium. Each member nominates, with equal voting rights, at most three candidates. The three who receive the most votes are reported to the Consistory for examination of their eligibility.
- c) After the examination of candidates' eligibility, the election committee announces the election among the nominated candidates. If any of these is not found eligible, the Pastoral Collegium conducts a new nomination of candidates.
- d) The election among the bishop candidates is conducted by the Province Convention.
- e) If none of the candidates receives more than half the votes, a second vote is held between the two with the highest number of votes.

2. Consecration of bishop

- a) When a bishop is elected, he shall be consecrated for his service.
- b) The consecration is carried out, if possible, by three bishops from good Evangelical-Lutheran Confession and tradition. Pastors from the Mission Province Pastoral Collegium assist in the consecration.

17 § Examination and installation of pastors:

1. The pastoral candidate is examined and certified as qualified by the Consistory.

2. The pastoral candidate is called and sent by the Consistory to the koinonia or for the assignment that is needed within the Mission Province.
3. The pastoral candidate shall be ordained for his ministry. The ordination is conducted by a bishop within the Mission Province.
4. No more pastors than needed within the Mission Province may be accepted or ordained.

18 § Pastors' ministry

1. The Consistory issues regulations for the ministry of pastors within the MPr.
2. A pastor who shall serve within a koinonia is sent for this service by the Consistory.
3. A pastor who desires pastoral ministry outside a koinonia shall have this approved by the Consistory.

19 § Appointment of a pastor in a koinonia

1. A koinonia calls, elects or accepts a pastor to be its pastor.
2. A pastor who shall serve within a koinonia shall be examined, certified and sent by the Consistory.
3. A pastor is installed in a koinonia by a bishop.
4. When a pastor is to be appointed in a koinonia, this shall be published.

20 § Examination, installation and appointment of deacons or deaconesses

As applicable, this is done in the same manner as with the examination, installation and appointment of pastors.

21 § Call and installation of a **preacher**

1. A koinonia that wishes to call a preacher does this through its board/council or through its pastor. The bishop can also call a preacher.
2. A called preacher is examined by the bishop.
3. After an approved examination, the preacher receives a *venia* (appointment) for one or more koinonias.
4. The preacher is blessed for his assignment by the bishop.

22 § Installation of missionaries and other workers

Examination, blessing and sending occurs in consultation between the bishop and affected mission organizations or koinonias.

23 § More precise provisions for call, examination, selection, ordination and appointment or installation of ministers and other workers within the Mission Province are worked out and issued by the Consistory.

24 § Duty of silence

1. Bishops and pastors are subject to the absolute duty to maintain silence [concerning confession and absolution] under the same regulations as for pastors in the Church of Sweden.
Breach of the duty of silence carries loss of authorization to exercise the office of bishop or pastor.
2. Deacons are subject to this duty of silence as to what they have come to know during pastoral [soul care] conversations, unless the person in question consents for the information to be released. The duty of silence does not apply to disclosures required by law.
Breach of the duty of silence carries loss of authorization to exercise the office of deacon.

25 § Recruiting

1. The bishop is responsible for recruiting pastors, deacons, deaconesses, preachers and other workers. The Pastoral Collegium assists with this.
2. The bishop is responsible for seeing that pastors, deacons, deaconesses, preachers and other workers undergo a preliminary evaluation of suitability at an early stage.
A positive evaluation is a prerequisite for admission to pastoral training approved by the Mission Province.

26 § Declaration of Disqualification.

Ministers within the Mission Province who depart from the qualification requirements of Chapter 5, §§1-7 can, after discussion and admonition, be declared disqualified by the Consistory. This may also be done for a specific period.

CHAPTER 6. THE MISSION PROVINCE'S ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

MEMBERSHIP AND COOPERATION

1 § Koinonias that share the Mission Province's faith and confession can affiliate with the Mission Province.

Application for membership is made to the Mission Council, which examines the application and confirms the membership.

2 § Within the Mission Province there is a nationwide faith fellowship for individuals who share the Mission Province's faith and confession.

3 § Mission organizations and institutions that share the Mission Province's faith and confession can cooperate with the Mission Province's ongoing development.

ORGANIZATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Province Convention

4 § Composition of the Province Convention, etc.

1. The Province Convention is composed as follows:

- Two members from each affiliated koinonia.
- Two members from the nationwide community of faith.
- Two members from each participating mission organization or institution.
- The bishops and the members of the Pastoral College. Each person can represent only one of the above mentioned groups. The groups may appoint alternate representatives.

2. The Mission Bishop is chairman of the Province Convention. A vice chairman is chosen by the convention.

5 § The Province Convention's tasks are

1. to consult and deliberate on the Mission Province's common concerns at least once a year;
2. to review and determine the Mission Province Statutes annually;
3. to develop and adopt bylaws for the various agencies working within the Mission Province;
4. to establish disciplinary regulations for bishops, priests and deacons;
5. to appoint members of the Mission Council;
6. to consider and grant freedom from liability for the Mission Council;
7. to select non-clergy members of the Consistory, with members of the Pastoral College not participating;
8. to determine possible membership fees for affiliated koinonias, cooperating mission organizations and institutions;
9. to select two auditors and two alternates;
10. if necessary, to select a Province Secretary.

The Mission Council

6 § The Mission Council's composition, etc.

1. The Mission Council consists of the Mission Bishop, with the auxiliary bishops as alternates, and eight members, with four alternates, chosen by the Province Convention.
2. The Mission Bishop is the chairman of the Mission Council. The Convention appoints a Vice Chairman from among the Mission Council's other eight members.
3. The Mission Council chooses a secretary and vice secretary from among its members.

4. In choosing Council members and distributing tasks, a good distribution of men and women, laity and clergy and representation of koinonias should be sought.
5. Members are chosen for a term of two years. Four members and two alternates are chosen each year.
6. The Mission Council chooses a treasurer, who may or may not be a member of the Council.

7 § The Mission Council's duty is to act as the Mission Province's board by

1. analyzing the mission situation and develop a mission strategy in consultation with the responsible bishops and the Pastoral College;
2. working toward forming new koinonias and to support these;
3. enacting the Mission Province's employer responsibility
4. being responsible for the Mission Province's financial management
5. preparing and conducting the Province Convention;
6. implementing decisions of the Province Convention;
7. preparing for election of bishops and to appoint the election committee.

The Consistory

8 § The Consistory's Composition, etc.

1. The Consistory consists of the Mission Bishop with other bishops as alternates, three pastor members with alternates and three non-pastor members with alternates.
2. The Mission Bishop is president of the Consistory. The Consistory chooses a vice president from its members.
3. Pastor members are chosen by the Mission Province Pastor Collegium. Non-pastor members are chosen by the non-pastor members of the Province Convention.
4. Members are elected for a term of three years. One pastoral and one non-pastoral member are elected each year.

9 § The Consistory's duties are

1. to decide as to eligibility for bishops, pastors, deacons and deaconesses;
2. to examine candidates for ministries such as bishop, pastor, deacon and deaconess;
3. to decide eligibility requirements for preachers and other workers;
4. to be the Mission Province's disciplinary board and to judge cases involving declaration of disqualification and excommunication;
5. to consider pastors' applications to be admitted to the Mission Province's Pastoral Collegium. The assessment relates to doctrine and life, and whether the ordination took place according to good apostolic order.
6. to be the Mission Province's appeals board;
7. to consider and rule on cases involving dissolution of marriage and the entering into new marriage;

8. to develop instructions for calling, examining, choosing, ordaining and installing/appointing office bearers and other workers within the Mission Province.

The Council members are bound to secrecy regarding personal circumstances discussed in Council.

Doctrinal Board

10 § Doctrinal Board's composition, etc.

1. The Doctrinal Board consists of the bishops and at least four pastors chosen by the Pastoral Collegium.
2. The Mission Bishop is chairman of the Doctrinal Board.

11 § Doctrinal Board's duties, etc.

1. The Doctrinal Board is the Mission Province's authority for doctrinal issues. It decides matters related to the Mission Province's doctrinal basis.
2. The Mission Province's organs and members of boards have the right to request a ruling from the Doctrinal Board.
3. The Doctrinal Board can issue a ruling on its own initiative in matters it judges to be significant for the Mission Province's identity.

Pastoral Collegium

12 § The Pastoral Collegium's composition, duties, etc.

1. The Pastoral Collegium consists of the Mission Province's bishops and pastors accepted by the Consistory.
2. The Pastoral Collegium meets at least once a year.
3. The Mission Bishop is president of the Pastoral Collegium. The Pastoral Collegium elects a vice president from among its members.
4. The Pastoral Collegium chooses from its members the Doctrinal Board for the Mission Province, which includes all the bishops with a bishop as chairman.
5. The Pastoral Collegium can call preachers, venia holders, and deacons/deaconesses to its meetings.

Province Secretary

13 § The Province Convention can choose a Province Secretary.

The Province Secretary reports to the Mission Council and the Mission Bishop. The Province Secretary's duties can be:

– with the Great Commission as basis, to work out plans for the Mission Province's development and consolidation;

- to coordinate the Mission Province’s activities between the decision-making organs and koinonias;
- to be responsible for the Mission Province’s administration;
- to maintain contacts with biblically and confessionally faithful clergy, laymen, congregations and other church bodies within and outside Sweden;
- to coordinate contacts with the media.

The Province Secretary is an advisory member of all Mission Province decision-making bodies and has the right to speak and to make suggestions.

The right to institute proceedings

14 § Koinonias, office bearers, ministers, supporting organizations, and groups of at least ten members of the Mission Province have the right to request that a matter be considered by the Mission Council or the Consistory.

Another worshipping fellowship served by a pastor in the Mission Province has the right to have a matter considered by the bishop or the Consistory.

Circuits

15 § If desirable, the Consistory may decide to establish circuits within the Mission Province.

In such a case, the Mission Bishop appoints a dean to assist him with the leadership and supervision of the circuit, or instructs an auxiliary bishop to perform this function.

Registration

16 § The Mission Province in Sweden shall be officially registered as as a non-profit organization. Its headquarters will be in Gothenburg.

Finances

17 § Possible membership fees for affiliated koinonias, cooperating mission organizations and institutions are set by the Province Convention.

18 § The Mission Province maintains its accounts on a calendar year basis.

CHAPTER 7. REVIEW OF DECISIONS AND APPEALS

DECISION REVIEWS

1 § The Mission Province's organs, koinonias, office bearers, workers, supporting organizations, and groups of at least ten members of the Mission Province may request that the Consistory examine whether a decision of the Mission Province's organs, office bearers or koinonias has been made in accord with the provisions of the Province Statutes.

2 § Members of a koinonia may request that the Consistory examine whether a decision of a koinonia affecting its activities, workers or members has been made in accordance with these statutes.

3 § The Consistory can revoke the examined decision and prescribe that the decision-making body take up the matter for reconsideration within a designated period.

The Consistory shall reject a request for review of a decision if it does not meet the requirements set forth in § 1, and deny it if the decision was made in accordance with the provisions of the Province Statutes.

APPEALS

4 § A decision made by a Mission Province organ other than the Province Convention or a decision by a koinonia or office bearer can be appealed to the Consistory by a koinonia or an individual affected by the decision.

The Consistory can revoke the examined decision and grant the appellant's request in whole or in part.

The Consistory shall dismiss an appeal if it does not meet the requirements set forth in 4 § 1 st., and deny it if the decision does not conflict with the provisions of the Province Statutes.

In case of an appeal, the Consistory shall conduct a review of the decision in accordance with Chapter 7, § 3.

5 § A decision may be appealed if a provision in these Province Statutes permits the appeal.

OTHER PROVISIONS

6 § The Consistory shall reconsider its own decision if a koinonia or individual affected by the decision requests this.

7 § The request for a decision review or appeal must have come to the Consistory within 60 days after the decision is published.

CHAPTER 8. ALTERATION OF DOCTRINAL BASIS, DISSOLUTION OF THE MISSION PROVINCE

1 § Altering the Mission Province's doctrinal basis requires a decision by a two-thirds majority at two consecutive Province Conventions, of which at least one is a regular annual session.

2 § The Mission Province can be dissolved if two consecutive Province Conventions at least one month apart so decide by at least a two thirds majority of those present who are eligible to vote. The Province Convention decides whether any possible remaining assets should be turned over to a mission that functions in accord with the Province's doctrinal basis.