

Definition of Mission

Any endeavour outside the local congregation undertaken by persons set aside by the Church in recognition of a call from God to a specific task in fulfilment of the Great Commission.

It is recognized that as the Church is called to go out into all the world, so too are individuals called out from the congregation into that world. The Church is both a sending Church and a going Church. Inasmuch as churches worldwide are involved in fulfilling the Great Commission, this is a task in which we all share as partners.

1. Introduction

1.1 The following is a policy to describe the normal practice of the Missionary Council in the operation of the missionary programme of the Church, and to facilitate the making of spiritual and orderly decisions in regard to missionary matters.

1.2 As the body of Christ at New Life Church, we recognize our responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission in mission both overseas and in the United Kingdom. The Council would seek to be open before God in the understanding of what we as a fellowship are called to do in the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

1.3 Recognizing that the Great Commission is the responsibility of the whole body of Christ, we co-operate in partnership with other organizations, denominations, interdenominational agencies and societies and churches at home and abroad in the fulfilment of the task of mission, providing that their general doctrinal basis is compatible with that of our Church.

1.4 The Council shall be responsible to develop missionary interest and support, co-ordinate all missionary activity and act as an advisory body on missionary policy to the Eldership and the Church.

2. Formation of the Missionary Council

2.1 The appointment of members is made by recommendation of the Council to the Eldership, subject to ratification at the Annual General Meeting.

2.2 Members appointed will be church members with a proven interest and involvement in the missionary life of the Church. However, the value of recruiting new members in order to give them experience in, and exposure to, the challenge of world missions will also be recognized. The Missions Council shall have power to invite others to assist them in their duties as deemed appropriate.

2.3 The Council will consist of:

- President - Senior Pastor or an elder as his representative.
- Chair.
- Vice Chair.
- Secretary.
- Treasurer.
- Other members elected as appropriate to the needs of the council.

2.4 In emergency, the executive comprising of President, Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer is authorised to make decisions which should be brought to the full Council as soon as practicable.

2.5 As ex-officio members of the Council, elders and church treasurers may attend meetings if they so wish.

2.6 Church members may be invited to attend a Council Meeting in order to share their views.

2.7 Any member of the executive may represent the Council at Deacons and Elders meetings when requested.

2.8 Meetings of the Council will be held not less than bimonthly.

2.9 Where the Council would value the participation and prayer support of the Church on particular matters, the membership will be notified accordingly. The Council will, in general, seek to keep the Church informed of its work.

2.10 Members of the Council may be asked to accept responsibility for areas of work such as prayer support, missiology, information, display, pastoral care, communication, research.

2.11 The Council may form a smaller group of its members to interview prospective candidates. They will report back to the full Council. Other specialist members may be co-opted to help in the assessment of a person's calling and motives for offering for missionary service.

3. Missionary Education.

3.1 Teaching on mission should be an integral part of the Church's educational programme. All organizations and groups should be encouraged to include in their programmes the development of an awareness of the spiritual and material needs of the world and the Christian response.

3.2 Council Members will be expected to advise and assist all Church Groups as and when required with specified information on all aspects of mission to aid education and promote prayer and to encourage involvement.

4. Recognition of Missionary Status.

4.1 We give priority to the support of New Life Church members who are missionaries.

4.2 It is recognized that the mission agency to which a missionary is joined has its specialized part to play and merits our co-operation and support.

4.3 Priorities are established and the following categories of worker are identified:

1. New Life Member. These shall have had a proven ministry within the Church and be approved by the Leadership and Missions Council.
2. Non New Life Member. Someone who has already been accepted and accredited by another church or missionary body, but has subsequently become linked with New Life Church.
3. Short Term Worker. Someone who is accepted for a specific engagement for a period of two years or less.
4. Ministry Candidate. To become a candidate, the person shall have a personal interview with an Elder or Elders for the purpose of enquiring into their spiritual, doctrinal and temperamental fitness. They shall also be interviewed by the Council to hear testimony concerning conversion, call and to discuss needs and assess their general suitability. Once approved, the candidate is eligible for recommendation to a Missionary Training College.
5. Self Supported Professional Workers. Persons who take up secular employment under Governments or organizations at home or abroad with an expressed purpose of exercising a missionary ministry. They may be interviewed by the Council with a view to advice and prayer support.

4.4 The Council may request a medical examination by a doctor of its choice at any time, either before or after training, or during furlough.

4.5 The Council recognizes its responsibility to advise candidates upon the choice of the agency to which they will commit themselves. They will be encouraged to investigate the potentialities of as many societies as are appropriate to their call.

4.6 Criteria for evaluation of an agency would include the following:

1. A general doctrinal agreement and unity in the Spirit with New Life Church.
2. The Society must be properly directed, organized and financed.
3. The Society's goals and objectives should be clearly articulated and be approved by the Church. It must be able to ensure that its goals and objectives can be effectively realized.
4. The general welfare of the missionary should be seen to be a matter of partnership with the Church.
5. A sympathetic attitude to the missionary's family responsibilities.

5. Pastoral Care of Missionaries.

5.1 The pastoral care of the missionary does not end with his or her departure overseas. We will continue to offer them pastoral care in consultation with their agency in the following ways:

5.2 Every missionary will ideally be linked with a home group through which to receive both practical and spiritual encouragement.

5.3 The Council will appoint a link person as appropriate to facilitate communication with the missionary.

5.4 The Council will endeavour to ensure that pastoral visits are regularly made to encourage accredited missionaries in their working environment. Pastoral visits may be made by Council Members or other Church leaders.

5.5 Mission agencies will be encouraged to allow the missionary on home assignment to spend as much time as possible at New Life Church, so that relationships may be renewed and support built up. This will provide opportunity for the church to be informed about their work and for the missionary to be refreshed physically, mentally and spiritually.

5.6 Missionaries will be encouraged to undertake periods of in service training or refresher courses either on location or during home assignment as considered appropriate, and in consultation with their mission agency.

5.7 Books, magazines, News Bulletins and other suitable literature, and recordings of church services and teaching may also be provided to them as required.

5.8 The Council will maintain open communication with the sponsoring mission agency for the purposes of welfare crisis management and awareness of any changes in ministry direction.

5.9 Our responsibility for the reasonable educational needs and pastoral welfare of our missionary families is also recognized by the Council, in conjunction with their mission agency.

5.10 Pastoral care for missionaries will not immediately cease with retirement or cessation of missionary service.

6. Responsibilities of Accredited Missionaries to the Church

6.1 Missionaries supported by the Church shall be expected to provide regular prayer letters for copying and distribution within the Church.

6.2 Over and above 6.1, they will be expected to correspond frequently with the Council providing up to date prayer information.

6.3 So far as other commitments allow they shall spend as much time as possible at the Church whilst on home assignment.

6.4 The Council will seek to arrange for missionaries on home assignment to have suitable opportunity to share with all sections of church life, in order to encourage and sustain them in prayer and financial support.

6.5 They will be expected to meet with the Council as soon as practical after return from their field of service to discuss their work and needs. Those missionaries who live and work in U.K. will be expected to meet with the Council from time to time.

6.6 Missionaries on home assignment are invited to attend Council meetings when possible and considered appropriate.

7. Collection and Allocation of Funds.

7.1 It will be the privilege and responsibility of the Council to supervise the distribution of all missionary funds. Monies will be handled by the Church Treasurers.

7.2 The Council will be responsible for the prayerful preparation of an annual budget for the support of missionaries and organizations. Priorities will be observed in the following order:

1. New Life Members. The aim is to provide as large a proportion of assessed needs as is possible within the total funds that are available. It will be recognized that needs will vary but should provide for training, equipment and travel costs where applicable.
2. Non New Life Members. The aim will be to provide a lesser proportion of the financial support needed.
3. Short Term Workers may receive some allowance towards their financial needs as appropriate.
4. Ministry Candidates shall be assisted financially where necessary by means of grants from funds available.
5. Non-Professional Missionaries will not normally be considered eligible for financial support.
6. Grants to other societies and agencies may be made at the Council's discretion.

7.3 A separate mission fund will be maintained to receive gifts for mission causes. Allocations will be made at the discretion of the Council. Gifts designated by Church members directly for individual mission workers will be passed through the mission fund.

7.4 It is recognized that in some circumstances it will be more cost-effective to support national workers than send missionaries.

8. Other Areas of Commitment.

8.1 The Council recognizes locally based missionary organizations and seeks to be supportive.

9. Review Procedure.

9.1 Each five years this policy statement will be reviewed and amended as considered necessary.