

New Life Missions Committee

Missions Policy Statement

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...for further information contact:

NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH
8765 Government Street
Burnaby, BC V3N 4G9
Phone 604-420-0761 Fax 604-648-9110

NLCC Missions Policy

2001/1

I. Philosophical Foundations**A. The Definition of Missions**

Missions is going into the nations to perform the Ministry of Jesus Christ.(note 1) **It is understood that "mission" refers to efforts beyond the normal outreach responsibilities of the local church** (note 2)

B. The Scriptural Purpose of Our Church's Involvement in Missions

1. To do our part in helping to fulfill the Great Commission; that is to go and preach the good news of Jesus Christ to every person and to make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28: 19–20; Mark 6:15; II Cor 5:17-21; Matthew 18:10-14).
2. To minister God's grace in its various forms to the whole realm of human need - spiritual, physical and emotional/ intellectual (Isa. 58:6-10; Isa 61:1; Matt. 25:31; Luke 4:18-19; James 2:15-16).
3. To serve the poor (Luke 4:18; Acts 6:1-7; James 2:5)
4. To honour the foundation of God's grace to us. Freely we have been given, freely we are to give (Genesis 12:1-3; Matt. 10:8; Eph. 2:1-10; I John 4:19).

C. The Purpose of our Missions Policy

1. To have a sense of direction and to achieve better efficiency in decision making.
2. To keep our focus on the scriptural purpose of our mission efforts.
3. To encourage working together with other Christian organizations locally and overseas.
4. To bring new committee members and members of the congregation up to date, allowing them to more easily familiarize themselves with the issues to be faced and the general direction of our mission policy.
5. To ensure consistency over time.
6. To ensure missions support is balanced and is focused according to well thought out priorities.
7. To ensure responsible stewardship of God's resources.

D. Goal Setting

1. A goal is an objective that is achievable, measurable and involves a step of faith.
2. The committee will meet each January to set both long-range and that year's goals.
3. Goals will be set in the categories of:
 - a) missionaries to be supported
 - b) the support of an unreached people group
 - c) short term groups to be sent
 - i) youth
 - ii) college & career
 - iii) adult or family
 - iv) worship teams
 - d) fund-raising
 - e) budgeting
 - f) prayer support
 - g) education & awareness
 - h) at least one short-term group project annually.
 - i) partnership projects with local churches in developing nations.

E. Responsibilities of our Missions Committee

The committee is responsible to:

1. Stimulate the church's intercessory prayer for missions and missionaries.
2. Pray for our congregation that there would be:
 - a) a growing sensitivity to world missions needs, and
 - b) a growing desire to become involved in some way to meet these needs.
3. Encourage and recruit volunteers for missions service.
4. Develop and manage fundraising programs for the missions budget.
5. Administer the missions budget.
6. Serve as a liaison between the church, and its related missionaries and missions organizations.
7. Administer and regularly evaluate the missions program.
8. Update the missions policy.

F. Flexibility of Interpretation

It is intended that the guidelines of our mission policy be followed. We do not, however, wish to restrain the work of the Holy Spirit. Exceptions may be made at any time subject to the approval of the Missions Committee, and, if need be, the board of elders.

G. Revision of Policy

The Missions Policy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the missions committee's January goal-setting meeting. Input will be invited from pastors, elders and the congregation prior to this meeting.

Footnotes

- 1 The ministry of Jesus Christ in the world would include at least the following:
 - a) evangelizing (Luke 4:43)
 - b) making disciples (Matt 28:19)
 - c) planting churches (the book of Acts)
 - d) healing the sick (Acts 5:12–16 etc, etc)
 - e) establishing justice (Isa. 42:3–4; Matt. 12:20)
 - f) intercession (Luke 10:2; Matt 9:36–38)
 - g) caring for the needs of the poor (Acts 6:1–7)

The "ministry of Jesus Christ" includes the spirit in which His ministry was conducted, one characterized by a genuine love which affirms, enhances and restores the inherent dignity and value of each human individual as being created in the image of God.

- 2 It is recognised that the elders of New Life Community Church must define what is meant by "the normal outreach responsibilities of the local church". (i.e. does this include North American suburban church planting? etc.)

II. Missions Committee Structure

A. Selection of Missions Committee Members

The missions committee will make the appointment. (Approval of elders to be sought before approaching candidates.)

B. Criteria for Selection

1. Must be a member of New Life Community Church.
2. Must have a healthy spiritual life; evidence of mature Christian character.
3. A sincere and deep interest in missions.
4. Basic agreement with current NLCC missions policy.
5. Willingness to work as a catalyst for NLCC missions efforts.
6. Commitment to a consensus model of decision-making in committee.
Willingness to be a "team player" with other committee members.
7. Willingness to continually learn and grow in understanding of world missions.

C. Size of the Missions Committee

The missions committee should number between 7 and 12 members. As the church grows and responsibilities increase, membership may need to exceed 12.

D. Term of Office

Due to the time necessary to understand and enter fully into NLCC's mission program, a minimum two-year commitment will be sought. Membership is renewable on an annual basis following the first two-year term.

E. Responsibilities of Each Committee Member

1. Attending monthly missions committee meetings and the annual January planning retreat.
Attendance at further meetings for specific purposes (i.e. with elders; congregational meeting; special task force meetings etc.) may be required.
2. Praying for NLCC:
 - a) Supported missionaries.
 - b) Missions committee meetings, that they might be led by the Lord.
 - c) Our congregation that it might be spiritually strong, active and growing in meeting world missions needs.
3. Reading at least one mission-related book per year.
4. Making sure that all meeting agendas, minutes and handouts are thoroughly read before filing away.
5. Maintaining supportive fellowship with other committee members.
6. Undertaking delegated tasks as needs arise.

7. Having a working knowledge of NLCC missions policy.

N.B. Members should be prepared to devote a minimum of eight hours per month (including meetings, reading, prayer etc.) on missions concerns.

F. Officers and Manner of Appointment

The missions committee will have an officially recognised chairperson selected and appointed by the NLCC board of elders. A vice chairperson would be selected by the chairperson subject to approval of the elders.

Other committee offices are desirable and may be filled as personnel permit. Among others, they include: secretary, treasurer, prayer co-ordinator, display co-ordinator.

These appointments would be made by consensus agreement of the missions committee.

G. Sub-Committees

Sub-committees may be struck from time to time to meet specific needs. (i.e. Missions conference planning, policy revision, education and awareness, interviewing committee candidates etc.) The heads of these sub-committees will be missions committee members but other members of the congregation could be involved.

H. Education of Committee Members

Our desire is that every missions committee member would become well-informed about world missions. It is recommended that the church invest in such training (i.e. through covering costs of one relevant course, seminar, conference and/or mission experience per year.)

I. Duties of a Missions Pastor

At some future point a full or part-time missions pastor should be considered. Duties would include:

1. Counselling, discipling and training people in missions.
2. Maintaining contact with missionaries, candidates, students, agencies.
3. Staying current with world missions strategy through reading, conferences etc.
4. Being an integral part of the missions committee.
5. Effectively communicating world missions interests and vision to the elders board and the congregation as a whole.

III. Responsibilities of the Missions Committee

A. Developing prayer concern

Our aim is to increase prayer for missions in the church by the following:

1. Missions committee members will lead the congregation in public prayer and sending out of individuals going on missions whenever possible.
2. Information on prayer needs of various kinds will be regularly presented to the congregation.
3. Develop and maintain a missions prayer group/movement within the church (cf. A.D. 2000)

B. Missions education in the church

The missions committee is pledged to increase awareness of and interest in missions by providing consistent and up-to-date information to the congregation through the following:

1. Annual Missions Month – sermons, displays, bulletin inserts and other focused information for the church.
2. Monthly missions newsletter to be inserted in the bulletin; information will include profiles on NLCC members in service, information about needs around the world, book reviews, etc.
3. Regular missions education within Sunday School and the youth group; to be done in liaison with children's and youth ministries leaders.
4. Displays and maps in the church foyer focussing on people involved in both short- and long-term, local and foreign missions.
5. Organising and promoting "missions focus" evenings; activities could include films, special speakers, etc.
6. Development and promotion of an up-to-date and comprehensive missions library.
7. Missions Emphasis Weekend in the fall to recap the year's missions activities.
8. "Moment for mission" spots during regular services.

C. Missionary Development

We will take a proactive stance in identifying and encouraging potential missionaries from the members of our congregation.

D. Caring for missionaries on the field

Our aim is to maintain contact with church members out on missions service for over one year.

1. Encourage church members to communicate with missionaries on the field (e.g. through bulletin inserts, by fax, letters, audio tapes etc.)
2. Committee members will regularly communicate (on a rotation basis), especially remembering important occasions such as birthdays and festive holidays.

E. Caring for visiting missionaries

The missions committee will arrange accommodations and food for missionaries who visit and minister to our congregations (if necessary).

F. Ongoing education of missionaries

This issue will be deferred until such a time as our church has a greater number of long-term missionaries out in foreign countries.

G. Visiting Missionaries on the field

At present, the missions committee will encourage church members to include visits to missionaries on the field in their work or holiday travel. As with point "F" above, this issue will be addressed more fully in the future.

H. Responsibility of a missionary to the church

1. Individuals supported by New Life Community Church will be requested to correspond with the church on a regular basis, providing information on their ministry and submitting prayer requests.
2. Individuals and organisations supported by New Life will be requested to submit a fiscal report to the church, in order that financial accountability can be maintained.

I. Short-term missionary service

1. All candidates
 - a) must meet with approval from the missions committee. They will be requested to present a short report on the project and explain why they feel called to participate.
 - b) upon returning will be required to report back to the missions committee about their experience. They may also be requested to make a presentation to Sunday School, youth group or in a service, if they so desire.
2. Short-term service (3 months to three years)

Minimum requirements for support:

 - members of New Life (minimum 1 year),
 - involved in a ministry in the church,
 - regularly involved in a house group or equivalent.

3. Summer or project service (3 months or less)
 - Minimum requirements for support:
 - regular attendance at New Life for a minimum of 8 months,
 - parental approval if a minor.
4. Church-sponsored projects
 - a) Anyone wishing to initiate and lead a missions project from New Life must first receive approval from the elders.
 - b) Candidates wishing to participate in and be supported on a project from New Life must meet with approval from the team leader and the missions committee.

IV. FINANCIAL POLICIES

A. Financial support

1. Long or short-term service
 - Financial support will be determined on an individual basis by the missions committee, and will be reviewed annually.
2. Summer or project service
 - It is expected that funds would normally come from the participants' personal resources. A degree of support may be available from the missionary development fund.

B. Missionary Development Fund

The missionary development fund is a missions budget category aimed at providing resources for effective education and development of potential missionaries.

1. Education through short term missions experiences may be subsidised.
2. Tuition fees for recognised courses may be subsidised.
3. The Committee will decide who receives aid.
4. Criteria to be used: person's call into missions, membership in the church, spiritual maturity, references, past experience in missions, involvement in the church, level of need, etc.
5. The maximum guideline amount designated to this Fund will be 10% of the total Missions Budget.
6. If funds are depleted in this Fund, and a worthy candidate needs support, funds can be borrowed from other categories.

C. Herman Jonker Fund

The Herman Jonker Fund is a scholarship program at Trinity Western University set up to support students with Third World missions as a career goal. It is the committee's responsibility to administer this fund in partnership with T.W.U.'s financial aid office.

D. Missions Funds Shortage Policy

1. Prioritise payments and cut off what are considered the least essential commitments.
2. Unite the congregation in prayer and appeal for needed monies.

E. Funds Surplus Policy

1. Surplus funds will be disbursed according to agreed-upon priorities.

F. Discretionary funds

1. There will be no specific fund, as special appeals can be given, and the vote of the people can be exercised through designated gifts.

G. Missions Administration Costs

1. Some administrative costs will be handled under the general budget of the church. (paper, photocopying, secretarial, library books etc).
2. Costs for Missions Conferences, attending educational conferences, Missions education materials or short term programs are budgeted under Missionary Development fund.
3. A special Administration fund could also be set up for these expenses.

H. Honorarium

1. Visiting missionary speakers help us to motivate people. If they have gone to any trouble or expense to share with us, we have an obligation to cover expenses and give something extra for their effort.
2. The cost is normally covered by church speaker's budget but could come out of Missionary development fund or administrative fund.

I. Guidelines for Missions Budget Preparation

1. The annual missions budget is prepared by the missions committee or sub committee, subject to approval of the board of elders.
2. A specified percentage (of total church budget), agreed upon by the elders board, will be given to missions, plus allowance is made for designated gifts above this percentage.
3. We give to both denominational and independent causes. We alone make decisions on our missions budget including working with independent faith missions agencies. Denominational assessments are covered in the church's general budget.

- 4a. 89% of the 1993 Church general budget was spent locally, in addition to the time and energies of our congregation. The following percentages, therefore, reflect our desire to use the remaining 11%, plus designated missions giving, to increase our emphasis on:
- i) reaching people who have never heard the gospel (mostly overseas).
 - ii) caring for the poorest of the poor with our tithes.
- b. Our priorities are to achieve the following division of missions funds:
- i) 75% to unreached people and the poorest of the poor overseas. Strive to give half of the 75% to evangelism, half to relief and development type ministries.
 - ii) 25% to North American missions, with 1/4 of this to Christian Action, 1/4 to Education, and remaining 1/2 to Evangelism and North American church planting.
- 5a. We support the missionary, or short-term volunteer and recommend agencies to serve under where appropriate.
- b. For the long-term missionary we will thoroughly investigate each agency, asking at least the following questions:
- doctrinal statement?
 - What are requirements? Calling?
 - What is their screening process? Psychological evaluation? Who does it?
 - What is failure rate?
 - Provision for children? Retirement?
- c. Recognising that agencies are contractors who agree to supervise the work of the missionary on the church's behalf, we look carefully at each contract before becoming a party to the agreement.
- 6a. We work primarily with agencies affiliated with the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA), or the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association (IFMA), that are members of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC), but will consider others after thorough investigation.
- b. We have developed our own list of agencies we want to work with, and we recognise the importance of deep involvement with fewer organisations rather than casual involvement with many.
- c. We support only agencies that agree with our statement of faith.
- 7a. We expect status reports from the agency on all the missionaries we support.
- b. We want to be in on the evaluation process with our missionaries, especially those we are heavily supporting or those who are members of our church.
- c. We want the organisation's help in recruiting young people from our church and inspiring our other members to greater devotion and support.
- d. A standard program of evaluating agencies for support will need to be developed in the near future.
- 8. Requirements for missionary selection:**
- a. pre-selection interview.

- b. pre-selection questionnaire.
- c. agreement with doctrinal position of the church.
- d. clear indication of conversion and call to the ministry.
- e. recommended by someone we trust. We must know that person's gifts and training match job requirements.
- f. must be serving in a church, including a volunteer internship, preferably with the same ethnic group they intend to serve.
- g. Church members take priority over non-members but both will be considered.
- h. Meeting the standards of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. 1
- i. Acceptance by an organisation approved by the church.
- j. Appropriate training or education depending on assignment.

The following areas will be considered fully as they become more relevant:

9. Support Levels:

- a. Develop criteria to determine the amount allotted:
 - i. alternative sources of support
 - ii. year of membership in the church
 - iii. total amount needed
 - iv. type of work that will be done
 - v. more to families, less to singles etc.
- b. We will assume a certain percentage of members' needs, and a certain percentage of non-members need. (e.g., 50% of members budgets, 25% of non-members budgets)

10. Starting Date – Missionary support begins when the missionary leaves for the field.

11. Termination will be considered in the event of:

- a. Failure to maintain the standards used to originally qualify for support.
- b. Any change in assignment, affiliation, or relevance of assignment, requires re-evaluation for support.

12. Missionary Families Support

- a. We relate to the total size and needs of the family in considering support.

13. Insurance

- a. The provision of insurance is the responsibility of the sponsoring mission agency. (This is one of the many reasons we need to work through agencies. They should have a large, cost effective policy covering many missionaries, and the experience to ensure proper coverage.)
- b. We must work closely with the mission agency to be sure these items are properly handled.

14. Childrens' Education

- a. It is expected that the missions organisation is responsible for these costs.

- b. High school and college support will be considered case-by-case, especially for members of church who are missionaries. For example, if a student meets the entrance requirements for Simon Fraser, where parents would have supplied housing --we will provide equivalent room & board.

15. Retirement

- a. This is the responsibility of the mission agency.

16. Regular Evaluations and Revision of Support

- a. We revise our support in proportion to need and ability of the church budget.
- b. We deal directly with the missionary, both in evaluation of his work and his financial needs. Someone, either from NLCC or the agency should visit at least every two years.

17. Under-Supported Missionaries

- a. Must be considered carefully on a case by case basis; inadequate support may indicate lack of God's confirmation.
- b. Encourage members of the congregation to make designations for this need.
- c. Encourage other churches, especially in the same geographical locality, or of the same persuasion, to become involved financially.
- d. Support fund raising projects by church groups or departments, if appropriate.

18. Travel Expenses (in initial outgoing expenses)

- a. Work with the sending agency on special projects, fund raising dinners, etc. to create the necessary monies.

Footnotes

1 I Timothy 3:1–15

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to much wine, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instruction so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Titus 1:5–9

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to much wine, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

(DF\MISPOLCY)