

NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Standard Policy & Procedure

Subject: D-03 Mission Policy

Approved: FINAL

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This Mission Policy will serve as a guideline in matters pertaining to Missions. In addition, the second part will deal with the guidelines related to the financial aspects of supporting missions and those undertaking missions, whether short-term or long-term in nature.

A. OVERALL MISSIONS GUIDELINE

Objectives

- Celebrate the Goodness of God - Through God's great Providence that members commissioned for mission work are given financial support that match up with their desire to touch lives with the transforming love of Jesus Christ.
- Connect with the Family of God - Be in partnership with other agencies in the development of local, regional and global Mission Program with God's given resources for the development of His Kingdom.
- Grow in the Likeness of God - Pray for God's guiding Hand in sending long-term and short-term missionaries to the Harvest field.
- Serve with the Kindness of God - Create opportunities for all church members to participate in missions according to the Gifts that God has given them, particularly to those in need.
- Share the Story of God – That the Love and Grace of our Father may be evident to all we contact through missions, whether by word or by deed.

Biblical Basis

- The Lord has called us to share the good news of his love and grace to all nations, and has given us the power and authority to do so.
 - "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" Matthew 28:18-20
 - "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8
- The Lord has directed us to help those who are hurting, hungry and needy.
 - "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Psalm 82:3-4
 - ""He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the Lord". Jeremiah 22:16
 - "The righteous care about justice for the poor but the wicked have no such concern." Proverbs 29:7
- We will be blessed by helping those who need our help, both physically and spiritually.
 - "and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday." Isaiah 58:10

- “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Luke 14: 13,14

Life Cycle of Mission Service

Regardless whether the actual length of mission field service is one week, one year, or one decade, there are three distinct phases to the life cycle of mission service. First is the “Pre-” or “Pre-Field” phase, which involves the preparation and confirmation needed before one heads into the field. This is followed by the “During” or “In-Field” phase where the missionary is actually on location and impacting the community they are serving. Once this is completed, the “Post” or “Post-Field” phase closes the life cycle of mission service. During this phase, the missionary returns to and reconnects with their home community. The Mission Policy of New Life CRC Church has been formed on this model.

For purposes of this mission policy, short-term mission workers are those who have committed to a mission project for up to one year. Long-term mission workers are those who have committed for periods greater than one year.

Pre-Field

- Candidates should clearly hear God’s Call to a particular sphere of service and on their part they simply obey the Call. Through having quiet time and prayer time with the Lord, they should sense God’s leading and guiding Hand in making it possible for them. Everything else would fall into place and they would be at peace with themselves. ***Only God qualifies the Called.***
- Candidates should give ample notice of their intention to the Missions Team before making any final commitment to serve in any mission work or organization. A written letter giving a summary of their personal calling, financial brief, as well as a personal recommendation reference should be submitted to the Missions Team for its consideration.
- Missions field work must be affiliated with an accredited Mission Agency, Christian Organization, Church and the like, as approved by the Missions Team. In addition, the organization must be a Canadian registered charity. This requirement does not preclude giving prayer support for those who desire to go on a missions trip with non-qualified organizations.
- Candidates should be interviewed and recommended by the Missions Team or together with the Youth Pastor. The recommendation for all long-term missions should be followed by confirmation from the Board of Elders.
- Candidates must be active members of New Life CRC for a minimum of two years for long-term and one year for short-term mission work. They are expected to be serving and contributing in some area of ministry.
- Candidates under the age of 18 must inform their parents of their desire and intent to go into the mission field and must first seek their approval and blessing before embarking on any mission work. They must also be regulars at worship and active Christians.
- Candidates for long-term missions should show a keen interest in missions through active participation in mission related activities.
- Leaders of New Life CRC will introduce the successful candidates to the congregation, publicly pray for them, ask for prayer support for them and commission them prior to their departure into the field.

In-Field

- The mission workers who will be out on the field for longer than two months will be encouraged to submit regular updates to New Life CRC to be shared with the congregation.

- Mission workers should communicate any significant changes in ministry or location to New Life CRC as early as possible.
- New Life CRC promises to regularly uphold the mission workers in prayer during their field service.
- New Life CRC pledges to communicate regularly with mission workers in the field to reaffirm their membership in the New Life family.
- New Life CRC pledges to assist long-term mission workers with their practical and spiritual needs while on home leave, as needed.
- New Life CRC pledges to remit financial commitments to its mission workers in a timely manner.

Post-Field

- Upon returning to the New Life community, the mission workers will meet with the Missions Team to share of their experiences in a personal way.
- New Life CRC will pray for the reconnection of the mission worker into their home community and praise God for their safe return, their willingness to serve His Kingdom and their answer to His Call.
- The mission worker should be available to do a presentation or brief discussion in front of the church body.
- The Missions Team will follow up with the mission worker within two weeks as to how they are reconnecting in their home community.
- New Life CRC will provide assistance wherever possible with the re-integration of the mission worker into the community.

B. FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR MISSION TRIPS

1. Background

Financial guidelines are required for mission related activities for two primary purposes:

- a. Ensure that funds designated for missions activities are used in a way that meets the charitable purposes of New Life Church and ultimately the effective furtherance of God's work here on earth. It is our desire as a church that those who call New Life their church home are
 - 1) Encouraged and enabled to actively engage in missions work, and are
 - 2) Not prevented from engaging in missions work due to lack of funds.
- b. Ensure that New Life Church handles the funds and the receipting of contributions in such a way that the intent of the *Income Tax Act (ITA) of Canada*, as it relates to charities, is fulfilled.

Under the *Income Tax Act* a charity (such as New Life Church) is defined as an entity that devotes all of its resources to activities that pursue its own charitable purposes that are carried out by itself. This means that any activity that New Life Church carries out must relate to our purposes as a church, and that it may not send money to a person or entity over which it does not have direction, control and accountability.

2. Missions Trips sponsored, organized and controlled by:

a. **New Life Church**

- 1) Whether short or long term in nature these mission trips will be an integral part of the ministry of New Life Church. They will be approved, organized and controlled by the church leadership.
- 2) New Life Church leadership will:
 - Ensure the proposed trip fits within the overall charitable purposes and objects of New Life Church
 - Ensure Board approval of the proposed trip (e.g. as part of approved ministry plans, the annual budget or by special board motion)
 - Plan the trip and make all arrangements
 - Provide appropriate leadership and supervision for the trip
 - Receive all revenues and paying all costs through the church and will retain appropriate documentation
 - Demonstrate appropriate financial controls and retain appropriate records for expenses
 - Require reporting to the Board once the trip is complete
- 3) All donations towards the trip by participants, family, friends, etc will be receiptable and the funds will be managed according to the policy for Handling Designated Gifts (D-20). The only exception is that any required trip deposits are not receiptable and may be refunded if the participant is not able to undertake the mission trip.
- 4) All donations come under the control of New Life Church and cannot be returned to the donor once they are deposited in and cleared through the bank.

b. **Other Canadian Registered Charities**

- 1) For those missions trips (whether short or long term in nature) that are under the direct control and responsibility of another Canadian registered charity, New Life Church will:
 - Ensure that the organization is a Canadian registered charity
 - Ensure that the organization operates in a manner that is not inconsistent with the way that New Life Church itself operates; e.g. that there are reasonable controls and that the missions trip is effective and well managed
- 2) All donations that New Life Church receives towards the trip from participants, family, friends, etc will be receipted and the funds will be managed according to the policy for Handling Designated Gifts (D-20). The only exception is that any required trip deposits are not receiptable and must be made directly to the responsible Canadian charity.
- 3) All donations will be forwarded to the responsible Canadian charity.

c. **Other organizations which are not registered as a Canadian Charity**

- 1) Missions, whether short or long term in nature, undertaken with organizations which are not registered as a Canadian Charity cannot normally be supported by donations made to New Life Church. The primary reason is that the trip is not under the control and direction of a Canadian registered charity. It is also not acceptable for New Life Church to receive donations and forward them to that organization even though a charitable receipt will not be issued.
- 2) The only exception is when New Life Church establishes an agency agreement with that organization. This would only be undertaken if there was a significant reason for doing so and only for long-term projects. Any agreement will be reviewed by a lawyer to ensure that it is legally acceptable. With an agency agreement in place, the process for applying for financial support is very similar to that for a mission trip with an organization other than New Life Church.

3. **YWAM (Youth With a Mission) Discipleship Training Sessions (DTS)**

- a. Many individuals who are a part of New Life Church have participated in and have been tremendously blessed by Discipleship Training Sessions (DTS) offered by YWAM. These sessions have typically been made up of a training period (essentially in class) and an outreach period.
- b. While the outreach period is eligible for charitable tax receipts, the training period is not. Please note that YWAM itself does not issue charitable tax receipts for DTS.
- c. In order for New Life Church to be able to issue receipts for the outreach period, it must receive an expense estimate separating the costs of the training and outreach periods.
 - 1) Funds received in support of the individual will be receipted in proportion to the split between outreach and training expenses.
 - 2) If no cost estimate is provided, New Life Church will not be able to provide a charitable receipt. When requested, the Administrator can provide assistance in developing this estimate.
- d. Please note that while this specifically addresses DTS programs with YWAM, the above guidelines will also apply to similar programs with other Canadian registered charities.

4. **Applying for Financial Support for Missions**

This section addresses:

- 1) Accountability for the funds that are provided for those undertaking missions work.
- 2) Fair allocation of the funds to those most in need.
- 3) The handling of donated funds beyond the needs of the individual being supported.

This section applies to both short-term and long-term missions work with some minor variation in on-going support and reporting for those involved in long-term missions work.

The Missions Team will appoint a team member to be a point person for financial matters. This person will serve as liaison between the Missions Team and the Administrator. The Missions Team (excluding those members who are in a conflict of interest situation) will review all financial applications as part of its duties in sending out mission workers.

The Administrator will be responsible for the distribution of funds in response to approved requests for financial support. Additionally, the Administrator will provide the Missions Team with a monthly financial report on the status of the Missions Fund. The Administrator is responsible for issuing all charitable tax receipts.

a. **For mission trips organized by New Life Church:**

- 1) The team leader(s) (staff or lay) will establish the budget for the necessary expenses and establish the amount required for each individual.
- 2) Trip deposits cannot be receipted. The trips leaders may decide that an individual and his family does not have the financial capability to pay the deposit and may waive the requirement in consultation with the Administrator.
- 3) The request for support letters that trippers send out to family and friends and which includes the indication that donations will be receipted by New Life Church must be approved by the Administrator and the team leader(s) and will include the specific intent of the policy for Handling Designated Gifts (D-20).
- 4) While the intent is that each tripper volunteers to raise funds to cover the amount required to cover their trip costs, the understanding is that all funds are raised on behalf of the whole team and that charitable tax receipts are issued for eligible donations with this understanding. The implication is that while it is a wonderful blessing to have individual trippers raise more than what they need, they cannot personally benefit from those additional funds. Those funds are available for the overall needs of the mission team, including providing greater amounts of on-site support for the area to which the missions team is going. The policy for Handling Designated Gifts (D-20) applies in this case.
- 5) In cooperation with the Administrator, the mission trip leader(s) are responsible for tracking expenses – especially while on the trip and for ensuring that appropriate expense receipts are kept as agreed to with the Administrator.
- 6) The individual tripper has no further responsibility for tracking expenses except to follow-up with thank you to notes to those who have supported the missions team on their behalf.
- 7) Awareness and promotion of these trips will be the responsibility of the team leader(s) in conjunction with New Life Church's Missions Team.

b. **For missions trips or missions work organized by another registered Canadian charity:**

- 1) Generally speaking the registered Canadian charity (e.g. YWAM, Youth for Christ, Wycliffe, Seeds of Hope, etc) will be responsible for establishing its own set of guidelines for the missions trip or work (whether team or individual based).
- 2) Individuals or teams seeking to work through another registered Canadian charity and desiring support from New Life Church must complete and submit an application form (*to be developed*) a minimum of two months in advance of the trip. The application should also include a letter of support from the registered Canadian charity.
- 3) The Missions Team will review the application and decide:
 - Whether or not to approve the application (*criteria to be established*)
 - The level of funding from New Life Church that is appropriate
 - Whether the funding is a one time grant (suitable for short term missions trips) or whether on-going support may be required and to what extent and for what duration.
 - The level of reporting required for financial accountability for the funds received.
- 4) If the application is not approved then:
 - The team leader(s) or individual is informed with the reasons for the decision
 - If the Team Leader(s) or individual desires to do so, a meeting may be appropriate to further clarify the reasons for the decision and provide an opportunity for the team member(s) or individual to clarify any misunderstandings that led to the negative decision.
- 5) If the application is approved then
 - The team leader(s) or individual is informed. The specific wording that must be included in any request for support letters that are sent out will also be provided.
 - The financial support from New Life Church and any donations that are received will be forwarded to the registered Canadian charity when that Charity has also given approval to the team or individual.
 - The Missions Team will arrange for any commissioning and follow-up that may be appropriate.

5. **Financial Guidelines for Major Mission Projects**

New Life Church desires to be actively engaged in mission projects that are:

- a. Long term in nature
- b. Effectively partners with other established organizations, and
- c. Which engages our church in many different facets; e.g.
 - 1) Financial support
 - 2) Specific hands on activities such as construction, teaching, etc.

While there are general guidelines in this policy that will be relevant for the Missions Team to consider when evaluating larger projects, this policy is not intended to address all aspects of what a large project would entail.

The Missions Fund established as part of the Capital Campaign will be a significant catalyst for these larger missions projects.