



MISSIONS POLICY

REVISED & APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF ELDERS MARCH 2018

NORTHWEST COMMUNITY CHURCH

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PART I: BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

A. PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The ultimate purpose of the Church is to glorify God (Psalm 96:3; Isaiah 48:9-11; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 3:21). As Christ was given one mission by His Father (John 17:4), He, in turn, gives only one mission to His Church (John 17:18; Matthew 28:19-20). The Church exists in the world for the same ultimate purpose for which Christ came – to reveal the glory of God to all men (1 Peter 2:9). This Great Commission for the Church is to see God’s glory declared among all nations, continuing to manifest His glory to a dark world (Ephesians 3:10), until He personally returns to the earth to extend His kingdom and His glory throughout the whole earth (Psalm 2; Revelation 19).

The means by which every local church accomplishes this ultimate purpose on earth is threefold: 1) by *exalting* God in worship (John 4:23-24; Ephesians 3:21; Romans 12:1); 2) by *edifying* the body of Christ through the faithful preaching and teaching of God’s Word (Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:2), the cultivation and training of church leaders (Acts 14:23; 2 Timothy 2:2) and the mutual employment of each member’s spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11); and 3) by *evangelizing* the world (Matthew 28:18-20) with the end goal of making disciples through the planting and establishing of God-centered, Christ-exalting, Spirit-empowered, Bible-expositing, indigenous local churches among all the peoples of the earth (Acts 14:21-23; Romans 15:14-29).

B. SUMMARY OF MISSION WORK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A summary of mission work in the New Testament can be found in Acts 14:21-24.

And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

This text reveals what has been referred to as the “three-legged stool” of mission work. The three legs of that stool include 1) evangelism and church planting, 2) discipleship, and 3) leadership development.

C. DEFINITION OF MISSIONS

Missions is the effort to fulfill the Great Commission beyond the normal outreach of the local church by making disciples of Jesus Christ through evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training, aiming to establish and strengthen local churches, usually cross-culturally, especially where there is little or no access to a biblical understanding of the gospel.

D. DEFINITION OF A MISSIONARY

A missionary is one who has been sent. The concept comes from the Greek verb *apostello*, which means “to send out as an official representative.” It is used 132 times in the New Testament (96 times in the Gospels). It is used of Jesus, who was “sent” by God, and the Apostles, who were “sent” by Jesus.

Every Christian who desires to be obedient to the Great Commission must be involved in missions, but not every Christian is a missionary. We must reserve the term “missionary” for those who are intentionally sent out from one place to another (Acts 13:1-4) to accomplish the goal of missions. So, a missionary is an individual or couple especially selected, trained, and sent by their local church to fulfill the Great Commission beyond the normal reach of that church, usually across cultural and/or geographic and/or linguistic barriers with the purpose of establishing and strengthening biblical local churches through evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MISSIONARY

Consistent with the “three-legged stool” of mission work, missionaries 1) preach the gospel to those who haven’t heard (primarily globally, but also locally) and establish healthy churches with sound teaching and good leaders; 2) disciple new believers in spiritual life and Christian doctrine; and 3) train leaders to be faithful teachers of God’s Word and shepherds of God’s flock (including convictions, character, competence).

There are also opportunities to serve in support ministry roles. These roles provide various support services to aid those engaged in church planting and equipping ministries. Support ministries may include such activities as Bible translation, women discipling other women and children, administration, medical work, aviation, and other services.

F. GOAL OF MISSIONS

The goal of missions is to win new converts, establish disciples in the faith, incorporate them into a local church, and train leaders to plant other churches.

G. DEFINITION AND PRIMARY FOCUS OF OUTREACH

The Great Commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations is not an option, but rather a biblical mandate that is binding upon His church until the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20). Therefore, it is both the privilege and responsibility of every local church body to carry out this commission zealously by faithfully proclaiming the gospel in the power of the Spirit to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Acts 14:21, Revelation 5:9), baptizing new converts into the name of the triune God (Matthew 28:19), teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded (Mt. 28:18-20; cf. Acts 14:22), and gathering them into indigenous (self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating) churches (Acts 14:21-23; Romans 15:14-29) which are able to fulfill their Christian calling among their own people.

The Great Commission is more than “evangelizing,” it is “disciplining” (i.e., disciple making) with the end result always being the establishment of a local church. This is not only the mandate, the privilege, and the responsibility of every local church, but also the primary focus of missions in the

church. The church today is being pressured on many sides with many tasks, all in the name of outreach. Therefore, the church should be focused in the understanding of its disciple-making mission as the utterly unique task of the church. All its outreach activities should be constrained by the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church.

H. OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

SCRIPTURES

We believe the Holy Scriptures are verbally inspired in every word and absolutely inerrant in the original documents and are God's complete written revelation to man. We affirm that they are, thus, both authoritative and sufficient in all matter of faith and practice. As the primary resource of one's spiritual growth, it is the responsibility of followers of Jesus Christ to apply the truth of the Holy Scriptures to their lives.

GOD

We believe that there is but one living and true God, an infinite, all-knowing Spirit, perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is the loving, sovereign, creator and sustainer of all things, deserving of our worship and obedience.

JESUS CHRIST

We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both fully God and fully man. We believe in His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His imminent personal return to earth in power and glory.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune God. As the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, the Holy Spirit indwells all believers and baptizes them into the Body of Christ at the moment of their salvation. The Holy Spirit also sanctifies, instructs, illumines, empowers for service and seals each believer unto the day of redemption.

SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of man, who is totally depraved and hopelessly lost, is a free gift for all who repent of their sin and put their trust in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. This salvation is wholly of God, by grace, on the basis of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and the merit of His shed blood, not on the basis of human merit or works. All of the redeemed are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever.

SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the process of becoming more like Christ that begins at salvation and is completed when the believer reaches heaven. At salvation, the believer is justified and is declared holy by God. Through the empowering of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the Word of God, the believer is enabled to live a life of increasing holiness and growing victory over sin.

THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church consists of all who have been regenerated by the Spirit, called out from the world, separated from sin and called to pursue holiness. The church is expressed as local bodies of believers, operating under the direction of Jesus as Lord and Head of His body. The Church gathers in community for corporate worship and to equip the body of believers to build up one another and in turn, serve as salt and light to the world.

THE FUTURE

We believe that Jesus Christ will physically return to earth and that this return is imminent. This promise of His return should unite, comfort, and motivate all believers to holy living. Christ will bring His Kingdom to completion with His return by judging the world in righteousness and fulfilling His promise to His people. His future work on earth will conclude with the destruction of all evil and the creation of a new heaven and earth. After death, man will exist eternally in a real physical place; either united with God in heaven or separated from God in hell.

PART II: BIBLICAL OBJECTIVES

A. PROMOTE THE SUFFICIENCY AND AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD

It is the solemn responsibility of the Church to both protect and promote the truth of God's Word (1 Timothy 3:15; 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:2; 4:2). The Church does so because God's Word alone is fully inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, and sufficient for everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4, 16-21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17, 19-30; John 10:35; Psalm 19:7-14; Psalm 119:89; Psalm 138:2). The Word of God alone is sufficient *to save us* (2 Timothy 3:15), *to sanctify us* (2 Timothy 3:16) and *to suit us* for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17). Therefore, sound doctrine must inform the church's thinking about missions. Rightly dividing the Word (2 Timothy 2:15) and faithfully preaching and teaching it (2 Timothy 4:1-5) in all of its fullness (Acts 20:27) by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) must be at the forefront of any biblical missions philosophy. The pastoral leadership of the local church must guard and protect its members and missionaries vigilantly from error (Acts 20:28-32; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7) and make sure that they are consistently being nourished on the words of the faith and sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:6, 13; Ephesians 4:11-16). From start to finish, missions draws its life from God's Word (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4).

B. TEACH THE PRIORITY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN MISSIONS

Christ's Church is foundational to all the ministries of God's people in this age. The Church is the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:32; Revelation 19:7-8), the pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), and the body (Ephesians 4:12) of which Christ is the head (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 3:23). Christ gave Himself for the Church (Ephesians 5:25) and promised to build His Church (Matthew 16:18); He has not made this unique promise to any other entity. Christ Himself has given gifted leaders to the Church (Ephesians 4:11) so that the body might be built up (Ephesians 4:12, 16). The philosophy of missions depicted in the book of Acts revolves around the local church from start to finish: missionaries are sent out from the local church (Acts 13:1-3) and then reports are given to the local church (Acts 14:26-28).

Therefore, the responsibility of the Great Commission falls to the Church, and not directly to para-church organizations or mission agencies. For the Church to give this responsibility to other organizations is to relegate God's *primary* means for missions to a *secondary* role. Although para-church organizations and agencies are useful aides to the church, the authority, responsibility and impetus for missions belongs to the Church.

C. PRIORITIZE MISSIONS THAT PLANT CHURCHES

The actions of the early church demonstrate that church planting should be the targeted goal of the Great Commission. The disciple-making demands of the Great Commission explicitly include more than simply evangelizing the lost. Making disciples involves baptizing them (Matthew 28:19; 'baptizing,' cf. the pattern in Acts 2:41-42 where people are baptized and then added to the number of the Church) and teaching them to observe all that Christ commanded (Matthew 28:28). Both baptizing and teaching are closely connected with the local church.

Further, the pattern of missions in the book of Acts is evangelism, incorporation into a local assembly and then devotion to the teaching of the Apostles. This pattern was evident in the church at Antioch (Acts 11:9-26, cf. 13:1-3). As people turned to the Lord (11:21), those same people were considered a church (11:26); then Barnabas and Paul taught them for an extended period (11:26). Acts 14:21-23 makes it clear that establishing churches with elders was the norm and not the exception (cf. Titus 1:5). If the goal of missions were only evangelism, it would be impossible for Paul to say, “so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:19) and to speak of having “no further place in these regions” (15:23). Paul could make these statements only because church planting was the goal of missions.

It is essential that the church consistently seeks to bring their missions effort in alignment with the emphasis that the Scriptures lay on church planting. In other words, the more closely a ministry is connected with this ultimate aim of seeing churches planted, the more it is deserving of missions focus. To do missions *biblically* is to have a mission’s effort that reflects the same emphases the New Testament does. Therefore, missions at Northwest Community Church will be prioritized in the following order:

1. **CHURCH PLANTING.** Church planting is the establishing of local, indigenous churches characterized by the true worship of God, effective biblical nurture of believers, and evangelization of unbelievers, to the end that these churches will reproduce themselves. Church planting efforts will require an initial evangelistic strategy (primarily where there is little or no understanding of the gospel, including Bible translation if needed), a strong and ongoing gospel witness, and a teaching ministry for the effective building up of a body of believers. Although many servants aid in a ministry of this nature, the primary means God uses to bring a church about is a resident pastor/teacher and qualified elders.
2. **LEADERSHIP TRAINING.** Churches cannot be planted unless there are pastor-teachers and elders to plant and grow them. Therefore, training men to be those who can handle God’s Word effectively as they lovingly shepherd God’s sheep is essential to missions. Involvement in leadership training includes training pastors at home to be sent out to plant churches as well as sending out teachers with the specific goal of training nationals for the work of the ministry.
3. **STRENGTHENING EXISTING CHURCHES.** Strengthening ministries are those involved with equipping and building up existing local, indigenous churches so that they are able to evangelize and reproduce churches among their own people in an effective way. Efforts to strengthen local churches may include such activities as shepherding, preaching, teaching, discipleship, and partnering with Christian nationals in evangelism and outreach ministries.
4. **SUPPORT MINISTRIES.** Support ministries provide various support services to aid those engaged in church planting and equipping ministries. Support ministries may include such activities as women discipling other women and children, administration, medical work, aviation, and other services.

D. DEVELOP A BIBLICALLY-MOTIVATED COMMITMENT TO MISSIONS

It is essential that the leadership of the church instill in God's people a biblically-informed vision and contagious passion for world missions which includes global church planting and strengthening, as well as training and equipping for national pastors/shepherds/leaders. God's priority and passion to gather an innumerable host of worshippers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Revelation 5:9, 7:9-12) into local assemblies (Acts 14:21-23) to be shepherded and taught (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-16) must be clearly communicated as the visible priority and passion of the church leadership.

Practically speaking, educating and energizing the congregation can be accomplished 1) by periodically preaching on biblical missions; (2) by periodically offering classes on missions; (3) by hosting missions conferences (at least once a year); 4) through regular short-term missions trips to encourage, support and serve the church's missionaries as well as to promote interest and raise awareness; 5) through ongoing prayer support as needs are communicated by the church leadership; 6) by providing frequent missionary updates and reports; 7) by investigating and publicizing field needs, and 8) by hosting missionaries while stateside.

E. CULTIVATE A BIBLICALLY-INFORMED HEART FOR THE LOST

With an aim to magnify God through obedience to the Great Commission, the church must strive to cultivate a deep-seated compassion for the lost. We must cultivate God's heart for the lost, as manifested by God's desire that none should perish (Ezekiel 33:11), the Father's joy at the repentance of a sinner (Luke 15:20) and in Jesus' earthly ministry (Matthew 9:36; 23:37; Mark 10:21). In addition, the sober reality of eternal, conscious suffering for all those not converted to Christ must inform our view of the lost (Isaiah 66:24; Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:42-48; Revelation 14:11). Thus, there is the utmost urgency in missions to pattern our passion for lost souls after our Father's and to view them through the lens of the eternity that awaits them apart from Christ.

F. IDENTIFY AND PURSUE POTENTIAL MISSIONARY CANDIDATES

It is the responsibility of the local church to not only pray for God to raise up workers (Matthew 9:35-38) but also to identify those whom God is raising up in the congregation (Acts 13:1ff). This is done through: 1) character (the Spirit's work in producing a life of holiness in the potential candidate— 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 2 Timothy 2:21; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3); 2) call (evident giftedness and desire— 1 Timothy 3:1-2; 1 Peter 4:10-11); 3) competence (the candidate will be encouraged to pursue proper biblical, theological, and pastoral training — 2 Timothy 2:2, 15; Titus. 1:9); 4) creed (the candidate will clearly demonstrate faithfulness in both doctrine and practice — 1 Timothy 4:16); and 5) confirmation (the church leadership, along with the congregation, will affirm the candidate—Acts 13:3; cf. 6:6).

There are a number of practical ways to help identify and promote missionary candidates in the local church, such as 1) congregational prayer for God to raise up workers (Matthew 9:36-38); 2) promotion of biblical missions; 3) involvement of potential candidates in local evangelistic outreaches; and 4) involvement of potential candidates in visits to the mission field (short-term mission trips).

G. EVALUATE, TEST, AND TRAIN MISSIONARY CANDIDATES

The priority of the local church should be on training men for church planting ministry, as this is clearly the biblical priority and emphasis (Acts 13:1-4; 14:21-23; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). This doesn't mean, however, that women have no role to play in missions. Women are equal with men in dignity and worth (Genesis 1:27; 1 Peter 3:7). They are, however, different in function and role. Women are not to have authority over men or to occupy a position of leadership in the church (1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-15). They do however play an important role in support ministry (evangelism, ministry to women and children, ministry to their husbands, etc.) (John 4:39; Titus 2:3-5; Genesis 2:18).

According to 2 Timothy 2:2, it is the role and responsibility of the pastoral leadership of every local church to reduplicate itself. In other words, leadership training and development are biblical mandates, not options (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). Therefore, the leadership is called not only to identify men in the church who are "faithful" (character) and "able to teach others" (gifted) (2 Timothy 2:2), but also willing to spend themselves, as leaders, in this great and glorious task of evaluating (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9), testing (1 Timothy 3:10) and training (2 Timothy 2:2) others for full-time pastoral ministry work on the mission field.

Once the leadership of the church has identified those men whom God is raising up (clear demonstration of character, giftedness, and faithfulness in serving the local body), those men should be evaluated, tested, and trained for ministry.

We strongly desire and recommend that all candidates for Northwest missions support complete proper biblical, theological, and pastoral training. In addition, the missionaries will also need to undergo intensive language and cross-cultural training so that they are properly equipped to enter the field.

H. SEND, SUPPORT, AND SUSTAIN EXISTING MISSIONARIES

It is the responsibility of the local church not only to test and train men for international ministry, but also to send, support, sustain, nurture, and care for them while they are on the field. Every missionary supported by the local church is considered to be an integral part of the extended church family; and thus it is both the privilege and responsibility of the local church to meet the financial (1 Corinthians 9:1-18; Galatians 6:6; Philippians 1:5; 4:15-20; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 3 John 5-8), physical (Matthew 10:5-10; Luke 8:1-3; Romans 12:10-13; 15:24; 2 Corinthians 1:15-16; 2 Corinthians 8-9), spiritual (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 13:17), prayer (Matthew 9:36-38, Romans 10:14-17, 15:31-33; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:18-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2; Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:2), and training needs of each individual missionary (2 Timothy 2:2).

In an effort to faithfully shepherd and care for our missionaries on the field, we emphasize quality of relationship rather than quantity. Therefore, the financial support of the church will be directed to a concentration of missionaries who are truly gifted, called, and qualified to effectively carry out the work in a biblical and God-honoring way. This enables us 1) to more effectively shepherd each missionary; 2) to be more intimately involved in their ministry work through continual prayer, regular correspondence, and periodic field visits; and 3) to provide a level of ongoing training and encouragement through the sending of resources (books and articles), counseling, teaching seminars on the field.

PART III: POLICY

A. PURPOSES FOR THIS POLICY

The purposes for this missions policy are as follows:

1. To help achieve a clear sense of direction.
2. To avoid making important decisions on an emotional or haphazard basis.
3. To insure that each missions dollar is spent in accordance with biblical principles.
4. To establish the membership and responsibilities of the Missions Support Team.
5. To bring new Missions Support Team members up to date quickly, allowing them to familiarize themselves with the issues to be faced and the general direction of our missions ministry.
6. To maintain consistency as Missions Support Team members change.
7. To develop a loving accountability in our missions ministry.
8. To work in harmony with the church-wide leadership.

B. CHANGES TO THIS POLICY

1. Exceptions - It is intended that this policy shall govern the practice of the Missions Support Team. Should it be necessary, exceptions may be made to this policy if approved by the Board of Elders.

C. THE MISSIONS SUPPORT TEAM

1. Purpose of the Missions Support Team - This team exists to provide care for the Northwest missionaries, communicate regularly with our Northwest missionaries, and alleviate some of the logistical responsibilities of the Northwest missions ministry from the Elders (Acts 6:3-4).

2. Becoming a member of the Missions Support Team - This team will consist of individuals or couples who are members of Northwest and who have demonstrated a love for the local church's fulfilling of the Great Commission. Whether the process is initiated by the individual, the existing team, or the Elders, the following steps will be taken:

Submission of Letter from Candidate

Candidates for the Missions Support Team will submit a letter to the existing team indicating briefly his/her background and those particular strengths and skills which he/she may bring to the team.

Interview by Team

The Missions Support Team shall discuss with the candidate the requirements and expectations of team membership in the terms elsewhere outlined. When the interview is concluded, he/she will be presented to the Board of Elders for approval.

Approval by the Board of Elders

The Board of Elders must approve all candidates for the Missions Support Team.

3. Qualifications for Missions Support Team Members
 - a. Evidence a commitment to missions as a primary function of the local church.
 - b. Have experience or knowledge of Northwest's understanding and philosophy of missions. This requirement may be fulfilled by reading Dr. David Doran's *For the Sake of His Name* or listening to the Northwest Missions Conference 2017 messages (online).
 - c. Study and develop a working familiarity with the Northwest Missions Policy.
 - d. Be one whose life is characterized by holiness (1 Tim. 3:8-13, Titus 2:1-8).
 - e. Be a member of Northwest in good standing for at least one year and consistent in church participation.
 - f. Become acquainted with Northwest missionaries and their ministries and maintain regular correspondence.
 - g. Pray for Northwest-supported missionaries on a regular basis.

4. Missions Support Team Meetings - The Missions Support Team should meet at least once quarterly, or at other times for special meetings as determined necessary. Communication between the team members and Northwest missionaries should be much more frequent.

5. Responsibilities of Missions Support Team Members
 - a. Faithful attendance at team meetings.
 - b. Accept and discharge assigned responsibilities of the Missions Support Team and regularly communicate with the assigned Elder(s).
 - c. Maintain an active interest in missions and specifically in the missionaries of Northwest. This, of course, includes prayer support, and loving and helpful concern.
 - d. Promote and be a source of information concerning missions to the church family.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MISSIONS SUPPORT TEAM

1. Missions Prayer - The Missions Support Team will help to develop a congregational familiarity with Northwest missionaries, as well as a burden to pray for them. This would involve an awareness of missionary prayer requests (including both financial and spiritual needs) and recommending their communication from the pulpit, in Sunday School classes, and through special emphasis at other church functions.

2. Missions Care
 - a. Seek the spiritual, emotional, and material welfare of the missionaries Northwest supports.
 - b. Provide for regular exchange of information between them and the church, and reassure them of the interest and prayerful support of the church.
 - c. Participate in planning/leadership of Missions events and publications (e.g., missionary profiles, conferences, email updates, etc.).
 - d. Conduct an annual review of the support status of each supported missionary.

E. FINANCIAL POLICY

1. The Missions Budget - The annual missions budget is set and approved by the Board of Elders.
2. Contributions to Missions - Biblical giving and the tax deductibility of contributions to missionaries and mission agencies is directly affected by the following considerations:
 - a. Designated Giving - Since Northwest operates on a unified budget, members are encouraged to give directly to the operating budget of the church, from which missionary support is allocated.
 - b. Transmission of Gifts - Gifts designated for specific missionaries, short-term trips, projects, or mission agencies may not be channeled through the Northwest accounting department for transmission to the designee. Donors are encouraged to forward such gifts directly to the missionary or to the mission agency concerned, where their tax-deductible eligibility will be determined.
 - c. Approved Designations - Designated gifts for special one-time projects or appeals must be approved and announced by the Board of Elders. These offerings shall be regarded as over and above the regular missions budget.
 - d. Recognized Ministries or Groups in the Church (i.e., VBS, etc.) - These groups shall be free to raise designated offerings for special projects or special one-time gifts to approved missionaries. Such funding shall be considered as over and above the annual missions budget. These groups may not assume recurring support commitments to individuals or projects. All contributions made by Northwest groups shall be subject to the guidelines and criteria of the Northwest missions policy. In each instance, the Missions Support Team shall be informed of the project and the Elders must give their approval.
3. Bequests - Bequests specifically designated for missions, for the support of Northwest missionaries, or for approved mission projects, shall be honored so long as they are in keeping with this policy.
4. Disbursements - All missionary support and grants to boards, ministries, and projects shall be made from the missions budget.
5. Fiscal Year - The fiscal year is from July 1-June 30.
6. Funding Shortfall - In the event that budgetary shortfalls affect current support and project commitments, the following procedure shall apply:
 - a. Budgetary commitments classified as projects or those subject to annual review shall first be examined and should absorb the majority of the initial reductions.
 - b. Budgetary commitments involving institutions and non-personal commitments should be examined and appropriately reduced or dropped.

- c. Individual missionaries or agencies would be evaluated as to which of them are least essential in the proclamation of the gospel, or as being non-proportionate in respect to other support levels and appropriate measures taken.
 - d. Upon completion of the above steps, all remaining support commitments would be reduced proportionately as may be necessary.
7. Funding Surplus - Any residual surplus of funds at the end of the church fiscal year may be allocated by the Board of Elders. Input may be sought by the Elders from the Missions Support Team.
8. Prioritization of Support Levels - Financial prioritization is based on the biblical objectives with a high priority given to the spread of the gospel where it is less well known (explained in Part II). Support levels will be prioritized according to the following four categories.
- a. Ministry Assignment
 - 1) Church planting
 - 2) Leadership training
 - 3) Church strengthening
 - 4) Support roles (directly tied to 1-3)
 - b. Their level of training and/or preparation for their intended role
 - c. Church Involvement
 - 1) Northwest member actively serving in a leadership capacity
 - 2) Northwest member actively serving
 - 3) Non-Northwest church member actively serving in a leadership capacity in a like-minded church
 - 4) Non-Northwest church member actively serving in a like-minded church.
 - d. Great Commission Priority
 - 1) Unengaged fields (where there are not any missionaries at work)
 - 2) Unreached fields (some level of missionary involvement exists, but a church has not been established)
 - 3) Weak church (a church exists, but needs outside assistance to grow strong)
 - 4) Strong church (a church is established, growing and healthy)

It is also our desire to emphasize quality of relationship over quantity. Therefore, financial support will be directed to a concentration of missionaries at a higher percentage of the missionaries overall support.

9. Gap Between Appointment and Arrival - The time between a worker's appointment and his arrival on the field should not exceed a period of two years, excluding any pre-field education, internship assignments, or extenuating circumstances. Northwest will reevaluate its commitment at the end of the first year of the missionary's deputation, and reserves the right to terminate the commitment of support for a missionary who fails to evidence satisfactory progress in discovering support sources or who otherwise fails to demonstrate initiative and industry in their deputation.

10. Support Details - Initial payment of the support allotment shall be decided by the Elders. Normally support will begin upon departure for the field or for pre-assignment training. Payments are normally made every month by check, directly to the mission agency under which the missionary is assigned.
11. Suspension and/or Termination of Financial Support - Northwest support may be suspended and/or terminated in the event that a missionary:
 - a. Deviates from the Northwest doctrinal position, ministry philosophy, and/or missions policy.
 - b. Is reported by a local church or his mission agency as subject of a discipline or performance problem.
 - c. Is culpable of specific incompetence, misconduct, or persistent behavior unbecoming to a believer, reasonable and convincing evidence of such having been established.
 - d. Resigns from his agency.
 - e. Is receiving full support from other sources.
 - f. Changes agency assignment or affiliation without prior communication with Northwest and approval of the Elders.
 - g. Assumes employment during furlough (or at other times) that significantly hinders missionary activities.
 - h. Enters an educational program which has not been discussed with and approved by the Elders or otherwise interrupts ministry activity for other than normal vacation, furlough, or board-mandated assignments.
 - i. Consistently fails to submit quarterly newsletters or reports to Northwest, or otherwise fails to fulfill responsibilities to Northwest as outlined in this policy.

In the case of temporary support suspension, request for reinstatement will be carefully and prayerfully considered by the Elders.

12. Furlough Support - Furlough support will be continued during the regular furlough period. In the event that furlough is extended beyond the established period, the Elders will review the circumstances and shall determine how long Northwest support shall continue.
13. Retirement Support - It is expected that approved mission boards and agencies have retirement programs in place for career workers and that a percentage of support funds will be designated for retirement, so Northwest will not provide support after retirement.
14. Honorariums for Visiting Missionary Speakers
 - a. Honorariums for visiting missionary speakers should be handled through the regular church budget, based upon church policy regarding visiting speakers.
 - b. Appeals for funds by missionary speakers may be made only upon recommendation by the Board of Elders, and may be in the form of a special offering at the time the missionary speaks.
15. Support Year - The support year of Northwest Community Church shall correspond with the church fiscal year.

F. MISSIONARY CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

These considerations form the basis for evaluating the suitability of candidates for support:

1. Character and Giftedness
 - a. Manifest the character qualities of a shepherd as listed in 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; and 1 Peter 5.
 - b. A demonstrated ability to clearly articulate the full biblical gospel.
 - c. Competence in rightly handling the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15).
 - d. See under Biblical Objectives, "Identify and Pursue Potential Missionary Candidates" and "Evaluate, Test, and Train Potential Missionary Candidates" for additional qualifications.
2. Doctrine and Philosophy of Ministry - The candidate (both husband and wife, in the case of married couples) must give satisfactory evidence of being in complete "agreement" with the doctrinal statement of Northwest and the Philosophy of Ministry as described in this Missions Policy, and shall sign the agreement form to this effect.
3. Education and Training - As stated in our Biblical Objectives we strongly desire and recommend that all Northwest missionaries complete appropriate training for their field of ministry, which may include biblical, theological, and pastoral training. In addition, missionaries may also need to undergo appropriate language and cross-cultural training to be properly equipped to enter their field of ministry.
4. Missionary's Relationship to Northwest
 - a. Accountability - We regard our missionaries as an extension of our ministry staff. We, therefore, expect them to meet the same character and performance standards expected of our resident pastoral staff, with similar accountability, and in keeping with their level of responsibility. This would include but not limited to 1) regular communication, 2) submit annual report, and 3) advance notice and consultation for any significant ministry changes.
 - b. Shepherding and Encouragement - As stated earlier in this policy, it is the desire of Northwest not only to train, send, and support our missionaries but also to sustain, nurture, and care for them while they are on the field. Our commitment is to be involved in the missionary's life and ministry through regular prayer, correspondence, and periodic field visits. Lastly, we will make every effort to bring our missionaries home on a rotating basis to attend our own Northwest scheduled conferences.
 - c. Selection of Mission Agency - New Northwest-member missionary candidates shall confer with the Elders prior to formal affiliation with a mission agency or acceptance of a field or ministry assignment. It is the desire of the Elders to work closely with member candidates both in the selection of an agency and in the decision respecting their ministry assignment. The Elders shall approve agencies and mission boards as meeting the standards defined in this policy.
 - d. Communication - As a condition of receiving support, all Northwest missionaries are expected to maintain regular correspondence with the Missions Support Team on at least a quarterly basis. Newsletters, prayer requests, progress reports, audio and video

briefings are encouraged and welcomed. At the end of each year a summary annual report should be submitted with an updated annual budget. Missionaries who fail to communicate satisfactorily are subject to support suspension or termination.

- e. Candidate Approval Process - To apply for support:
 - 1) Candidate must carefully read and agree with the Northwest missions policy.
 - 2) Candidate must contact the church office to schedule a meeting with an elder of Northwest.
 - 3) Candidate completes the Northwest application for missionary support.
 - 4) Application is reviewed by the Elders.
 - 5) Candidate is interviewed by the Elders with respect to his or her qualifications as outlined in this policy.
 - 6) The Elders will affirm/deny the candidates final approval.

G. SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

1. Definition of Short-Term Missions - Short-term missions are the sending of a believer or a group of believers to a local or global mission field to assist a church-approved missionary or indigenous church for a period of less than 2 years. Short-term trips should always be in association and agreement with a church-supported missionary or with an already-established indigenous church in order to ensure that there is a strategy for further discipleship of people who were the ministry focus of the trip.
2. Purpose of Short-Term Missions - Short-term missions can increase the effectiveness of a church's involvement on the mission field in several ways. Short-term missions can:
 - a. Raise interest and awareness, as well as energize and excite the local church in regards to missions.
 - b. Help both the local church leadership and potential missionary candidates assess their calling to full-time, career missionary service.
 - c. Provide an opportunity to shepherd, encourage, and support missionaries already on the field, as well as to further equip and train them for maximum ministry effectiveness.
 - d. Accomplish specific goals, tasks, and projects including preaching and teaching, pastoral leadership training and evangelism, work-related construction projects, and medical needs.
 - e. Help the local church gain a better understanding of the needs of missionaries (i.e., prayer, resources, training, construction, etc.).
 - f. Assist the indigenous local church (where it already exists) when individuals or teams are invited to help strengthen and train such a church.
3. Guidelines for Short-Term Mission Trips - Short-term missions trips must:
 - a. Be consistent with Northwest's stated goals and purposes as delineated in this missions policy and approved by the Elders.
 - b. Be led by a Northwest elder, staff member, or elder-approved lay leader, or another approved organization.
 - c. Be directly tied to a known, church-based ministry approved by the Elders of Northwest (preferably a Northwest-supported missionary).

- d. Be approved by the missionary to ensure that the trip will actually be a benefit and help to their ministry and not a burden or hindrance.
 - e. Be approved by the Elders of Northwest.
 - f. Ensure participants must meet the stated requirements of this policy (see below).
4. Requirements for all Short-Term Mission Trip Candidates - Short-term mission trip candidates must meet the following criteria:
- a. Have made a clear profession of faith in Jesus Christ and show evidence of the fruit of the Spirit.
 - b. An interest in missions.
 - c. A level of spiritual maturity appropriate for the needs of the trip.
 - d. An ability to clearly communicate the gospel.
 - e. Must be appropriately skilled for what they are sent to accomplish.
 - f. Make a commitment to the stated mission, purpose, and goal of the trip.
 - g. Must be a Northwest member. Non-members will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - h. Must fill out a short-term mission application and complete an interview with the trip leader.
 - i. Must be willing to submit to the authority of Scripture and the appointed leadership of the trip.
 - j. Must successfully complete the necessary pre-trip training and reading requirements, as established by the team leader.
 - k. Must raise and/or provide his/her own support for the trip, which may include an application to the Missions Support Team for a portion of the support.