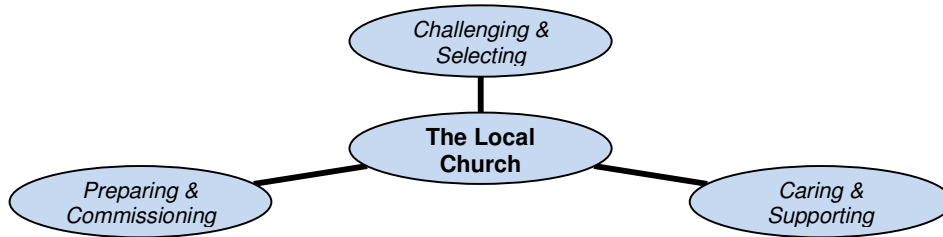




WORLD FOCUS TEAM

Assisting Local Churches and Christians in World Mission



Resource Paper 4

Examples of Local Church Cross-cultural Mission Policy Statements

As an aid to churches wishing to develop a policy for their mission involvement we append the cross-cultural mission policy statements of two UK Churches. The names of the two churches have been removed from the documents. However, we appreciate their willingness to share these statements in this way.

‘The smallest church has the power to make their influence felt around the world. No church is worthy of the name that does not put itself in sympathy with the magnificent breadth of the Great Commission and draw inspiration and zeal from its worldwide sweep’ (Andrew Murray)

The Cross-Cultural Mission Policy of XXX Church

This **policy statement** is an expression of the Church’s understanding of our part to play in cross-cultural mission based on our understanding of God’s missionary heart. In accordance with the church’s doctrinal basis, it outlines principles relating to cross-cultural mission and details the way in which these principles should impact our church. The church’s desire is that our life together would build up “world Christians” with a world view that is God centred and biblical, inspiring increased prayer, giving, sending and going, so that God would be glorified in the nations of his world.

Not every Christian is called to be an overseas missionary but every follower of Christ is called to be a world Christian. A world Christian is someone who is so gripped by the glory of God and the glory of his global purpose that he chooses to align himself with God’s mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2v14)

Throughout this document we have used the phrase “cross-cultural mission” rather than “world mission”. This is because, in the multi-cultural society in which we live, cross-cultural mission can occur on our doorstep and need not require travelling to another part of the world.

Mission -The Bible's Story:

The story throughout the Bible, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, is of God accomplishing his purposes to bring "a great multitude that no-one can count, from every nation, tribe, people and language" to stand before his throne in worship. In the Old Testament, God's covenant people were to minister to the nations by drawing nations to themselves through their godliness and distinctiveness. In the New Testament, God's covenant people, the church, are commissioned to complete God's mission by making disciples of all nations. In Acts 1v8, the model given to the early church for undertaking this mission, is one that addresses gospel needs at a local, national and international level.

One further aspect of mission, often particularly applicable in a cross-cultural context, is social involvement or "ministries of mercy." The case for the church's social involvement is rooted in the character of God, who upholds the cause of the oppressed, who provides for the poor and liberates the prisoner; he sustains the marginalized and the vulnerable. In many places the Old Testament commands social involvement by the people of God and the Jews were condemned for being indifferent to the plight of the poor and oppressed and not speaking out against injustice. In the New Testament these commands are reiterated and the principle that applies is that our attitude to the poor should reflect God's grace towards us. It is therefore our desire that we should engage with issues of social involvement, performing ministries of mercy, in line with biblical principles.

The Goal of Cross-Cultural Mission:

The primary goal of cross cultural mission is for God to be glorified amongst the nations of his world. We acknowledge that mission is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate not man. When this age is over, and countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

If the primary goal of cross-cultural mission is that people from all the nations of the world might come to glorify the Lord, there is another, secondary reason for engaging in cross-cultural mission. It is this: an appreciation of the way in which God is at work in other cultures fuels our understanding and appreciation of the character and activity of our God. The more we see of God's hand at work in different cultures, the more we will know and understand God's grace and majesty, recognising that his activity is not confined to people of one socio-economic or cultural group.

Cross-cultural mission should therefore impact the life of the whole of the local church not just of interested individual members of the church. Each member of each local church has a part to play in the total mission of the church worldwide. We are all caught up in God's missionary plan.

Cross-Cultural Mission:

Historically the church's heart for cross-cultural mission is expressed in many ways in the life of the church, following the example of Acts 1v8 through reaching out locally, nationally and internationally. Recently this has included the following:

- sending of missionaries overseas
- supporting people on short term mission
- financial and prayer support to other missionaries known to the church
- financial and prayer support to national cross-cultural mission
- ministry to internationals in the community initiatives

In order to be a church that increasingly builds up and cultivates world Christians to engage in cross-cultural mission, the following principles should increasingly characterise our life together:

- Cross-cultural mission and an understanding of God's missionary heart must be embedded within the life and character of the church and should be expressed in many different aspects of church life

including our corporate worship, small groups and youth work.

- The church should increasingly understand God's Word and the responsibility it places on us to be world Christians, engaged in cross-cultural mission through prayer, giving, sending and/or going, so that we might see more from amongst our midst being sent out to the mission field.
- The church should be proactive in identifying, assessing and nurturing individuals who may be called to full-time cross-cultural mission work.
- We should be people who are informed, concerned and involved, at home and abroad, about social issues of poverty and injustice, and who demonstrate the heart and compassion of God through prayer, giving, action and speaking out.
- The church must be active in supporting the missionaries that we know – through pastoral support, prayer, giving, and communication.
- The prayer life of the church should be characterised by a concern for cross-cultural mission.
- The church should seek ways of undertaking cross-cultural mission locally.
- The church should provide prayer and financial support to those considering going on short term mission trips, as is detailed in church's short term mission policy.
- The church should remember and uphold the persecuted church around the world through practical support and prayer.
- The church should strive to include people from other cultures into the life of the church, learning from them and appreciating their gifts so that we might better reflect the universal church.

The Role of the Mission Core Team

The role of the Mission Core Team is to help encourage every member of the congregation to be a world Christian, in order that the church might display a world view that is God centred and biblical, inspiring increased prayer, giving, sending and going. Specifically this will involve the following responsibilities:

Profile of mission: raise the profile of cross-cultural mission in church life, through:

- Organising a programme of regular Sunday and Tuesday slots dedicated to cross-cultural mission
- Preparing regular articles for "In Touch" focused on cross-cultural mission
- Organising dedicated cross-cultural mission Sundays including booking a "mission" speaker.

Mission directory: Decide on which individuals and organisations should be included in the mission directory and ensure that the directory is maintained and updated. Also, raise the profile of the directory and promote its use in church life.

Resources for cross-cultural mission: Investigate resources tailored towards envisioning people for cross-cultural mission and make these resources available to departments in the church (for example, youth departments).

Short term mission: Support those going on short-term mission in the following ways:

Linking those going on short-term mission with a contact point in the church;

- Coordinating briefing and “debriefing” opportunities for those going on short-term mission in order to help process lessons learned
- Providing opportunities for those returning from short term mission to feedback to the whole church and to appropriate youth departments.

Supporting mission partners: liaise with the Elders and Diaconate to ensure that the church’s long-term mission partners are supported through:

- Regular prayer in church life;
- Regular contact whilst overseas;
- A pastoral visit every four-year term, where possible;
- Ensuring that a link-person in the church is nominated and maintained;
- Ensuring that the profile of mission partners is maintained in church services (e.g. through letters being read out, Skype calls, DVD etc).

Ministries of mercy: Develop and maintain the profile of international “ministries of mercy” that they might grow within the life of the church.

Prayer: generating opportunities within the life of the church to pray for the world church and for world situations.

Mission budget: allocate the mission budget and the Short Term Mission Fund, in consultation with the Ministry Team and Diaconate.

Membership of the Mission Core Team: Nominate individuals for membership of the Mission Core Team, for approval by the Elders.

The Mission Policy of YYY Church

Mission Objectives

Our mission is to cooperate in God’s purposes for changing people into mature followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that the whole world needs to hear the gospel and are, therefore, committed to supporting the mission of Christ locally, nationally and internationally. It is expected that church members will be energetic and active in their support of world mission. Awareness and support of mission will be encouraged across the spectrum of the church fellowship and include home groups, youth groups, Sunday School etc.

The ethos of our missions thinking is influenced by the following priorities:

- Our founding commission in the New Testament is to make disciples through teaching. (Matthew 28:19,20)
- Word-based gospel communication is of greater importance to us than social ministry (e.g. providing food, water, housing, work), if we *have* to choose
- Cross-cultural ministry is a critical need in today’s world, and this should be reflected in our missions budget
- Individuals raised and sent by the Church are a greater responsibility to us than organisations
- Short-term work is usually of greater benefit to the person being sent than to those to whom he/she goes. It is not to be confused with ‘mission’ therefore, and is better understood as offering exposure and a cultural experience upon which it is hoped the participant may build in the future

The **purpose of the Church's 'Mission Policy'** document is to:

- Clearly set out the Mission objectives of the Church
- State how the Church intends to fulfil these objectives
- Set out the roles, responsibilities and means of accountability for missionaries commissioned or supported by the Church, potential missionaries, the Mission Support Team, the elders and church members
- Set out the expectations missionaries may have of the church family.

It is hoped that the existence of this document will give clarity to all those involved in mission and avoid any unnecessary confusion. It should also assist in ensuring that individuals and situations are dealt with on a consistent basis.

For the avoidance of doubt, this document focuses on broader, external mission activity rather than that carried out locally under the direction of the church e.g. Sunday evangelistic events, youth programmes, Holiday Club etc.

We believe that in order to fulfil our mission of proclaiming the good news of Christ to the world we will be involved in supporting a number of activities, such as (but not necessarily limited to):

- Direct evangelism by individuals and organisations both overseas and in the UK
- Individuals commissioned and sent from the Church
- Individuals associated with the Church but commended from other churches
- Partnering with overseas churches
- Church planting
- Bible translation
- Relief/development work
- Short term mission assignments
- Longer term mission assignments

Missionaries / potential missionaries.

Any member of the church sensing a **call to mission** should share this with an elder or the Mission Support Team (MST) at an early stage. Elders may initiate discussions with a member they feel the Lord may be calling to mission. In due course such a calling will be made known to the wider church for prayer, encouragement and support.

An elder or member of the MST will discuss with the person whether suitable **training and pastoral care** are provided for. Pastoral care will remain our responsibility even if a mission agency is involved.

Any commissioned missionary is **accountable to the church** and comes under its biblical discipline, as do all members. Their role will be reviewed from time to time by the MST and elders and they are required to communicate regularly with the church especially prior to any change in role. If during training/mission service new needs come to light e.g. financial, practical etc. they should be communicated to the MST.

Prior to any period of **home leave** a commissioned missionary should initiate discussion with the MST regarding their plans which should include rest/relaxation, fellowship and reporting back to the church.

Non-Church missionaries

Those supported from our mission budget will be expected to provide regular updates/prayer letters. The elders may deem it appropriate to withdraw support, financial or otherwise if the role of the missionary changes or our funding requires reprioritising to support commissioned missionaries.

Mission Agencies.

Day-to-day responsibility for the missionary lies with their agency however the church retains the main responsibility for the spiritual welfare of commissioned missionaries. In most situations we would expect an elder to visit the agency with the candidate prior to sending. It is expected that the agency will clearly detail emergency procedures, points of contact, line management structures etc..

In the case of missionary organisations supported by us the elders may deem it appropriate to withdraw support, financial or otherwise, if the aims, doctrinal position or role of the organisation change or funding requires re-prioritising to support commissioned missionaries.

Church's elders

The elders will formulate the scope of the church's mission policy in conjunction with the MST; will determine priority for the mission activity supported by the church; will provide support for those contemplating mission; will interview all individuals seeking support (apart from 'summer short-termers'); will have the final decision as to the church's endorsement/support or otherwise and will review the missionaries' work, monitoring any changes in its nature or circumstances.

MST link person.

The MST will provide an active link person between each individual that we support and our members and elders. S/he will forward prayer points, updates and concerns to the MST and elders; provide prayer letters to church members and information for prayer meetings etc; keep the missionary up to date with church activities and encourage others to communicate with the missionary.

Church members

Members should be actively involved in mission on a day-to-day basis. They are expected to pray regularly for world mission. The MST will arrange times for prayer for the effect of mission work, for new unreached areas and peoples, for our supported missionaries/organizations and for those considering mission work. They should support the priorities set by the elders by giving to the church's Mission Support Fund.

Financing of Mission.

Mission funds will be prioritised to those individuals/organizations which have been approved by the elders. Ministry trips to missionaries may be funded from the Mission Fund.

The MST will prepare an annual mission budget for approval by the elders. The MST can allocate sums of up to £500 from the budget without referring back to the elders for approval.

Where gifts are not designated to specific individuals/organizations they will be applied to budgeted needs but designated gifts will be considered over and above the amount specified in the budget. Where gifts are specified for an organization/individual not adopted by the church, the gift may be passed on or returned to the donor at the discretion of the Church and/or MST treasurers.

In order to help assess the validity of their call individuals entering mission service are encouraged to raise funds towards their support e.g. by employment, via friends etc. However, they would be advised to do this only after the endorsement of their mission plans by the church elders.

Short-term assignments.

We seek to encourage those who attend the church to be involved in mission projects that express our values and priorities, particularly our commitment to Word based and cross cultural mission. Consequently we encourage people to become involved in short-term assignments. While there may be some obvious benefits to a church member being sent and commissioned for a short-term trip, requests for funding will be scrutinised carefully, and early, to ensure the strategic use of our funds. We have developed extensive criteria to assess short-term proposals and a list of matters to be considered by prospective short-termers.

The Role of the Mission Support Team

The elders will make all appointments of personnel to the MST and one church elder will be a member. The elders will delegate the responsibility for the administration of the Mission Support Fund to the MST.

Expenditures outside the agreed budget require the approval of the elders.

The MST will usually meet monthly for prayer, review of commissioned/potential missionaries' situations and financial matters. Minutes of these meetings are regarded as confidential to MST members and the elders.

The MST are responsible to the elders for:

- Developing the scope of our **mission priorities and policy** in conjunction with the elders.
- Promoting better **biblical and theological understanding** of mission in the church.
- **Seeking out and encouraging** any whom the Lord might be calling into mission, and to consider, with the elders, their development of gifts or their need for further training.
- Providing **support for commissioned missionaries**, identifying and seeking to meet spiritual, prayer, fellowship, practical and financial needs. Where necessary, they will seek to provide support (prayer, pastoral, practical etc.) to parents, children, etc. of commissioned missionaries.
- **Gathering news** and needs of missionaries/mission organisations and feeding in mission prayer requests to the church and to prayer groups.
- Assisting the missionary in **preparing for home assignment**, where relevant, and considering what practical help may be necessary in respect of housing, schooling, transport, etc.
- **Developing and managing the Mission Support Fund** budget as agreed by the elders.
- Organising **annual reviews of missionaries' work** to provide accountability and evaluation for those receiving funds. Changes in direction or support-needs will be discussed with the elders.
