

BETHANY COMMUNITY CHURCH MISSIONS POLICY

Revision Date: November 2008

1. PURPOSE STATEMENTS

a. Mission

As a caring community we seek to challenge, equip, send and support short and long term cross-cultural missionaries to a hurting world.

b. Mandate

Bethany Community Church, in obedience to Jesus Christ, is committed to being a witness for God in the world and to building His church by worldwide evangelism, discipleship and multiplication of growing churches. We take seriously the commands of Christ to His followers:

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation”. – Mark 16:15a

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” – Matt 28:19

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” – Acts 1:8

We believe that salvation is through Christ and that man’s eternal destiny is determined by his response to Him. We believe that all nations and peoples should hear and be given the opportunity to respond to Christ’s love.

We see Niagara, Canada, the Americas and the World as our mission field.

c. Methods

It is our intention as a church to associate ourselves and partner with a number of individual missionaries and mission organizations in order to encourage maximum involvement with those whom we support. We seek to maintain a geographical balance and variety of ministry in the missionaries we support. Our emphasis is on evangelism and church planting. The primary thrust of the Missions Committee will be to promote world missions.

A major part of Bethany’s commitment is in the support of missions through prayer. We regularly pray for each person in our missions program and encourage daily and weekly prayer for them through services, activities and church publications.

d. Purpose of Missions Policy

- To guide the administration of the missions program
- To assist in achieving a clear sense of direction
- Assist in our church wide promotion of missions
- To inform missionaries and potential missionaries regarding involvement with Bethany.
- To make information available to new Missions Committee member and others actively involved in missions.

2. MISSIONS INVOLVEMENT

As a church we seek to provide opportunities for every person, youth and adult, to experience missions. Our hope is that these opportunities will help people to grow in their relationship with Christ and will encourage future missions awareness, involvement and support.

We divide missions into short term mission trips of three months or less and long term involvement for periods longer than three months. Consistent in these involvement periods are the following requirements:

- The candidate should be fifteen years old or older.
- If less than 18 years of age the candidate must have the support of parent(s).
- It is expected that the candidate has been regularly attending Bethany Community Church and is involved in an area of ministry,
- The candidate must be connected to one of Bethany partner missions agencies.

a. Short Term Trips of Three Month or Less

Bethany partners with a number of missions agencies to provide short term missions trips which will accomplish evangelism, children's ministry, construction and medical clinics. It is expected that any partner missions agency is a registered Canadian charity, has a doctrinal statement that we agree with and preferably is a member of the Canadian Council of Canadian Charities.

Bethany approves all short term missions trips, for which people expect Missions Committee support and advertising privileges. Requirements for approval are the following:

- A partner mission agency approved by Bethany must be sponsoring and controlling the missions trip
- There must be either a Bethany leader for the trip or a leader from the missions agency.
- The Missions Committee must agree with the purpose and goals of the trip.

Once approved the trip can be advertised through the Bethany communications methods, e-bulletin, missions kiosk, weekly bulletin, verbal announcement and

Rooftop. Fundraising plans must comply with the Fundraising Policy which includes approval by the Management Team.

Candidates are expected to make application and be approved by the partner agency. Any fundraising for the persons personal trip costs must be approved except for mailbox insertions of prayer leaders for friends and family only. Other fundraising plans must be approved as per the Fundraising Policy.

Short Term Mission teams will be commissioned by the church and de-briefed after the trip is completed. The purpose of the de-briefing is to determine what went right and what could be improved so that future teams will benefit. Teams are also expected to give trip presentations at mission celebration events.

b. Long Term Missions Involvement- Longer Than Three Months

We strongly support and seek to encourage those in Bethany Community Church who are seeking the Lord's will in their lives to consider missions as a vocation. As a member of Bethany, the prospective missionary must meet the following qualifications:

Requirements

- The candidate is a committed Christian with assurance of salvation.
- The candidate is personally interested in missions and has a biblical foundation for their call to missions.
- The candidate is growing spiritually and is effectively and actively involved in ministry at Bethany Community Church.
- The candidate is familiar with and agrees to work in unity with Bethany's doctrinal statement and purposes and is in submission to the church leadership.
- The candidate is open to counsel regarding their preparations and plans.

Bethany's Commitment to the Prospective Missionary

- To give the candidate counseling, encouragement and opportunities to minister in ways designed to strengthen their spiritual gifts.
- To pray with the candidate seeking God's will for their life.
- Upon acceptance by an approved Missions Agency the candidate will meet present their plans to the Missions Committee for acceptance and approval.
- Prior to leaving the accepted candidate will be commissioned by Bethany Community Church.
- To provide ongoing counseling, prayer and financial support as arranged.

Application Process

- It is recommended that a person considering long term missions meet with the Senior Pastor, a Pastor or a member of the Missions Committee for advice and direction.
- The candidate must seek acceptance from a Missions Agency approved by Bethany. Written evidence of this should be provided by the agency including a statement indicating the candidates proposed ministry and immediate plans.
- After acceptance is obtained from the Missions Agency, the candidate meets with the Missions Committee and presents their plans. The plans are to include:
 - Background and salvation experience.
 - Acceptance by approved Missions Agency.
 - Immediate plans prior to assignment.
 - Financial requirements.
 - The reasons for choosing missions, governing agency and ministry.
 - Formal education.
 - Abilities, spiritual gifts, interests.
 - Ministry experience and spiritual maturity.
 - Home and marital life.
- At the conclusion of the interview the Missions Committee will decide upon the suitability of the candidate and notify them as to their decision.

Financial Support

The following categories of missionaries have been established in order to determine the priority given to candidates when considering financial support requests.

Category 1 - Bethany Community Church members.

Category 2 – Individuals who have worshipped, had fellowship and actively participated in ministry at Bethany for a significant length of time (usually 2 years).

Category 3 – Missionary candidates approved by EMCC and/or World Partners.

Category 4 – All others.

The financial support of any missionary from the Bethany missions budget will be to a maximum of 50% of their total budget requirement. The Missions Committee will also provide guidance to the missionary regarding communicating their needs to Bethany adherents.

The financial support will be sent according to agreement with the Missions Agency. Support status will be reviewed formally as part of the annual church and missions budget process. After budget approval, missionaries will be notified in writing of their support status for the coming year by a representative of the Missions Committee.

Accepted missionaries should notify the Missions Committee in writing prior to making any change of Mission Agency since such a change could affect support status.

The expected ratio between length of personal time and service will be specified by the sending agency. It should be one month personal time for every year of service. If a missionary remains on furlough for longer than expected, continuance of support will be reviewed by the Missions Committee. Likewise, support during an educational leave which is longer than an expected furlough will be reviewed.

Communications

- Missionaries are expected to keep Bethany aware of ministry progress and needs on a regular basis through prayer letters and e-mail.
- Missionaries during furlough will give a personal report to the Missions Committee as early as possible. A report to the congregation may also be requested.
- Whenever possible, missionaries when home will be encouraged to take an active part in the ministry at Bethany Community Church.
- Missionaries will be expected to promote missions and unity within Bethany.

Retiring Missionaries

Support for missionaries who retire according to the policy of their Missions Agency may be continued to be supported for one year if necessary. In cases of continued need the circumstances will be reviewed annually. In some situations support at a reduced level may continue beyond one year.

3. Bethany Community Church MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Missions Committee is to challenge, equip, send and support short and long term cross-cultural missionaries. This committee shall seek to promote missions through:

- Sharing missions information with the congregation through the worship services, the missions kiosk, special missions events and written and e-bulletin information.
- Sharing about missions in youth and children's meetings.
- Reviewing potential missions candidates.
- Facilitating missionary reports, welcome homes and farewells.
- Communicating with the missionary.
- Promoting urban and student missions programs.
- Prepare annual missions budget.

The Missions Committee shall be made up of a chairperson, a secretary, a representative of the pastoral staff and at least five (5) members of the church. The personnel of this committee shall be reviewed annually. Members will be appointed by the pastoral staff representative and the chairperson, with input from the committee members.

The chairperson will be responsible for the following:

- Prepare agendas and preside over meetings – there should be at least six meetings per year.
- Cooperate with church staff and boards in developing, coordinating and administering the overall missions program.
- Facilitate the development of long-range missions programs goals and integrate these with the long-range plans of the church.
- Inform and involve Bethany people in missions gatherings and conferences.
- Submit an annual budget to the Executive Director of Administration.
- Be a contact person and representative for Bethany missions.

The secretary will prepare the minutes of each meeting and forward them to the committee members.

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