

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The church recognises that each member of the body of Christ is called to mission; to live for God wherever He has placed us. For most of us that will be a commitment to live and witness in our home community.

This policy sets out the mission principles and objectives of the church. It serves to guide the church in the recognition of those called by God into missionary service and to oversee the practical and prayer support of mission and missionaries. It seeks to define the relative roles and responsibilities of the church, the missionary and the mission organisation in the partnership of mission.

This policy shall be reviewed at least every five years by the office-bearers and amended if necessary. A copy of this policy shall be given to all church members.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**2.1. Mission.** As stated in the Great Commission which the Lord Jesus Christ gave to his church (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John. 20:21; Acts 1:7-8), mission refers primarily to being witnesses and includes the activities of evangelism, church planting, teaching, discipling and caring.

**2.2. Missionary.** For the purposes of this policy the term “missionary” (full time or part time) is broadly defined as a member of this church, called and gifted by the Holy Spirit, whose aim is to exercise his/her gifts through a church or mission organisation to facilitate the fulfilment of the Great Commission, having had that call accepted and confirmed by the church. Under this definition missionaries may be: directly involved in evangelism, church planting, teaching and discipling, using gifts of administration, medical, agricultural or other academic or practical ability.

**2.3. Baptist Missions.** This is the missionary arm of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland which facilitates mission work carried out under the auspices of the Churches.

**2.4. Missionary Organisations/Societies/Agencies.** For the purpose of this document these are the mission organisations with whom our church missionaries are serving. The promotion of other evangelical mission organisations within the church shall be at the discretion of the Elders.

**2.5. Tent making.** For the purposes of this policy tent makers are defined as those called by God to live and work:

- Either in “secular” employment in other locations with the specific aim of being witnesses to Jesus Christ and/or supporting a local church while remaining a member of Windsor Baptist Church.
- Or in the special category of those serving as professionals in nations where missionaries are not granted permission to work directly in Christian ministry (sometimes referred to as Creative Access Nations).

## 3. AIMS

### 3.1. Education

- To stimulate interest in mission in the light of the Great Commission by presenting the challenge and needs of world mission as an integral part of the church’s programme.
- To encourage all to be active in mission – in regular prayer, financial support and direct involvement.

### 3.2. Personnel

- To identify those called and gifted for mission at home or abroad.
- To offer opportunities to explore God’s call on their lives.
- To offer advice prior to and during training and throughout the period of missionary service.

### 3.3. Support

- To support those called into missionary service through counselling, pastoral care, prayer and finance.

## 4. MISSIONARY CANDIDATES

**4.1. General.** The procedures set out below shall normally be followed for the recognition, counselling, guidance and training of missionary candidates. Before going through these formal procedures, potential candidates shall normally have been members of the church for at least two years and have been actively involved in the life and work of the church. These procedures may also be applied, at the discretion of the office-bearers, to new church members already serving as missionaries or undergoing training for mission.

**4.2. Applications.** Potential candidates should indicate their interest in mission to the Elders as early as possible, unless the initial approach has originated with the Elders.

**4.3. Interviews.** The candidate shall then be interviewed by the Elders for the purpose of enquiring into spiritual issues, to hear details concerning the applicant's call and to assess general suitability for mission. Where the Elders recognise a potential call they will refer the candidate to the Missionary Committee. The Missionary Committee will interview the candidate to discuss details of training, placement and support.

**4.4. Acceptance.** After these interviews the Elders and the Missionary Committee will report to the office-bearers who shall decide whether to recommend the candidate for approval at a church meeting. The approval of a candidate for mission service or training or a new church member already serving in mission must be confirmed at a church meeting. Financial support by the church shall be subject to such confirmation and, in the case of a new church member already serving as a missionary, shall normally only be considered after a period of two years in membership at Windsor.

**4.5. Training.** For details of policy in relation to training see section 13

## 5. MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

**5.1. Structure.** The committee shall consist of at least one elder, the church treasurer, and at least six other members. One of these will be appointed, by the Elders, as chairman. A recommendation may be made by the Missionary Committee. Before consideration for chairmanship the person would normally have served on the Missionary Committee for 2 years. The chairmanship will be reviewed by the Elders after 3 years and can be renewed for a further 3 years. The appointment of church members to the committee shall be by the church, on the recommendation of the office-bearers. Such appointments shall be for a period of five years and members shall be eligible for re-appointment after this period. The committee shall have the authority to co-opt, for a limited period, as and when required, other church members whose experience would be of benefit for specific tasks.

**5.2. Objectives.** Recognising the church's responsibility to fulfil the Great Commission, the objectives of the committee shall be:

- To maintain regular contact with our missionaries and their organisations.
- To encourage effective financial, prayer and practical support, fellowship and pastoral care of our church missionaries.
- To encourage and support the work of other mission organisations as directed by the church Elders with a particular emphasis being placed on Baptist Missions.
- To encourage, by instruction and example, a continuing and increasing interest in mission through the various church meetings and in liaison with the existing church organisations.
- To organise an annual event focused on mission.
- To support church members who meet in smaller groups to pray for our missionaries on a regular basis.
- To initiate a regular review of mission activity including an annual report presented to the church.

### 5.3. Roles

**5.3.1 Stimulation of Missionary Interest.** The committee shall:

- Have responsibility for co-ordinating the setting up and regular updating of the church missionary information boards and the missionary section of the church website.

- Have responsibility for our church missionary family - maintaining regular contact with the missionaries and liaising with the prayer letter co-ordinator and distributor for each person or family.
- Have the responsibility for the promotion of prayer for Baptist Missions.
- Promote the availability of missionary literature.
- Maintain contact with those engaged in tent making ministries through correspondence and prayer.

Committee members shall assist:

- In regular prayer/news items at Sunday services and midweek prayer meetings.
- In the organisation of farewell and welcome meetings.
- In the organisation of an annual event to focus on mission.
- In the organisation of the home visits of our missionaries.

**5.3.2 Finance.** The committee shall:

- Liaise with the church missionaries and missionary organisations regarding their financial position to determine the needs of our missionaries. Any matter of concern shall be communicated to the Elders.
- Advise and make recommendations to the office-bearers regarding other expenses as appropriate.

**5.3.3 Missionary Candidates.** The committee shall assist:

- In the application process on the request of the Elders or officebearers.
- In seeking and receiving periodic progress reports from all candidates in training and from their training organisations.

**5.3.4 Pastoral Care.** The committee shall:

- Maintain regular contact with all our church missionaries, whether in training, in service or on leave, through sending and initiating the sending of letters, tapes, gift parcels etc.
- Encourage pastoral visits to our missionaries while in service.
- Welcome missionaries on leave into the fellowship and arrange opportunities to speak and report on their service.
- Be responsible for ensuring that reasonable educational welfare and pastoral care of our missionaries' families are in place.
- Ensure that care of missionary personnel does not stop on retirement.

**6. PRAYER SUPPORT** As up-to-date information is essential for informed prayer all our missionary personnel and those in training will be expected to co-operate in the regular supply of such information and news by email, prayer letters, tapes etc.

**6.1. Regular information for prayer** will be provided as follows:

- Regular prayer letters available in either electronic or printed format
- Regular updates of prayer news and information posted on the church notice boards
- Specific prayer requests during the Sunday services, midweek prayer meetings and other church activities
- Regular reports and visits from missionaries on home assignment
- Distribution and use of literature from missionary organisations associated with our church missionaries, Baptist Missions and other evangelical mission organisations chosen at the discretion of the Elders
- Regular and consistent prayer for our church missionaries will be stressed in interviews with those applying for church membership

**6.2. Opportunities for prayer.** Regular prayer for our church missionaries and their associated organisations, Baptist Missions and other evangelical organisations chosen at the discretion of the Elders will be arranged at:

- The church prayer meetings
- Fellowship groups
- Sunday services.

## 7. FINANCE

**7.1. Level of Support.** Financial support will begin at the time of need as determined by the office-bearers and the level of that support for the church missionaries shall be based on an annual unitary allowance which shall be supplemented, if necessary, by an additional special allowance.

**7.2. Unitary Allowance.** The value of the unit will be assessed on an annual basis as part of the church budget. Allowances shall be allocated on the following basis:

	UNITS
Married couple (both in membership and serving as missionaries)	5
Married couple (one in membership or only one serving as a missionary)	3
Plus a further allowance based on the commitment of the partner's church, where both are serving as missionaries, up to a maximum of	2
Single person	3
Each child (until leaving full time education)	1

**7.3. Additional Allowances.** Any shortfall in the estimated needs of missionaries will be assessed by the Missionary Committee who shall liaise with the appropriate missionary societies regarding the financial needs of the missionaries. After consultation with the office-bearers payment may be made from the emergency fund as agreed in the church budget.

**7.4. Tent Makers.** Normally tent makers in salaried employment will not be supported under the financial terms set out in this policy. This does not preclude financial help as appropriate in individual cases.

**7.5. Part-time Missionaries.** The financial needs of part-time missionaries shall be assessed on an individual basis by the Missionary Committee and a recommendation sent to the office-bearers. Payment may be made on the approval of the church.

**7.6. Baptist Missions.** Financial support for Baptist Missions shall be determined annually as part of the church's commitment to the ABC in Ireland.

**7.7. Other Societies.** Support for other missionary societies shall consist of offerings received and/or gifts from church funds as determined by the office-bearers.

**7.8. Other Expenses** Funds shall be made available from the church budget as required to meet the following costs:

- Publicity, including distribution of missionary prayer letters
- Speakers' expenses
- Costs relating to missionary events
- Christmas gifts and cards for missionaries and their families
- Welcome gifts to missionaries on arrival for home assignment
- Expenses for pastoral visits as agreed by the office-bearers.

**7.9. Pensions.** The Missionary Committee shall consult with the mission organisation and the missionary to ensure that National Insurance and state pension provision is in place. Missionaries will be encouraged to seek independent financial advice regarding private pension provision.

## 8. CARE OF OUR MISSIONARIES.

**8.1.** All church members are encouraged to maintain frequent contact with all our church missionaries, whether in training, in service or on leave, through sending and initiating the sending of emails, letters, tapes, gift parcels etc.

**8.2.** While on leave the missionaries will be welcomed into the fellowship with opportunities given to speak and report on their ministry. Every effort will also be made, in close liaison with the mission organisation involved, to ensure that the missionary's rest period is assured and guarded.

**8.3.** The church in consultation with the mission organisation will seek to ensure reasonable educational, welfare and pastoral care of our missionaries' families.

**8.4.** Care of missionary personnel will continue beyond their term of missionary service.

**8.5. Home Assignment.** During home assignment the church will take account of our missionaries' needs by

- Providing opportunities in public and private sessions to report on their work and experiences.
- Assisting as appropriate in the practical arrangements in relation to accommodation, transport and children's education.
- Encouraging church members to extend friendship and hospitality to missionaries.
- Involving missionaries in service opportunities in the life of the church.

## **9. SHORT-TERM MISSION WORK**

This should be for a period not exceeding 3 months and in partnership with a missionary organisation. Short term service exceeding this period will normally be considered under the procedures set out in section 4.

- 9.1.** Those in the church wishing to participate in short-term missionary work, either overseas or at home, should first seek the advice of the church Elders. Persons under the age of 18 years shall normally have parental approval.
- 9.2.** The committee will also be available to provide appropriate literature regarding suitable opportunities for such outreach.
- 9.3.** At the discretion of the office-bearers a contribution may be granted towards the costs of the worker. The office-bearers shall take into consideration the person's involvement in the life of the church and their interest in mission.

## **10. INTERCHURCH CO-OPERATION IN MISSION**

**10.1. Introduction.** In certain circumstances this church may wish to support a missionary under joint agreement with another church, e.g. if another church's missionary wishes to work in our immediate area, or if our missionary wishes to work in the locality of another church.

### **10.2. Procedure**

- If such co-operation is initiated by this church the Elders shall have responsibility for contacting the Elders/office-bearers of the other church.
- If such co-operation is initiated by another church/missionary, enquiries shall be directed to our Elders.
- The Elders shall present any necessary proposals to the church for approval. Following Windsor's endorsement of these proposals contact with the co-operating church will be progressed by the Elders.
- When co-operation in mission is undertaken the Elders and the committee shall ensure that the principles of this policy are not compromised by such an agreement.

## **11. COMPLETION OF MISSIONARY SERVICE.**

When a missionary completes their service whether on retirement, moving on to employment or awaiting further guidance for future service, their integration into home, family and church life will be a major readjustment physically, emotionally, spiritually and financially. The Elders, Missionary Committee and church family in conjunction with the mission organisation will need to be involved in making this transition as smooth as possible. Financial support under the terms of the missionary policy will continue for up to 3 months.

**11.1. Retirement.** When a missionary retires from full-time missionary service their various needs will be assessed by the Missionary Committee and reported to the office-bearers for consideration.

**11.2. Awaiting employment.** Discussion with the Elders and Missionary Committee will take place to assess needs and help required.

**11.3. Awaiting further guidance for future service.** Ongoing consultations with the Elders and Missionary Committee will explore future direction – either in further training or service in line with the recommendations set out in this policy.

**12. RESIGNATION FROM WINDSOR BAPTIST CHURCH.** When a single missionary or missionary family resigns from the church and continues in their existing ministry the Elders may at their discretion:

- Discuss the transfer with the new church and the possible support the new church may be able to offer
- Suggest that the missionary/family may continue to receive support from Windsor Baptist Church for up to a year - the upper limit of such support will normally be set at 50% of the amount due to members

### **13. GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS IN TRAINING.**

#### **13.1. Introduction**

The procedures set out below shall normally be followed for the counselling and guidance of those entering training for Christian ministry whether as missionary candidates or candidates for pastoral ministry. Before going through these formal procedures members who are potential candidates shall normally have been actively involved in the life and work of the church for at least two years. Training may be understood as:

- Preparation at a mission training college or Bible college
- A period of practical or other Christian service in a Baptist church or other evangelical organisation
- Short term service overseas or at home, as preparation for long-term service.

#### **13.2. Procedures**

- Potential candidates shall indicate their interest in training to the Elders, unless the initial approach has originated with the Elders. The candidate shall then be interviewed by the Elders for the purpose of enquiring into spiritual issues, to hear details concerning the applicant's sense of call and to assess general suitability for training and ministry.
- The needs of students in training shall be assessed by the Missionary Committee on an individual basis and reported to the office-bearers. A recommendation on the level of financial support shall be brought to the church for endorsement at a church meeting.
- A proportion of the college fees of those in training may be paid by the Church but any such payments shall not exceed 2 units of support as set out in 7.2.
- The Missionary Committee shall seek periodic reports from all candidates under training and from their training organisations. Any matters of concern shall be communicated to the Elders.

### **14. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MISSIONARIES.**

To facilitate the implementation of this policy those requiring church support shall:

- be proactive in building a support base for prayer and finance.
- discuss with the appropriate government body their position regarding National Insurance and state pension provision and actively explore the possibility of joining a mission organisation pension scheme.
- invite a friend to act as prayer secretary to receive, duplicate and circulate letters
- Establish an email facility for sending news (if practicable)
- Communicate regularly with prayer letters for general circulation, prayer points for fellowship groups, the Missionary Committee or your designated contact on the committee
- Alert the Elders immediately when problems arise.