

GUIDE FOR LOCAL CHURCHES ON



Writing a Global Mission Policy



THE BIG IDEA

Every church has a policy on global and cross-cultural mission even if it isn't written down. Aspects of unwritten policies could include that the church doesn't support missionaryⁱ work; or sends a proportion of its finances to the denominational governing body for mission; or observes an annual "mission Sunday;" or the leadership makes a case by case decision when asked whether or not to support potential missionaries/projects.

However, decisions made on the spur of the moment or without consultation almost invariably turn out to be wrong. **Guidelines need to be worked out in an unpressured and unhurried manner**, so that all the ramifications can be considered.

While being open to direction from the Holy Spirit, God expects churches to operate/serve in a responsible way. In Acts 13, when the church at Antioch sent out Barnabas and Paul as missionaries, it wasn't done on the spur of the moment. Rather, it was after prayer, fasting and consultation that the Holy Spirit confirmed the Antioch church was to send them out to the work He had called them.

Advantages of a written policy:

- It **builds confidence and cohesion** in the total church ministry
- It **permits thoughtful evaluation** of crucial issues
- It prevents decisions based on personality or momentary whims
- It **prevents confusion**, inconsistency, misunderstanding and hurt
- It **defines the specific responsibilities** of the church, missionaries and mission agencies
- It **informs** the congregation know what the church leadership has in mind, which builds trust
- Everyone (church members and leaders, missionaries and agencies), knows ahead of time what to expect – **there are no sudden surprises**
- **Visitors and newcomers** can read the policy and follow it



TIPS & EXAMPLES

With the endorsement of the church leadership, ask a group of three or four people to identify the church's present mission policy, by design or by default (i.e. written and unwritten), and write it down. The policy documents contain at least some of the following information:

1. Policy on the mission programme within the church, including discussion on:

- Education for every age group
- Prayer
- Special Events
- Resources and information
- Personnel
- Finance
- Long Term Planning

2. People responsible for the church's world mission program

- For example: [mission coordinator](#), [mission committee](#), leadership sub-committee, designated staff member
- How are they selected?
- How long do they serve?
- To whom are they accountable?
- If a mission action group, who is on it and how often do they meet?

3. Support for missionaries, [mission agencies](#) and projects

- What selection criteria are employed for deciding who to support?
- To what extent, and by what processes, are they supported?
- What partnerships between the church and agencies/national churches/projects, and how are these developed?

Using this existing policy as a starting point, and with God's guidance, **ask the church leaders how it should be modified**, redesigned, developed, and implemented under God. The new written policy should be **presented to the church congregation**.

In order to help the church accomplish the steps of faith God wants them to achieve, **review the mission policy annually**, so that changes can be recommended.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

1. Ellen Livingood. “**Restructuring Local Church Missions.**” Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 2, Iss. 12, 2007. <http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Restruct-Mis.pdf>
2. Ellen Livingood. “**Missionary Accountability: Wrestling with the Church’s Challenge to Practice it Well.**” Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 2, Iss. 11, 2010. <http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Accountability.pdf>

ⁱ **Missionary/missionaries** - a person/family who has been commissioned by their sending church(es) and/or mission agency to be explicitly dedicated to the work of cross-cultural ministry. It indicates someone who is gifted, set apart and trained/prepared for cross-cultural service, and so serves a particular role in the global Body of Christ. While every follower of Jesus is called to be His witness wherever they are, some are specifically lead to cross cultural and geographical boundaries to share the gospel with those who could otherwise not comprehend its message.