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HANDBOOK



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SECTION I: FORWARD

- (1) This Handbook has been prepared as a guide for the praying partners and commissioned missionaries of the World Mission Prayer League.
- (2) The Handbook is comprised of two parts:
 - a) A summary of the philosophy, vision and values at the core of our fellowship; and,
 - b) A summary of the structures directing our life together.
- (3) The Handbook is a dynamic document, open to ongoing revision. The Handbook may be revised by action of the Mission's Home Council.
- (4) The Handbook is complemented by several documents printed separately:
 - a) The Mission's Constitution;
 - b) The Mission's By-laws; and,
 - c) The Mission's Policy Manual, a compendium of current policies.

SECTION II: HISTORY

- (5) The World Mission Prayer League grew out of a God-given burden to pray for the unreached interiors of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. How could these peoples come to faith, unless they hear the Gospel? How could they hear, unless the Gospel is preached? And how could the message be preached, unless someone is sent to preach it?
- (6) By the mid-1930s, a band of students, pastors and friends in the Minneapolis area joined together in prayer that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers into his harvest (Luke 10:2). Soon some of them felt called to join the harvest themselves.
- (7) Volunteers approached the mission boards of the existing Lutheran synods, but found no budget for new outreach. In 1937 they organized themselves along simple lines to accept missionary volunteers and send them into areas of special concern. They were committed to finding a way to send and go in mission, without the constraint of budgetary limitations. They were committed to providing a way for lay participation in mission, without the requirement of ordination. They

were committed as well to complement the regular work of the Lutheran synods, without diverting means or personnel from their programs.

(8) The Mission began as the *South American Mission Prayer League*, and was organized on May 25, 1937. Its first two missionaries left the next year for Bolivia. Soon other volunteers were sent to Central Asia, and eventually to Africa, and Eastern Europe. In 1939 the Mission adopted its present name to reflect its growing involvements around the world: a *prayer league* of supporting friends with a *world mission*. In 1945, the World Mission Prayer League adopted its Constitution and incorporated in the State of Minnesota.

(9) In 1969, the *World Mission Prayer League/Canada* adopted its Constitution and incorporated in Edmonton, Alberta. The World Mission Prayer League/Canada functions in partnership with the World Mission Prayer League/USA as a sister organization.

(10) In 1972 the *American Board of the Santal Mission* merged with the World Mission Prayer League. The *American Board* was founded in Minneapolis on November 13, 1891, as the American partner of the Norwegian Board and the Danish Board (1867) of the same Mission. Its first American missionaries were sent to India in 1904. From these early beginnings, the World Mission Prayer League has inherited a particular concern for the Santal people of India and Bangladesh.

(11) Together with the Church and its partners in mission, the World Mission Prayer League seeks to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's fresh initiative in our world today. Prayer League members continue to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth workers, and that the Lord himself would sustain and uphold them.

SECTION III: PURPOSE

A. Our Mission

(12) We are a Lutheran community committed to:

- a) know Christ;
- b) pray for the advance of his kingdom;
- c) share the gospel and ourselves with those who do not know him; and,
- d) encourage Christians everywhere in this global task.

B. Our Vision

We are a Lutheran community...

(13) We are a Lutheran community in mission.

a) We undertake our mission as Lutherans. We proceed from a variety of Lutheran synodical backgrounds, in which we participate gladly.

b) We undertake our mission as a community: lay and ordained, male and female, multigenerational and multi-ethnic. Our members are variously and wonderfully gifted for the task we share together. We appreciate their multi-textured gifts and work at encouraging one another in their exercise, for the cause of Jesus Christ.

(14) Moreover, we understand our fellowship to be part of a much larger body – the Church of Jesus Christ around the world. Wherever possible, we will advocate interrelationship, interdependence, and creative partnership in the cause of the Gospel around the world.

...committed to know Christ

(15) We are committed to the Person and the Cause of Jesus. We believe that committed lives are indispensable for authentic and compelling witness.

(16) We intend to call others to commitment as well. We intend to plead with all of our creative energy, “*Be reconciled to Christ,*” as ambassadors of God himself.

(17) We understand that this commitment exacts a cost – and we purpose to bear it, by the grace of God. We will ready ourselves for suffering. We will turn away from costly comforts, a larger income, material possessions, and places of personal privilege or honor. We will choose instead to embrace the way of poverty, loss, suffering, and humiliation – whatever it takes to bring the Gospel of Jesus to as many people as possible.

...committed to pray for the advance of his kingdom

(18) We are committed to pray, as Jesus commands his followers in Matthew 9:38 – “*Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*” Indeed, we are not primarily a missionary-sending organization. We are a praying “league”, a community of men and women who are committed to prayer as a key methodology for advancing the Gospel of Christ. Prayer is the working method of our mission.

(19) Our commitment to prayer leads us to several important corollaries:

a) Since God gives our resources in answer to prayer, we will not solicit human beings. We envision mutual accountability as we hold one another to this common commitment.

b) Since God gives our resources, we will continue to treat them “as from the hand of God” – honoring financial designations explicitly.

c) We will treat our personnel “as from the hand of God” as well – respecting insofar as possible each individual calling within our overall work and fellowship.

...committed to share the gospel and ourselves with those who do not know him

(20) We declare our passion for the evangelization of the world. We will share the gospel. And our sharing will involve more than our words. We propose sharing “*ourselves*” – that is, our material goods, our money, our service, our very lives.

(21) We will focus our sharing in three areas: discipling along the frontiers that surround us; leadership development in service to the emerging church; and, mission mobilization.

a) *Disciple-making along the frontiers.* We will remain prayerfully alert to the frontiers that surround us today, and the new frontiers that may beckon us tomorrow. We will apply our prayers and resources, in particular, along the frontier of the unreached – those peoples among whom an indigenous, missionizing, church-planting movement has yet to be established. We will apply ourselves further, as much as possible, along the frontier of limited access – unreached peoples among whom few missionaries are at work, or traditional missionaries cannot go.

b) *Leadership development.* We believe that God has equipped the church with everything needful for its basic ministries of proclamation, service and administration. We believe that God equips the church, as well, with the leadership necessary for its life and ministry. We will not, therefore, lead churches where local leaders are available. Rather, we will encourage the church to take up its calling. We will pray and work to encourage and develop its leadership in every way.

c) *Mission mobilization.* We will work toward an indigenous, missionizing, church-planting movement, wherever God has led us. We will work under the structures of the church as it exists in hopeful partnership, that the church may be planted where it has not yet advanced.

...committed to encourage Christians everywhere in this global task

(22) We applaud evidences of God's mission from and to the entire world. We believe that the mission of God belongs to the whole people of God. We will encourage Christians everywhere in its pursuit.

(23) As for ourselves and our work, we intend to be mobile. We pledge ourselves to expendability. We will not ensconce our persons or our organization permanently in any of our areas of work. We understand ourselves as scaffolding; but when a building is completed, the scaffolding must be removed. In all of our work, we will plan for our own dismantling, in order to help build up the church in another area.

SECTION IV: STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. We believe in...

(24) The only true God, the almighty Creator of all things, existing eternally in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – full of love and glory.

(25) The unique divine inspiration, entire trustworthiness and authority of the Bible, our infallible guide and inerrant norm for doctrine and living.

(26) The value and dignity of all people: created in God's image to live in love and holiness, but alienated from God and each other because of their sin and guilt, justly subject to God's wrath and unable to save themselves.

(27) Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine, who lived as a perfect example, who assumed the judgment due sinners by dying in our place, and who was bodily raised from the dead and ascended as Savior and Lord.

(28) The means of grace – principally the Bible and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper – by which God shares with us the good news of the wonderful salvation that can be ours in Jesus Christ.

(29) Justification by God's grace – complete access to God's every gift and benefit – for all who repent and put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

(30) The indwelling presence and transforming power of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all believers a new life and the spiritual gifts necessary for a calling to obedient service.

(31) The unity of all believers in Jesus Christ, manifest in worshipping and witnessing churches making disciples throughout the world.

(32) The future personal return of Jesus Christ, who will judge all people with justice and mercy, giving over the unrepentant to eternal condemnation but receiving the redeemed into eternal life.

B. We further believe that...

(33) The historic creeds of the church – the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian – and the historic confessions of the Lutheran Church – particularly the Small Catechism and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession – describe the Christian faith accurately and well.

SECTION V: STRUCTURING FOR MISSION

A. The Prayer League at work

(34) In addition to the values and priorities described elsewhere in this Handbook, we are committed to principles for the structuring of our work in the world.

a) We aim at conscious dependence upon God: we will structure our work in deliberate expectation of his great faithfulness (Lamentations 3:23).

b) We are committed to community. We will organize our work in relationship with our sisters and brothers in Christ at home and around the world. We aim to serve as a *fellowship*, encouraging one another, bearing one another's burdens, standing firm "in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

c) We are committed to the principle of gracious equitability. We refuse to make distinction between the one who prays at home and the one who goes abroad, the one who serves and the one who proclaims, or with reference to national provenance, gender, education, social status or cultural background. We need one another. For every member of our community, we aspire simply

to the obedience of faith and complementary participation in the shared mission of God (Romans 12:10).

d) We are committed to accountability. We will build transparency into our structures, authentic partnership and open dialogue, taking pains to “do what is right, not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of others” (2 Corinthians 8:20-21).

e) We are committed to local empowerment. Insofar as possible, we desire that those who must live with the result of our decisions are authorized as well to make them (2 Timothy 2:2).

f) We are committed to simplicity. We aim to work out our calling in a low-overhead, simple sort of way (Luke 9:1-5).

g) We are committed to mobility. As a community in mission, we are called to be mobile. We aim at agility in our lives and ministry, and responsiveness to God’s lively and ongoing direction (Luke 9:6).

h) Finally, we are committed to prayer. We aim to practice deliberate, united, frequent and believing prayer at every level of our community – among those who send us, those who go, and those we meet along the way. Prayer is our working method. It is the way we participate, first of all, in the purposes of the Kingdom of God in our own lives and around the world (Matthew 9:37-38).

B. Membership in our praying community

(35) At its deepest and best, our community is simply a fellowship at prayer, gathered in service to the mission of God in the world. We are a wide-ranging, free association of sisters and brothers committed together to the values, purposes, and priorities described in this Handbook. Individuals, couples and entire families may become *members* of our praying community by a simple pledge to join us in these values and purposes. Fellowship groups or entire congregations may affiliate as *congregational members*, as well. Members indicate their commitment by contacting our offices or visiting our website, and are added to our membership directory.

(36) These praying members are the heart of our community: they are “the Prayer League” served and described by this document. We are not, precisely, a “sending society”; our work is not, simply, “over

there.” We are a broad praying fellowship. Our work around the world is but an extension of our life of prayer and faith at home. We tend to reproduce what we are.

(37) Our structures for mission must reflect this dynamic interdependence: the relationship of full-time workers abroad and praying partners at home. The fellowship of praying partners may support the work of the Mission financially. They may volunteer for service, too: out of their number come our leadership, our Council and committee members, project workers, office staff, representatives, and other volunteers. Most significant of all, they have pledged themselves to uphold our shared work in prayer. We believe that the mission of God has enlisted our entire community together. It is our aim to “stir one another toward love and good works,” at home and abroad, at work and at play, praying members in local fellowships and members in service around the world (Hebrews 10:24). Each part has a role to play. Each must find its complementary service in the wide-ranging mission of God.

C. WMPL-International

(38) Our community receives praying members from every nation and culture who come to share the simple commitments described in this Handbook. We are an international community, part and participant in the Christian church around the world.

National or regional offices

(39) This broad international community may organize in national and regional offices, or in other expressions that may seem helpful from place to place and time to time. Such national or regional offices do not presume to supervise the activities of other national offices. Each is free to develop its own contextually relevant programs and organization consistent with the core values and priorities we share across our fellowship. We advocate decentralized, lightweight, entrepreneurial structures for prayer, sending and ministry support throughout our fellowship, rather than an overarching international superstructure.

(40) This vision has led to the creation of formal offices in the United States (1937) and Canada (1969), each based in a common commitment to the mission and values described in this Handbook, yet functioning

independently. It has led as well to occasional and informal sending structures elsewhere, committed to partnership within our broader community. We watch for the emergence of similar structures, formal and informal, elsewhere in the world.

(41) National or regional offices may develop bilateral or multilateral mechanisms for the coordination of their efforts. Such relationships may include mechanisms for sharing strategic vision, prayer concerns and activities, personnel and joint projects, mutual fellowship, distributed funds, and other meaningful resources, in the spirit of this Handbook.

The Joint Committee

(42) A Joint International Committee will meet periodically to share mutual concerns and encouragement among representatives of our national or regional offices. The Committee is convened by a simple consensus of its potential members. Typically, one national or regional office will act as host for such a meeting and help to prepare an agenda for its deliberations.

(43) The Committee is not executive in nature: it is consultative and catalytic. Representatives gather to learn from one another, encourage one another in prayer, identify opportunities for greater effectiveness and partnership, and propose improvements or further development in our shared mission around the world. The Joint Committee does not then act unilaterally. Its members present report and recommendation to their representative national or regional offices, which may in turn put plans into suitable action.

D. WMPL-USA

(44) In the United States we have organized into an incorporated society, with a Constitution and Bylaws and a shared commitment to the way of life described in this Handbook. The following paragraphs describe structures specific to WMPL-USA, judged consistent with the values and priorities we share across our fellowship.

(45) WMPL-USA is comprised of all praying members formally pledged to the community of WMPL-USA and appearing in its membership directory. WMPL-USA meets in general session annually, for fellowship in God's mission, prayer for its advance throughout the world, renewal of its Mission Council, and observance of its

Constitution and Bylaws. It may be convened in special session at other times by the President of its Mission Council as provided in its Bylaws.

The Mission Council-USA

(46) WMPL-USA entrusts the oversight of its workers and projects to its Mission Council, a governing board elected by its members.

Membership and meetings

(47) Individual praying members of WMPL-USA are eligible to participate in the annual election of the Mission Council, as described in the organization's Constitution and Bylaws.

a) The Council's members are elected by mail ballot prior to the annual meeting of WMPL-USA, and presented to the gathered community at that time.

b) The Council is comprised of no fewer than twelve and no more than twenty-four members. Members serve for a period of three years, and may be reelected twice for a total of nine consecutive years of service.

c) The Council may co-opt associate members because of special knowledge or experience judged to be useful. Associate members serve for a period of two years and are eligible for reappointment. The Council may appoint emeritus members, as well, for a period of service that it defines.

d) The Council meets quarterly and at other times as convened by its President. A simple majority is required for the establishment of quorum; once quorum is established, the Council seeks to act in unanimous agreement. The Council recognizes the electronic polling of its members as valid decisions of the entire group.

e) The Council's members serve voluntarily and pay their own expenses. In case of hardship, members may voluntarily help one another to defray the expenses involved in attending meetings.

Responsibilities

(48) The Mission Council supervises the activities of WMPL-USA according to its Constitution and Bylaws and the spirit and values described in this Handbook.

The Council...

- a) Watches for the hand of God at work in the world, and attempts to find its place of maximal participation.
- b) Considers and takes suitable action for carrying out the purposes and general program of WMPL-USA.
- c) Elects officers of WMPL-USA, including a Mission Council President and Treasurer, and fills occasional vacancies among its members.
- d) Elects members of its Mission Directorate, its additional standing committees, and configures occasional task forces it thinks important to its work.
- e) Appoints the General Director of WMPL-USA, upon consultation with its workers around the world.
- f) Provides for the timely treatment of applications for candidacy and eventual service, as well as changes in assignment or status.
- g) Provides for the receipt, record and disbursement of funds received by WMPL-USA, including their annual and external audit.
- h) Provides for an annual review of the monthly allowance for the staff and workers of WMPL-USA.
- i) Acts on any other business that may be its responsibility, including issues referred from the Joint Committee, its own Mission Directorate or its Home Office.
- j) Sees to it that the activities of WMPL-USA are carried out in accord with its governing Constitution and Bylaws, and the spirit of this Handbook.

The Mission Directorate-USA

(49) The Mission Council-USA entrusts the closer management of its workers and projects to its Mission Directorate, an executive committee elected from among its members.

Membership and meetings

(50) The Mission Council of WMPL-USA elects its Mission Directorate annually, as provided in the organization's Constitution and Bylaws.

- a) The Directorate is comprised of no fewer than seven and no

more than twelve members, a majority of whom shall be members of the Mission Council. Its membership consists of the Council's President and/or Vice President, the Council's Treasurer, the General Director of WMPL-USA, and additional Council and administrative staff as appointed by the Mission Council.

b) The Directorate typically meets monthly, or as convened by the General Director or the President of the Mission Council.

c) The Directorate is chaired by the President of the Mission Council, or upon his/her request, the General Director. A simple majority is required for the establishment of quorum; once quorum is established, the Directorate seeks to act in unanimous agreement.. The Directorate recognizes the electronic polling of its members as valid decisions of the entire group.

Responsibilities

(51) The Mission Directorate acts on behalf of the Mission Council and in conscious accord with its spirit and leadership.

The Directorate...

a) Considers applications for candidacy and service, as well as changes in assignment or status, as authorized by the Mission Council.

b) Considers requests for the disbursement of mission funds, typically upon recommendation of the Council's Finance Committee.

c) Provides for the supervision of the Mission's properties.

d) Provides for the orderly conduct of the work of WMPL-USA under the guidance of its Constitution and Bylaws and the provisions of this Handbook.

(52) The Mission Directorate seeks to act in conscientious harmony with the mind and the decisions of the Mission Council. Matters that the Directorate considers beyond its scope or authority are referred to the Mission Council for consideration.

The General Director-USA

(53) The Mission Council-USA appoints a General Director to serve as its executive, upon consultation with its workers around the world. The Director serves for a period of three years and may be renewed in his/her appointment.

(54) The General Director-USA must be committed to the values and priorities described in this Handbook, and live under the same financial and other arrangements that apply to all of the Mission’s workers. The Director represents the projects and personnel of WMPL-USA before the Mission Council and our overall praying constituency; he or she should serve as far as possible with their hearty consent. The Director is responsible for giving life and leadership to the aims and decisions of WMPL-USA in the spirit of this Handbook, in mutual partnership with the Mission Council, Directorate, Home Office staff, and the Mission’s workers.

Home Office Staff

(55) The Mission Council may appoint Home Office staff to serve with the General Director. Home Office staff are responsible to the General Director. Staff serve for a period of three years and may be renewed in their appointment.

(56) Matters that the Director and Home Office staff consider beyond their scope or authority are referred to the Mission Directorate or Council for consideration.

Mission Representatives

(57) The Mission Council may appoint Mission Representatives to represent the interests of WMPL-USA in their respective areas. Representatives serve for a period of two years, voluntarily and without remuneration. Their activities come under the guidance of the General Director.

E. Workers and projects around the world

Expectations and principles

(58) National or regional offices may offer personnel to a wide variety of ministries and projects around the world – including traditional Mission Conferences, national church bodies, interagency partnerships, or other agencies or projects. Whatever the nature of their specific assignment, the Mission’s workers are committed to:

- a) Make their “home” among the people they serve, aiming to build genuine friendships and a sense of belonging within the culture and context in which they live and work.

- b) Participate authentically in the life of a local community of believers whenever and wherever possible.
- c) Pursue transparency and mutuality among their ministry teammates, without regard to the provenance, language, or cultural background of their fellow workers.
- d) Identify and develop relationships of mutual accountability, as well as accessible and appropriate resources for their own personal discipleship and pastoral care.
- e) Maintain up-to-date relationship within our broader fellowship, including their respective Councils, Home Offices and staff, national or regional Prayer League structures, and praying supporters at home.
- f) Remain informed and duly accountable with respect to the Mission’s safety and security policies, in collaboration with their respective Home Office supervisors.

Supervising Ministry Teams

(59) The Mission’s workers are assigned by their respective Councils to a “Supervising Ministry Team.” Supervising Teams may organize differently in different contexts: they may be traditional or nontraditional, denominational or interdenominational, based in western lands or anywhere else in the world. The Mission’s workers become accountable to their respective team and its leadership for their specific assignments and responsibilities.

Mission Conferences

(60) Traditionally, our workers in a given area constitute a *Mission Conference*; this is their “Supervising Ministry Team.” A conference brings together Mission workers in a national area or from a larger regional distribution. Traditional conferences are comprised of a Conference Directorate and officers, similar in function to the Directorate and officers at work in national or regional offices.

(61) Traditional Conferences meet at least once a year, with all of their members required to be present. They may draft constitutions and bylaws, elect governing officers, appoint workers to specific assignments, elaborate job descriptions, and administer and evaluate

the work of the conference, its various projects and personnel. Conferences elaborate policies consistent with our shared values and priorities regarding their projects and workers, work assignments, vacations and leaves, properties and other matters. Conferences may also propose new work and new partnerships as they feel led, presenting their proposals to their respective Councils and the larger community.

(62) Mission Conferences may entrust the closer management of their workers and projects to a Conference Directorate, whose composition and responsibilities are described by the Conference at large. A Conference Directorate is typically comprised of a Director, Vice Director, Secretary and Treasurer elected by the Conference at its annual meeting.

(63) Conference Directorates are responsible to see that work and projects under their direction are conducted in harmony with Conference policy and the values and policies of this Handbook. They keep in touch with their respective Mission Offices through regular reports and the minutes of relevant meetings.

(64) Traditional Conference Directors serve as Mission representatives in matters relating to government, churches and other missions or agencies, make decisions in matters where the counsel of the entire Conference cannot be obtained, and in general encourage and supervise the work in their respective areas.

Other supervising teams...

(65) Many of our workers serve outside traditional Mission Conferences. They may be assigned to partnership with a national church body, another mission or non-profit agency, a regional grouping of the Prayer League itself, or some other partnering organization. Here they will find their “Supervising Ministry Team” – a team that will provide the context and resources for the implementation of the structural principles and expectations described in this Handbook. Our Mission Councils and Home Offices will ensure that such a team is feasible before assigning their workers to alternative settings such as these.

(66) Whether in Mission Conferences or alternative teams, our workers advocate united prayer, honest fellowship, communal worship, and open discussion regarding the state of our life and work together

around the world. Wherever we are at work, we believe it important to pray openly with one another, consider our common strategy for ministry, formulate practical goals and objectives, and give ourselves in one accord to a united vision for ministry. We believe that agreement in purpose and unity in effort are indispensable to fruitful service: we will work toward commonality, teamwork and agreement wherever we are assigned in the world.

F. The relationship between Home Offices and workers and projects around the world

(67) Our community works best when Mission Conferences and Supervising Ministry Teams feel liberty to press on in their work, in the spirit of this Handbook. It is our intention that the workers and projects who must live with the Mission's decisions should be authorized as well to make them, insofar as possible. Yet in major undertakings – the purchase of property, for example, or advance to new areas, or substantial shifts in strategy, or the dismissal or relocation of personnel, and so on – Mission Conferences and Supervising Teams will look for consensus with their respective Home Offices before implementation.

(68) Our Home Offices, likewise, work best when they press forward freely in the vision and work of the Mission at large. Yet they aim always at conscientious fellowship and mutual agreement with our Conferences and Supervising Teams around the world. Mutual faith is the foundation for this relationship. Home Office workers must trust their colleagues elsewhere to manage their work wisely, while these must trust their Home Office colleagues to hold fast to our shared vision, remain steadfast in prayer, faithfully distribute the Mission's funds, and exercise care in the selection and preparation of candidates for service. Throughout our praying community, we are bound together by our loyalty to a common vision and commission, and to the principles and practice outlined in this Handbook.

(69) In a similar way, our officers and directors must feel free to act and to lead, while the boards that supervise and the committees that assist them must be free to affirm, deny, suggest, refuse, and finally determine in all matters. The structures described in this Handbook check one another. They complement each other like the oars of a boat: they must pull together. The terms of their relationship and

the balance of their authority cannot be stated explicitly, for it is a spiritual relationship in which they “in honor prefer one another” (Romans 12:10) and wait upon the Lord to hear his voice together and follow him in conscientious partnership. Indeed, it is our custom to withhold decisions until we have reached consensus in spirit. Insofar as possible, at every level, we aim always to act together with one mind and spirit (Philippians 1:27).

(70) Under particular circumstances, Mission Councils may feel it necessary to take a direct hand in the business of a particular Conference or Supervising Ministry Team. The arrangement may seem advisable in the case of new work in new areas, for example, until an effective Conference or Supervising Team has been organized. Mission Councils may also intervene when they judge that Conferences or Supervising Teams lack effective leadership, or have plainly violated the policies or values described in this Handbook. In every case, Mission Councils act in sympathetic consultation with the Conferences or Supervising Teams concerned, and direct matters only until the specific crisis is passed and authority can again be restored to the Conference or Supervising Team in question.

SECTION VI: PERSONNEL

A. Discovering our Commission

(71) We believe that God has called all Christians everywhere to involvement in his mission in the world. Each one has a role to play. Through its Personnel and Regional Offices, the Prayer League seeks to help its members to hear that call and to discover their place of maximum participation.

(72) Many of our members will discover their place of participation at home, in their own neighborhoods and in their regular occupations. Others will discover their place in extraordinary service elsewhere in the world. The Mission expects that God will commission its members to a wide and wonderful variety of participations in his mission of love around the world.

(73) The Mission prays for such commissions. The Mission also hopes to provide opportunities for fulfilling them – that spiritually gifted

people from every walk of life may take an active role in sharing the gospel and themselves with those who have yet to know the Savior.

(74) The Mission Council establishes the overall policy and strategic priorities guiding this process. The Council describes the sort of people and gifts that should be the object of our prayers, and the *kind* of activities we hope them to accomplish around the world.

(75) The Mission Council entrusts the application of its policy to a Personnel Department, which evaluates the calling and specific suitability of individual applicants, supervises their training and orientation, manages their application and placement, encourages their professional development, and processes eventually their resignation or retirement. The Personnel Department functions under the leadership of a Personnel Director, responsible in turn to the General Director of the Mission.

B. Missionary Inquirers

(76) We believe that in answer to prayer God will call persons of his own choosing to offer themselves for missionary service within our fellowship. We will not hesitate to make known the opportunities for service among us. Yet our primary means of recruitment is prayer.

(77) Those wishing to investigate service may contact our Personnel Department. Inquirers are asked to describe their calling and motivation and the specific gifts they may bring to the missionary task. They may be invited to interview. The Personnel Department will inform inquirers of various posts and opportunities for service, together with requirements necessary for meeting them.

(78) If an inquirer wishes to take the next step, he or she may be invited to apply for Missionary Candidacy.

C. Candidates for Missionary Service

(79) Candidacy represents a formal and supervised period of preparation for eventual missionary service. Applicants for missionary candidacy are recommended to the Mission Directorate by the Personnel Director, upon completion of a thorough application process and in consultation with the applicant's pastor, physician and counselor. Applicants will ordinarily meet personally with the Mission Directorate for formal approval of their application, prayer and affirmation.

Qualifications for Candidacy

(80) Candidates for missionary service must:

- a) demonstrate a genuine, personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
- b) know the call of God to lay aside other employment and to take up missionary service, willingly and voluntarily;
- c) be willing to look to God for the supply of all their needs;
- d) agree with the principles and policies that guide the World Mission Prayer League;
- e) apply themselves to diligent preparation for eventual missionary service.

The Candidate Program

(81) Candidates are encouraged to gain practical experience in a regular trade or occupation, as well as in Christian ministry and evangelism in their local congregation. Candidates should prove themselves faithful servants and responsible workers on their own home ground before attempting to serve in another land.

(82) Candidates are encouraged to seek close personal acquaintance with the Mission, its principles and practices, its personnel, its work at home and abroad, and its general spirit. This can be furthered by visits to the Mission Office, participation in Mission prayer events, or by a designated stay at the Mission Home. Such participation enables the entire Mission to become better acquainted with individual candidates, which is helpful in discerning a candidate's calling, suitability for service, and direction regarding eventual placement.

(83) Candidates will apply themselves to an individually tailored program of preparation for missionary service, under the guidance of the Personnel Department. Preparation may include:

- a) Debt reduction;
- b) Biblical and missiological studies;
- c) Spiritual formation;
- d) A prayerful search for guidance concerning an eventual missionary assignment;
- e) Participation in a Briefing Course provided by the Personnel Department, etc.

(84) Upon acceptance by the Mission Directorate, candidates may receive financial gifts designated for schooling and other expenses associated with their preparation for service.

D. Missionary Service

(85) Candidates may make application for missionary service upon satisfactory completion of candidacy. Applicants for missionary service are recommended to the Mission Council by the Personnel Director, in consultation with the Mission's Associate Directors or project leaders who may come to receive an applicant within their area of responsibility. Applicants will ordinarily meet personally with the Mission Council, for formal approval of their application, prayer and affirmation. Acceptance by the Mission Council establishes a candidate as a bona fide missionary of the World Mission Prayer League.

Qualifications for Missionary Service

Spiritual Qualifications

(86) In addition to the qualifications for candidacy, applicants for missionary service must:

- a) heartily agree with the principles and practices of the Mission and earnestly desire to carry them out in life and work;
- b) demonstrate the soundness of their faith, in whole-hearted solidarity with the faith statement of the Mission;
- c) demonstrate the clear conviction that the Lord himself has called them to missionary service, specifically and personally, and make a firm decision to heed that call;
- d) give satisfactory evidence that they are able to live and work with others in peace, love and unity of spirit;
- e) demonstrate that they can pray with faith and discern together with their fellow workers the leading of the Holy Spirit for their life and work;
- f) be committed to a life of implicit faith and trust in God alone to provide all that is needed for their life and work, both for personal needs and for the work of the Mission as a whole;
- g) show themselves ready to endure in times of trial, to meet

disappointments with sweetness and grace, to persevere through interruptions, inconveniences and delays without murmuring and complaint, and to bear the failings of others with unbroken patience and unmeasured love;

h) be ready to “accept the plundering of their property” (Hebrews 10:34) and to “rejoice that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name” (Acts 5:41);

i) be possessed of a willing and obedient spirit in all things, willing to go anywhere to do anything helpful for the work of the gospel, or to make any adaptation and that with joy. When missionaries prove themselves faithful servants of the Lord, they will find in Christ, in his Word and in doing his will, a treasure, a joy and a strength that will far outweigh everything suffered for his Name.

Educational Qualifications

(87) The Mission requires that candidates receive formal or informal instruction in Bible and missiology. Ordinarily this will mean one to two years of Bible school training, or its equivalent. The Mission recommends that candidates and missionaries alike make every effort to sharpen their skills continually as professional, cross-cultural servants of the Gospel.

Other Qualifications

(88) Applicants for missionary service must be debtfree, or demonstrate a reasonable plan to become debtfree before undertaking missionary service.

(89) Applicants must confirm that their condition of health is appropriate for their proposed area of service.

(90) Specific service projects or assignments may require additional qualifications of potential applicants, in consultation with the Personnel Department.

Counting the Cost

(91) Those who desire to make application for missionary service should soberly count the cost of a life that may involve:

a) long and lonely separations from parents, relatives, friends, and customary support systems;

- b) living in unstable, disruptive, and potentially dangerous situations;
- c) joining a new circle of people, friends and unfamiliar cultural surroundings;
- d) becoming an alien and guest in a different society, subject to its norms and laws and the authority of its people;
- e) adjusting to posts of larger responsibility and harder work than accustomed, which may require self-discipline, flexibility and humility;
- f) adopting the role of a servant, willing to assume humble and thankless tasks and ministries in partnership with national and expatriate colleagues;
- g) the loss of financial security or career advancement, being content with less so that others may have more;
- h) personal sacrifice and the potential of martyrdom for the sake of the gospel;
- i) raising a family and exposing one's children to these same risks and conditions.

Undertaking Missionary Service

(92) At the moment of formal application, the Personnel Director will recommend assignment to a particular missionary conference, national church body, or other supervising ministry team, in consultation with the appropriate Associate Directors or project leaders. The Mission Council will ordinarily include such assignments in its treatment of applications for missionary service. Missionaries become accountable to the conference or team to which they are assigned for the clarification of their specific ministry responsibilities.

(93) Missionaries approved for service and assigned to a ministry team will be publicly commissioned to undertake their assignment. Ordinarily, a commissioning service will be arranged by their home congregation.

(94) Missionaries will ordinarily remain at home until the Lord, in answer to prayer, supplies the funds needed for travel, equipment and language study, and in other ways opens the door. In the meantime, they will wait patiently for God's supply – which will surely come, if there has been a true call from God and true faith and dependence upon him.

(95) Upon arrival in their place of service, missionaries are given the early and important assignment of orientation to life and work in their new situation. Newly commissioned missionaries attempt to:

- a) understand the goals and aims of the ministry team of which they become a part and to join their colleagues in pursuing them;
- b) acquire the local language and constantly use it, by pursuing a definite course of study with examinations prescribed by their ministry team demonstrating a sufficient mastery of the language as to be useful in the work;
- c) understand and appreciate the culture in which they are living, get along well with their national neighbors and colleagues, and conduct themselves with good behavior toward all;
- d) learn to take care of themselves in every way, manage their own housekeeping, travel, and personal affairs;
- e) “lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3).

(96) Upon receiving their assignment, missionaries proceed to their posts without unnecessary delay. If a change in assignment is desired, missionaries should inform their ministry team and await a satisfactory adjustment. Patience and perseverance are needed to overcome doubts and hardships, so that the work may progress successfully.

(97) Missionaries seek to teach the Word of God and the comforts of the gospel wherever possible, though their personal job assignment may take the form of administration, Christian service, or the like. The missionaries’ special treasure, whoever they are and whatever their assignment, is the Bible and its message of salvation for all people in Jesus Christ. They will want to share the Word of God at every opportunity. God’s commission to every Christian is to preach the Gospel to the whole creation and to make disciples of all nations. Missionaries will watch for opportunities to fulfill this calling in a personal way, whatever their specific assignment.

Home Assignment and Return to Active Service

(98) Because of time required for language study and orientation, missionaries are normally expected to complete a four-year term of service before requesting their first home assignment. The length of subsequent terms and home assignment periods is arranged through the Personnel Department, upon recommendation of supervising ministry teams. Normally, twelve months of home assignment will follow four years of service. For second and subsequent terms of service, ministry teams may recommend nine months following three years of service, or four months following two years.

(99) Before missionaries leave their place of work for home assignment, their supervising team acts to approve their return. If return is not approved, the missionary and the General Director will be informed. The missionary will be informed in sufficient time before departure to make possible the orderly disposition of personal affairs and goods.

(100) Arrangements for home assignment are recommended by supervising ministry teams and overseen by the Personnel Department. Ordinarily, missionaries will indicate their intention to return to field service within three months of returning home, and to arrange in a timely manner for reapplication. Those who resign while on the field or after any term of service will continue in regular status for a reasonable period of resettlement and are not entitled to a normal home assignment period.

(101) Missionaries on home assignment who desire to return to field service discuss their intention with the Personnel Department and submit the appropriate reapplication and medical examination forms. Reapplications are recommended to the Mission Council by the Personnel Director, upon satisfactory completion of home assignment or leave of absence periods. Missionaries will ordinarily meet personally with the Council for formal approval, prayer and affirmation.

Holidays and Vacations

(102) Missionaries are entitled to annual holidays and vacations, approved and coordinated by their supervising ministry team. Missionaries will inform the Personnel Department if they intend to travel home during their vacation period. Holiday and vacation travel and activities are funded personally.

(103) Annual vacations are intended for respite and retreat from annual ministry assignments. Annual vacations are inherently periodic; ordinarily, they do not accumulate from year to year nor are they added to the period of home assignments.

Leaves

Leave of Absence

(104) Missionaries may request a leave of absence from active service, for personal, medical or educational reasons. Leaves are arranged by the Personnel Department and reviewed annually. Leaves of absence will normally be limited to three years.

Study Leave

(105) Missionaries may request a formal study leave for participation in an approved program of continuing education longer than their home assignment period. Specific requests will be coordinated by the Personnel Department, in consultation with the corresponding ministry team. Missionaries on study leave may receive designated support and work funds as do missionaries on home assignment. They will not receive, however, support from the General or Missionary Support Funds nor the provision of Mission housing, nor continue on Mission benefits (health insurance and pension), though designated support may be used to meet these needs.

Administrative Leave

(106) The Personnel Department may arrange an Administrative or Emergency Leave for unusual circumstances, such as the need to respond to security emergencies, legal matters, or medical or other conditions not treatable in the country of assignment. Such leaves are considered time under active assignment, and not home assignment time, when calculating the length of field service.

Resignations and Dismissals

(107) Missionaries desiring to terminate their service while on field assignment are to:

- a) consult with their supervising team, and,
- b) inform the General Director of the Mission in writing, giving three months anticipation of the proposed date of termination.

(108) Missionaries desiring to terminate service while on home assignment or leave must:

- a) consult with the Personnel Department, and,
- b) inform the General Director in writing, giving one month anticipation of the proposed date of termination.

(109) A supervising ministry team may find it necessary to dismiss individual missionaries. Supervisors may initiate such action in consultation with the Personnel Director. Normally, missionaries will not be asked to repatriate without approval of the Mission Directorate.

(110) Resignations and dismissals are considered by the Mission Directorate. Upon recommendation of the Personnel Director, resignations and dismissals may be referred to the Mission Council for ultimate resolution. Persons leaving the Mission transfer Mission funds and properties under their charge into the hands of the person appointed to receive them for the Mission.

E. Missionary Children

(111) Monthly allowances are provided for missionary children. Missionary children are eligible for support while:

- a) their parents remain in the service of the Mission;
- b) they remain unmarried;
- c) they continue to receive half of their total support from their missionary parents; and,
- d) they remain under the age of 19, or under the age of 24 and a full-time student.

(112) Parents are personally and financially responsible for the education of their children. Parents may receive specifically designated gifts for the education of their children. The Mission may also provide additional help as additional funds designated for the education of missionary children are received.

F. Retired Missionaries

(113) Retired missionaries remain members of the Mission family. The retirement provisions of the Mission are applied to those who have made their missionary calling a life's work. Care is given that the retirement transition is thoughtful and orderly.

(114) The normal age of retirement from the Mission is 65 years. Continuation of service beyond age 65 is approved by the Personnel Department on a yearly basis. Missionaries should set the retirement process in motion well in advance of their retirement age. Retirement status is approved by the Mission Directorate, upon recommendation by the Personnel Director.

G. Short-term Volunteers

(115) Short-term volunteers are persons who feel called by God to volunteer some months or years for ministry within the Mission's fellowship. They may have completed another career elsewhere, may have already years of professional, technical or managerial experience, and share with the Mission an enthusiasm for the Lord's work around the world. They offer themselves freely for assignment to short-term postings and responsibilities, as the Mission may need from time to time.

Qualifications and Training

(116) The Mission expects of short-term workers the same qualities of character and evangelical testimony that it requires of long-term missionary candidates. It is important that short-term workers:

- a) experience personally the call of God upon their lives;
- b) exercise their faith within the fellowship of the church;
- c) learn to depend upon God's gracious provision for all of their needs; and
- d) find themselves in agreement with the principles and policies that guide the ministries of the World Mission Prayer League.

(117) Ordinarily the Mission understands short-term volunteers to be personally responsible for the material support of the ministries they propose, including travel costs to and from their place of assignment as well as living costs while there. Short-term workers should also be of good health and able to withstand the rigors of overseas life and ministry.

(118) The Mission may require specific training prior to short-term service, depending upon the variety of service proposed. The Mission recommends that all short-term workers participate in the Mission's Briefing Course.

Making Application

(119) Those wishing to volunteer for short-term service make inquiry to the Mission's Personnel Office. Applications are to be submitted to the Mission's Directorate, upon recommendation of the Personnel Director.

Supervision and Accountability

(120) Prior to departure, short-term volunteers are responsible to the Personnel Department for supervision, planning and orientation. Upon departure, they are accountable to the ministry team to which they are assigned, whether a national church, a regional grouping of the Prayer League, or some other supervising agency. The team will make and supervise their ministry assignments. Volunteers who desire to shorten their intended period of service should consult with their respective supervisors.

(121) Short-term volunteers may participate in the regular fellowship and business meetings of their ministry team, subject to its policies and procedures. For business meetings, they will ordinarily be permitted voice participation only.

Upon Return Home

(122) Short-term volunteers become stewards of a global experience and ministry perspective unavailable, perhaps, to many of their peers. They do well to undertake this stewardship with prayerful intentionality, becoming alert to opportunities for applying their experience and perspective to their own life-style and ministries.

(123) The Mission asks, however, that volunteers observe the Mission's basic commitments to nonsolicitation and prayerful dependence upon God as they share their experience with others. Short-term volunteers may want to consult the Personnel Department for practical orientation in this area.

H. Seconded and Associate Missionaries

(124) In light of the Prayer League's commitment to partnerships in mission, missionaries may be formally seconded to national churches or other agencies or projects. Likewise, personnel from other entities may be seconded to the Mission. In consultation with the appropriate Associate Directors or project leaders, the Personnel Department will

elaborate written agreements for seconded workers describing the responsibilities of sending and receiving agencies, lines of authority and accountability, and other guidelines. The Mission Directorate will approve seconded missionaries upon recommendation of the Personnel Director.

(125) The Mission may create “associate” or other categories of missionary laborers to accommodate seconded workers, individuals in secular employment who desire to serve as “tent-makers”, or others as may present themselves from time to time. The Personnel Department will consider these on a case-by-case basis and, as it thinks advisable, define terms of service and association within the fellowship of the Mission. The Mission Directorate will approve associate missionaries, upon recommendation of the Personnel Director.

SECTION VII: FINANCES

A. Guiding Principles

(126) The method for obtaining funds or goods and equipment for the temporal needs of the Mission and its workers is primarily prayer to God and trust in him to provide. Information concerning the needs of the Mission is freely shared through its Newsletter with members of the Prayer League who have pledged themselves to pray for the work, and also to others who make particular inquiry, while the general work of the Mission is presented to friends at large through Fellow Workers magazine, additional publications of the Mission, and in other ways as there may arise the opportunity.

(127) But no direct solicitation of funds is made, either to individuals or to churches and church groups. One reason for this practice is that the Mission does not desire to divert support which otherwise would go to the regular work of the church bodies. Voluntary contributions are however gratefully received and accepted and these constitute the backbone support for the Mission. The Mission recognizes and regards such gifts as being prompted by the Holy Spirit in answer to believing prayer and is careful to treat them as such.

(128) The Mission recognizes that various Christian funding agencies exist to provide financial assistance for development, health, education

and other programs. The Mission does not consider application for financial assistance to agencies such as these to be contrary to its financial policy, but recognizes the Lord's gracious provision here as well. Such applications should be made by the missionary in charge of the program or institution in question, upon approval of the field conference.

(129) The Mission firmly believes that the promises of God in the Scriptures and his faithfulness are sufficient grounds for obeying his call to missionary service, and for trusting him to be with his own and supply all their needs. "Let all men know your gentleness," said St. Paul, "but let your requests and needs be made known to God." And many years ago Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission expressed an attitude of faith which fits well the position of the Mission when he wrote, "God's man, in God's place, doing God's work, in God's way, will never lack God's supply."

(130) The Mission in each country with all its workers is committed to the principle of avoiding any kind of indebtedness. Any exception to this policy should have the consent of both the Conference and the Mission Council.

(131) The Mission's financial policy believes and assumes that God is faithful, and may be counted upon to provide in every way, both spiritually and materially, for the advancement of his kingdom's work around the world. The Mission, therefore, does not curtail or delimit its activities on the basis of a formal budget, or pledged and calculated income. New workers are accepted, commissioned and sent without requiring that there first of all be money in sight to support them. No stated salary is pledged or promised to any worker wherever assigned. All workers in the Mission, whatever their location or position, share impartially in the distribution of living allowances made each month out of the general funds of the Mission. A certain sum is specified as a goal for monthly living allowances to be paid each worker when there are sufficient funds on hand. But if funds are not sufficient for full allowances, the workers receive allowances in proportion to the funds on hand. [For exceptions to this practice see Paragraph (142).] The responsibility of the officers and members of the Mission Council and of the Mission Office staff with respect to the matter of finances is that of good stewards and faithful intercessors. In no way are they

held responsible to raise or gather funds for the support of the work. All missionaries and workers of the Mission agree to trust and look to God above all for the supply of their needs. The Mission organization and facilities serve simply as the channel through which God's supply may come as it pleases him.

(132) In the use of money and goods the Mission believes that it is God's plan for its workers to live on a modest and sacrificial scale rather than on an abounding one. Expenditures for maintenance and equipment are held to a minimum, consistent with the requirements for useful service. The missionaries and workers live and conduct their work in as simple a fashion as possible, while seeking to maintain health and good order. As a prayer and missionary fellowship, and as members one of another, all seek to share what they have and bear one another's burdens in faithful prayer before the throne of Grace.

(133) What happens when the Mission operates on this basis? There may often be shortage of funds, a scarcity of material supplies, with few possessions and no reserves. There may also be occasions for extreme sacrifice for the sake of the work and for fellow workers in the fellowship of the Mission. At the same time, when obedient faith acts on the promises of God, there can then be constant advance within the bounds of God's will for worldwide missions. In such a life there will be rich opportunities to learn faith, patience, humility, love, obedience to the Holy Spirit and dependence on God.

(134) Being guided by these principles in financial matters, the Mission moves forward into new advances without hesitation as the Lord guides and reveals his will, trusting him to open doors, to supply the needs of the work and to give fruit and success to its labors according to his promise.

B. Rules for the Receipt and Disbursement of Funds

(135) The management of the Mission's finances is exact and comprehensive. Each gift is acknowledged by receipt and letter. All expenditures are made by check and are signed and countersigned by persons authorized to do so by the Mission Council. Account books are carefully kept. Once a year these accounts are thoroughly audited by certified public accountants, following which a financial report is published.

(136) The Mission Treasurer is responsible for the receipt, disbursement and orderly accounting of all Mission funds. Great care is taken that all funds be used as they have been designated by the donors. The procedure in the disbursement of general Mission funds is first to pay the current maintenance expenses of the Mission Office and Mission Conferences. The balance is then applied to missionary allowances. If there are further funds available, they are applied to other needs of the work. The scale of allowances for workers is determined by the Mission Council in consideration of changing economic conditions in the world. The commencement of allowances for newly accepted and appointed workers is decided by the Mission Council or the Directorate. At the end of each month a summary statement of all receipts and payments is prepared. Conscientious care is exercised to receive, acknowledge, record and transmit each gift to its proper destination.

(137) Donors are allowed to designate their gifts for special projects or purposes approved by the Mission. The intention of such gifts is always carefully regarded and carried out. The Mission in general encourages donors to designate their gifts for the General Fund, or for the support of particular missionaries, since this makes possible a more equitable provision for existing needs. If a gift is intended for any special purpose this should be stated very clearly by the donor. If no designation is made, it is understood that the gift maybe used for the General Fund of the Mission, and it is applied accordingly. If there is any doubt, however, as to the intended use of any gift, the money is held until further correspondence makes clear the intention of the donor.

(138) Each Mission Conference, as well as the Mission Office, regulates its own financial affairs (such as rents, travel, hiring national workers, etc.), and keeps careful records of all business matters. Those responsible for financial affairs in each Conference send to the Mission Office periodic reports as requested by the General Director, and advise the Office of any special financial needs for which the Conference is looking to the Lord for supply.

C. The Designation of Gifts

The General Fund

(139) Gifts for the Mission as a whole, as well as all undesignated gifts, are put into the General Fund and are distributed as fairly

as possible to all branches of the work of the Mission. As far as it will allow, this fund is used to pay running expenses at the Mission Office (administration, publications, homes, rents, etc.), to pay for obligations in Conference areas (rents, administration costs, etc.), to provide allowances for missionaries and workers, and to meet any other general needs of the Mission.

The General Fund of Mission Conferences

(140) Gifts designated for use in a particular Conference area are set aside for the General Fund of that Conference. This money is used for rents, administrative costs and for similar needs in that area. The General Fund of the Mission is thus relieved from contributing to those Conference items.

(141) The matter of using Mission funds to employ nationals shall be left to the decision of each Conference, with careful consideration of national labor laws and of any financial commitment or contract with a national person or institution.

Support Gifts for Missionary Allowances

(142) Some churches, church groups, and individual donors contribute regularly toward the support of specific missionaries or workers. Such gifts are gratefully received and are applied directly toward the allowances of those concerned at the prescribed monthly level, thus relieving the General Fund from which this support would otherwise have been drawn. These regular gifts are applied toward support funds unless they are clearly marked as personal gifts [see Paragraph (148)]. The Mission does not require that missionaries and workers secure the promise of regular support from anyone, in any form, before they go to take their assignments in the work of the Mission.

Special Projects

(143) Some gifts are designated for certain approved projects of the Mission, such as a farm, an orphanage, a school, a hospital, radio work, Mission homes, literature production, a travel fund, etc. All such gifts are carefully applied to the projects for which they have been designated and are not allowed to be diverted elsewhere.

(144) Mission workers look to the Lord to supply the means, apart from general Mission funds, for their personal equipment, the costs

for their language training, education of their children, etc., as well as transportation to and from their place of work.

(145) An individual missionary or worker may personally finance and operate a special project with the consent of the Mission. Money used for such an undertaking is considered a donation to the Mission and the project is operated under the supervision of the Mission. The general funds of the Mission are not claimed for such a purpose, nor is the Mission obliged to assume any financial responsibility for the same. If the individual is unable to continue the support of such a project, it is curtailed or abandoned, and the individual bears any losses involved.

(146) Any special project which extends beyond the regular maintenance of the missionary staff of any Conference, and which is undertaken with the approval and participation of the Conference (such as farms, schools, book stores, orphanages, radio stations, printing of literature, support of national workers, etc.) is maintained by designated gifts. If the Conference sees that its General Fund is able to assist any given project in need it may apply such money accordingly in specific instances. If a special project is not solvent, it is curtailed or abandoned, and the Conference bears any financial losses involved. In no way is the General Fund of the Mission responsible for the financial operation of any such venture. If its resources permit, the Mission General Fund may be used now and then to assist such projects, but it is never responsible for their maintenance, or for any other financial obligation incurred in connection with them.

(147) As intimated in Paragraph (139), projects of the Mission Office which are found to be necessary for the benefit of the entire Mission (such as offices, homes, publications and promotional materials, duty travel, deputation work, briefing sessions, etc.) are under the charge of the Directorate of the Mission Council and may be maintained by the General Fund of the Mission if necessary. When such projects involve major financial commitments or questions of policy, they require the approval of the Mission Council after careful consideration and consultation. It is the consistent aim of the Mission Office staff to make such projects pay their own way as far as possible without calling upon the General Fund of the Mission. Individual workers may assume the cost or the maintenance of any such project out of personal funds

or designated work funds, thus permitting the resources of the General Fund to be directed more fully toward the support of other Conference needs and projects. Though projects are funded by personal or work funds, they remain the property of the Mission.

Personal Gifts

(148) At times personal gifts are received for missionaries and workers. These gifts, not intended to be applied to their monthly allowance, may be used by the individual missionary or worker as he or she likes. In this fashion, God may occasionally provide for personal needs and expenses that reach beyond other resources available to the worker. Any such gifts received by the Mission are sent to the individual for whom they are intended and have no bearing on that person's support allowance from other funds. Any money which is meant to be a personal and private gift to an individual, and which is not intended as a donation to the Mission nor to relieve Mission funds of that individual's support, should be clearly marked as "personal gift."

SECTION VIII: MISSION PROPERTY

(149) We believe that "all good things come from above" (James 1:17). Our time and energies, bodies and abilities, and material and organizational resources belong to God. They are not our own. We are only their stewards.

(150) As stewards of these gifts, we may hold them lightly and invest them freely. We do not attempt to guard away our material resources against eventualities that may never come. We will not "bury our talents" (Matthew 25:18). To the contrary, we are happy to expend our resources freely and without restraint in service to God's kingdom.

(151) But we will not expend our resources foolishly. As stewards, we will make every effort to employ our properties in the most effective manner possible (Matthew 25:27).

A. Acquisition and Ownership

(152) The ownership of lands and properties is not in every case commendable. Ownership requires a level of administrative overhead that may detract from other ministry efforts and limit our sense of

mobility and possibility. Properties tend to “tie us down.” For the most part, therefore, we prefer to rent or lease rather than to own.

(153) Mission teams may nevertheless propose the purchase of land or the construction or alteration of buildings in order to further their ministry objectives. Proposals are approved by the Executive Committee of the corresponding mission team. The Home Council shares in decisions concerning major commitments of this nature and retains final authority in case of dispute.

(154) Funds required for the purchase of land or properties, or the construction or alteration of buildings are ordinarily the product of specifically designated donations. If designated gifts are insufficient, mission teams may make request for special funding through Estate Funds, upon consultation with the Home Office.

(155) Upon approval of their supervising team, missionaries may use their own work funds or personal funds to purchase or improve property or to construct or repair buildings to be used for Mission projects. Funds used for this purpose are regarded as donations to the Mission. Their use does not merit special liberties or considerations regarding the administration of such properties or buildings.

(156) Properties, vehicles, home appliances, and other equipment purchased with Mission funds – whether designated gifts, work funds, or Estate Funds, etc. – are considered Mission property.

B. Eventual Disposition

(157) Mission teams must envision the eventual disposition of properties and buildings owned by the mission. Properties may become a burden. We cannot own them forever.

(158) Every mission property will require a particular and tailored strategy for its eventual disposition. Mission teams will elaborate such strategies upon the acquisition of properties. The Home Council will share in decisions regarding the disposition of major properties.

Nationalization

(159) In most cases, it will seem appropriate to sell or otherwise transfer mission properties into the hands of national colleagues who may use the property effectively. This should not automatically

mean an associated national church body, however. It may be that another national colleague – perhaps a secular colleague, or even the government – may use the property more effectively.

Sale or Liquidation

(160) In other cases, it may seem appropriate, simply, to sell a mission property, a vehicle or equipment on the open market. Funds generated in this way become the responsibility of the Home Council.

Vehicles

(161) Missionary teams will develop specific policies with regard to the ownership and liquidation of vehicles, appropriate to each ministry context. Vehicles purchased with personal funds are considered personal property; proceeds resulting from their liquidation may accrue to their owner.

SECTION IX: PARTNERSHIP IN KINGDOM SERVICE

(162) We do not live or work alone. We are part of the broad church of Jesus Christ throughout the centuries and around the world. At a larger scale, we are part of the Kingdom of God's sovereign rule, at work at every level of human society and in every corner of the world.

(163) Our identity in the church and the broad Kingdom of God enables us to pursue wide-ranging and creative partnerships in service around the world. We may expect to find colleagues in Kingdom service everywhere. Wherever possible, we will advocate interrelationship, interdependence, and creative partnership in common service to the King and his wonderful cause.

A. The Church

(164) The church of Jesus Christ is the holy company of the redeemed gathered by grace and commissioned for mission. This is our home. We are part and parcel of the church of Jesus Christ around the world.

(165) The fundamental expression of this holy company is the local congregation. In the local company of believers, we are nurtured in faith, convicted of sin, assured of forgiveness, and called and equipped for mission. Our staff, missionaries and praying members will make themselves active and responsible members of a local congregation.

(166) The mission of God commands the entire church of Jesus Christ, all of its members and all of its resources. It is not our ambition to “do mission” on behalf of our congregations or the larger structures of the church. We aim instead to equip the church and its members for involvement in the mission of God, directly and in creative partnerships around the world. We hope to catalyze wider missionary vision, deeper missionary surrender, greater and more adventurous missionary service everywhere. The mission of God is the domain of every community of believers. The mission of God is why the community of believers exists.

(167) This is the goal of our service wherever we are at work around the world. We earnestly desire individual expressions of faith – and the gathering of believers into communities of faith under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We strive for maturing communities of faith that will come to include effective structure, pastoral and teaching ministries, worship and the administration of the means of grace, a diaconate of service, orderly discipline and disciple-making outreach. We will not presume to specify such details on our own; we may entrust emerging communities of faith to the powerful word of God, as St. Paul did (Acts 20:32). We will encourage the church to develop indigenously from the beginning, emphasizing its own national character and theological stance. We will pray, and give, and work to see the church grow in faith, authenticity, surrender, and mission.

(168) Where the church does not yet exist, we will bend every effort to plant its seed. Where the church has come to exist, we will work with the church – and under its leadership wherever possible. We will describe such partnerships in written agreements when it seems helpful. Under written agreement or not, however, it is our intention to stand in solidarity with the church in its mission around the world. We love the church and will serve the church. We will not tolerate cynicism or negativity regarding the church of Jesus Christ in the world.

B. The missions

(169) Beyond local congregations and synodical structures, the church around the world is organized in a wide array of agencies given to specialized outreach and service, like our own. Their common home in the Body of Christ binds such agencies together. We are members one of another; we will aim to walk in partnership rather than independently.

(170) When it seems helpful, we may pursue formal partnerships with like-minded agencies, describing the arrangement by written agreement approved by our Home Council. It may seem helpful to elaborate written agreements when partnering in the support and direction of specific missionaries or missionary projects, for example, taking into account lines of accountability, security considerations, provisions for pastoral care and professional development, periods of service and home assignment, and other details.

(171) More often, however, we will simply work together as opportunity presents itself. We refuse to participate in the vain pursuit of individual acclaim or the preservation of institutional or denominational advantage. We will work always toward the goal of humble and productive cooperation in the broad mission of God.

C. Beyond Church and mission

(172) If Jesus our Lord is sovereign, we may expect to find him at work wherever and however he pleases. He is not bound by human formulations of spiritual and secular, heavenly and earthly, eternal and temporal, sacred and mundane, and the like. If Jesus is sovereign, he is Sovereign over all.

(173) This means that we may find our Lord at work beyond the boundaries of the visible church. We will find him at work in governments, businesses, medicine, art, our shared political and economic life – in any and every stratum of human experience. These domains represent valid opportunities for partnership in service to the Kingdom, as well.

(174) We may feel it appropriate to assign members of our fellowship to pursue opportunities such as these. Such partnerships will be described in specific and detailed agreements with governments, businesses, or other partnering agencies, upon consideration and approval of our Home Council.

(175) While our Lord Jesus may be found at work however and wherever he pleases, we are mindful that he has promised to work for our salvation through one agency alone: the word of God, convicting of sin and delivering grace. This message of law and gospel is our only unique gift to the world, and by far the most significant. We may

find many opportunities for partnership and service in many domains of human society. But the only service that leads others to heaven is announcement of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. In every partnership and every service, whatever its domain, we will watch for opportunity to share the heavenly word of God.

SECTION X: THE HEART OF MISSION

(176) The Mission fellowship has recognized and embraced certain principles of discipleship which lie at the foundation of its missionary calling, of its methods as herein described and of this way of life:

a) Missionaries are possessed of an absolute devotion to Jesus Christ. Because they have been called and sent by Christ, missionaries regard themselves in a very real sense as “bondslaves of Christ,” and “ambassadors of Christ.” Missionaries have renounced the flesh, the world and the devil and give themselves in all things to the Lordship of Christ. They die daily to self and live for others.

b) Such a relationship to Christ means that the Mission and its workers, while thankfully recognizing the visible channels of support, look to Christ alone as the one sure Source for the supply of whatever is needed to fulfill their calling and ministry. This will make it possible to carry forward an unlimited advance in the work. And because Christ’s riches are without measure and his promises are free to all, new advances will be continually undertaken, new recruits will be sent forth as rapidly as they volunteer and qualify, and new work will be opened in the full expectation of his added provision.

This fundamental relationship of faith toward Christ as Lord sustains the missionaries and holds them to their work when other ties fail, and enables them in triumphant faith to face hardship with joy, to endure privation with contentment, and to suffer loneliness and adversity with courage. Funds might run short and fail, or the Mission might even cease to exist, but if the missionaries are devoted to Christ and have put their trust in him above all, the Lord will never fail or disappoint them.

c) In addition to their deep personal devotion to Christ, missionaries possess an affectionate loyalty to the other members

of the Mission and of the whole Body of Christ. This leads them to love their fellow workers, to bear their burdens and weaknesses as if they were their own, and to exert a strong influence for faith and unity in the missionary force. This fraternal loyalty safeguards them from the temptation to grow impatient, and possibly even to separate themselves from their fellow workers. Such a spirit of loyalty to the whole Body of Christ also enables missionaries to love and trust the national Christians as brothers and sisters, to be patient and charitable toward them, and to assist them in every possible way to become fully established as a strong and indigenous church. And finally this same spirit leads them to regard their work not as a kind of competition with rival missions in the same area, but rather as a loving cooperation with others who are fellow-workers of the Cross.

d) An underlying principle of life and fruitfulness in the Spirit is the way of the Cross. As the Savior poured out his soul unto death as an offering for sin, so his disciple—indwelt by his Spirit—is likewise poured out in self-giving, sacrifice, and loving service that others might know and believe in him as their Redeemer and Lord.

Having found the joy of salvation and the delights of Christ's love, missionaries are moved by a deep, new urge to transmit these treasures to others. They are not only receivers but givers. A strong sense of responsibility grips them. The riches they have found are not only for them but are meant for all the world. Missionaries owe it to their fellow-beings to tell them of this. A passion to evangelize the world burns in their hearts.

But it is not easy to carry this out. "We know that...the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (I John 5:19). It will cost a price in precious years of one's lifetime, in concentration of all one's faculties, in sacrifice, in prayer, and in stern labor to leave home and seek the salvation of people in all parts of the world. It means that missionaries must turn away from seeking after costly comforts, a larger income, material possessions, and places of personal advantage, honor and privilege, and deliberately choose instead to embrace the way of poverty, of loss, of privation, of humiliation and whatever else it costs to bring the Word of God to as many people as possible.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24).

Thus the separation from loved ones, the loneliness and heartache, the setbacks and discouragements, the long hours of labor, and the faithful pleadings with God and with human authorities, when lived in love and faith, are part of the dying process of the seed which in the fullness of time will spring forth in an abundant and fruitful harvest. Only in this spirit, which by faith takes pleasure in necessities and distresses, constantly triumphing in Christ who came not to please Himself, not to be ministered unto, but rather to minister and to give his life for others, can missionaries expect to advance in their work, obtain victories among non-Christian people, and further revival in the Church.

e) Missionaries understand themselves to be part of the Church of Christ. They see this Church to be under commission from Christ to be active in his mission in the world. They see Christ giving numerous gifts and graces by the Holy Spirit to members of the Body, that they might work and bear fruit in this mission. They understand the primary task of this mission, of which they are a part, to be the conviction of sinners and their conversion to God. They believe that the Church’s mission is to preach the Word of God to all people everywhere so as to,

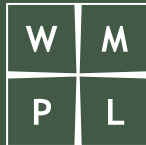
“open their eyes, that they may turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” (Acts 26:18)

Missionaries believe that repentance and faith in Christ will effect as great a change in the lives of people in one land as in another.

Further, they believe that Christ’s mandate to the Church includes the tasks of teaching believers and assisting in planting Christ’s Church, and of doing good to all people in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to overcome evil, to heal and to help, and thus to make life more like God the Father wants it to be.

In the midst of the variety of works in the total mission task, missionaries earnestly seek that they themselves together with the

body of which they are a part will be constantly active, by the Holy Spirit, in the central task of evangelism, that is, of preaching the Word of God and announcing the Kingdom of God in word and deed in order that sinners might repent and believe the Gospel of Christ.



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