

New Hope Church Policy for Short-term Missions

10 October 2006

BACKGROUND

We exist to glorify God by seeking gospel change in our hearts, in our church and in the world that many would come to know and worship God. This is our charge and short term missions is one way in which we fulfill the second part of that charge, i.e. ‘in the world that many would come to know and worship God.’

Missions defined: According to Webster’s, ‘mission’ means the act of being sent and is rooted in the Latin. It has been defined as ‘everything the Church has been sent into the world to do’ including evangelism and service. The second chapter of Acts gives us insight into the special relation of the church and missions and of course Paul’s missionary journeys have become a fundamental example of missions for us even to this day.

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS OF NEW HOPE CHURCH

Generally we can characterize short-term missions of New Hope Church as non-permanent missions in which we, as a Church, seek to equip, send and support a person or group to a particular mission field. This will be for a definite period of time, normally less than a year, in which they are sent to proclaim and/or live out the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A particular mission field can be either foreign or domestic. The mission can be on a field of the candidate’s own interest or New Hope’s or of the OPC or another mission organization of which Session can wholeheartedly approve. The mission must be clearly judged by Session as one of God’s calling for both the missionary candidate and those to whom they are sent.

For the purpose of this policy, a short-term missionary candidate is a member of New Hope Presbyterian Church who has been called and approved by session to perform specific acts of service or evangelism on a short-term mission field. In certain cases, as in a training situation such as the Boardwalk Chapel ministry, this definition may be expanded to include non-members when approved by the Session.

EQUIPPING

The equipping ministry of New Hope Church includes, but is not limited to, training in evangelism and of the reformed understanding of the great commission as well as specific preparation for a particular field. A major and fundamental equipping effort of New Hope Church is the annual Boardwalk Chapel ministry. The Session of New Hope Church will not normally send anyone to a mission field whom it has not examined.

This examination may include interviews, point papers and the fulfillment other requirements in order for session to ensure the person(s) going on the mission are fully prepared for it. Prayer with and for missionary candidates may be one of the most important ways in which we can all

equip and support them. These are all necessary, both for the Glory of Jesus and for the health and welfare of those sent.

SENDING

As we have seen, one extremely fundamental aspect of missions is the ‘sending’ of a missionary to a particular field. In this step we, as a body, want to have an opportunity to bless a missionary on his or her way to the field. This act of ‘sending’ not only encourages the missionary, but also the family and the congregation as a whole. It serves to remind us in no uncertain way, of the great commission and the fact that Jesus promises to be with us unto the ends of the earth. It also, in a healthy way, sets a spiritual seal of approval upon the work and the missionary while at the same time consecrates them to the will of God in a public way.

SUPPORTING

Sometimes even before being equipped and sent, it becomes the body’s great privilege and responsibility to both encourage and support a missionary with its prayers and monetary assistance. We must provide, to the best of our abilities and sometimes in partnership with other established mission organizations, the needed worldly goods and support. This is normally handled through proper management of the Short-term Missions budget line item. This line is not intended to fully fund any particular short-term mission save perhaps the Boardwalk Chapel ministry. Occasionally, mission opportunities arise for which funds have not been budgeted due to quickly emerging circumstances and additional funds may be solicited on behalf of or even by a missionary candidate (but not without approval of the session.) Again, throughout the entire support phase spiritual sustenance in the way of prayer is always needed.

FOLLOW-UP

A critical but sometimes forgotten aspect of support for missionary work is follow-up. This requires a two-way interchange of communications from prayer support, encouraging correspondence, finding out about and sustaining the missionary’s needs by the sending church as well as providing regular updates and requests for prayer by the missionary. This aspect will be monitored by the committee of session and reported regularly to Session.

PROTOCOL

A Protocol is defined in Webster’s as “a code prescribing strict adherence to correct etiquette and precedence (as in diplomatic exchange and in the military services.) Since service on the mission field has been compared to military service by several missionaries including the Apostle Paul, this is an apt description for the procedures New Hope Church would like to use in managing short-term mission work.

First and foremost the short-term missions procedures should be bathed in prayer both before and during missionaries’ time on the field.

The following Protocol is intended to be an integral part of this policy paper while at the same time to be used as a handy and practical check sheet for elders, parents, and aspiring missionaries to understand and follow when seeking and receiving support from New Hope Church as well as when communicating with one another.

SHORT TERM MISSIONS PROTOCOL

"..... You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

It is the intention of the Church to support, encourage, and send those who have been called by God to minister among the lost. Short term shall be defined as missionaries who will be awarded monetary support from the Church for no longer than twelve months.

The protocol for considering missionary candidates is as follows:

1. Request for oversight----- Requests should be made no less than six months, but preferable one year, before leaving for the field.
2. Oversight ----- One or two Elders shall be responsible for short-term missions. Elders shall interview candidates to determine A) Level of maturity, B) Knowledge of Scripture and C) General character and fitness for missionary work.

It should be noted that, while missionary work should bring peace, contentment and happiness in Christ, it is often arduous work without immediate and/or tangible results. Candidates should understand this and not entertain the view that the "work" may be considered a religious vacation.

3. Monetary support ----- The candidates should understand the following: New Hope Church shall provide from no less than fifty and no more than seventy-five percent of required funding. Candidates should be encouraged to test their faith and earn or gather from other sources as much of the required support as they are able.
4. Spiritual support ----- It is often said that no work of God succeeds without prayer; however, it is recognized that these prayers should be regular and specific. Candidates must understand that prayers for missionaries and their work are necessary. Therefore, it is recommended that candidates should be encouraged to enlist others so that daily prayers are offered on their behalf.

5. Training ----- Candidates should be encouraged to learn as much as possible about language, culture, religious tradition, etc. of the people they intend to work among. Teachers shall provide other training and/or information as to prepare the candidate for the field.

6. Follow-up -----Regular written or verbal reports will be provided to the Session and Congregation. Elders or other interested church members will be encouraged to keep in constant contact with the missionary. Such information will be mutually shared as will be helpful for building up and encouraging both the missionary and the congregation by bulletin inserts, 'mission minute' presentations, reports from the field, and other creative, useful means of communication.