

# Westchurch Mission Policy

20 November 2005

Mission, in the broadest sense of fulfilling God's plan above ("kingdom aims") is the principal reason for the existence of the church, and the church's principal aim and purpose. "The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning" (Emil Brunner)

Hence:

- All Westchurch people are (should consider themselves to be) engaged in mission in all aspects of their lives.
- All Westchurch people could in principle be involved in any **corporate** Westchurch involvement in the community as part of our "kingdom aims".
- All Westchurch people can be commended: to the mission God has called them to in their daily lives and within the life of the church.

**Mission** is primarily the redemptive work of God, reconciling the world to himself, and establishing his kingdom.

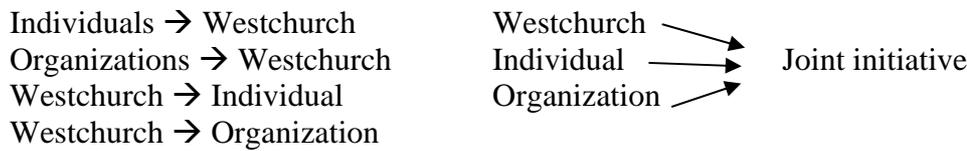
**Mission partner** - a person/organization to whom Westchurch gives special support because of the circumstances of their particular contribution to "kingdom aims". A mission partner must be a person or organization whose partnership with Westchurch is self-evident or where partnership with Westchurch is sought and reciprocated

This is a practical definition, not a category specifically defined in the Bible. It is also not a badge of spiritual merit or authority. The following guide indicates some of the aspects, which characterize potential mission partners; individuals or organizations may fit some or all of these criteria. The essential requirement is that they are participating in working towards reconciling the world to God .

- a. People working cross-culturally, i.e. involved with a different people group from Westchurch(i.e. they may be involved with other groups in NZ or overseas)
- b. People whose main occupation is
  - i. Evangelistic
  - ii. Discipling / training e.g. theological training, nurturing local Christians
  - iii. Social action for disadvantaged people
  - iv. Tent making, i.e. using their usual occupation as a bridge to another people group
  - v. (usually this involves a restricted-opportunity country)
- c. People whose work with other people groups entails substantial sacrifice of normal income, capital, living standards and/or access to their usual family and support groups.

## 2. Recognition of partnership

### a. Missionary partnership can be initiated by



### b. Recognition of the mission partner

Attributes that should be considered in assessing someone as a potential mission partner

- A follower and servant of Christ
- Character - spiritual, emotional and social maturity, e.g. relationships with others.
- Gifting (skills, knowledge, personality)
- Training – biblical and secular
- Application of their gifting - would expect they have already been active in the appropriate area, and to have sought further training as necessary
- Motivation - how has this been expressed already
- Articulation of their calling, or heart-felt desire and purpose.
- Willingness to serve and be guided by others
- Willingness to accept the full implications of the work, its requirements and circumstances, and to consider its impact on current commitments and responsibilities to dependants and other family members. E.g. in the case of a couple, both partners should be committed and have a sense of calling to the work; in the case of a couple with children, they should have thought through the implications for upbringing, education and safety/health aspects.
- Someone the church is sorry to lose because of the gap the person will leave

### c. Recognition of organizations with which partners are involved

Westchurch recognizes that well-known organizations (e.g. para-church or interdenominational organizations) involved in mission or social work usually have established policies and expertise in the following:

- Screening and interviewing of candidates
- Supervision and pastoral care of workers
- Travel and entry arrangements to other locations
- Cultural orientation within other people groups
- Practical guidelines for their particular sphere of mission
- Health assessment and care
- Repatriation or retirement of workers

In view of this expertise and the added support and safety it brings, it is preferable that mission partners of Westchurch are part of such organizations, or seek appointment within such organizations.

Westchurch needs to ensure the agency aims and strategies and processes for selection and support are consistent with the aims of this policy. This does not absolve Westchurch from assessing the suitability of prospective partners itself, and outside organizations will usually request this.

Westchurch needs to be aware of what the better organizations provide and if no suitable organization is available to seek to provide appropriate processes for selection and support. GCIM may act as a resource regarding the characteristics of different mission agencies and their modes of operating, support, and direction of mission partners.

**d. The focus of Westchurch's mission with partners:**

Although we have traditional links with INF and been involved in training Church leaders, God's calling of the mission partner is overriding

**e. Training**

We believe it is important for mission partners to be adequately trained to be able to maintain and share their faith effectively in difficult cross-cultural situations. For medium-long term mission partners we would recommend systematic theological studies (as a guide, the equivalent of a 2 year diploma in Ministries at BCNZ) . Specific training for mission should be undertaken.

We need to know enough about the training institution to be confident about its ability to provide a good grounding in such studies.

### **3. Partners in preparation and Commissioning**

This process should be for a particular task and a particular period of time. Mission partners should be re-commended when sent out again.

However it is clear that there are two aspects to the process of commendation or commissioning.

**A. Partners in preparation**

- The mission partner, mission agency or Westchurch initiates the process for a mission partnership.
- The Mission Team works with the prospective mission partner and the mission agency if appropriate, assessing the suitability of the mission partner and the work to which they are called.
- The Mission Team makes a recommendation to the elders, when all the requirements are fulfilled.
- The church meeting discusses and confirms
- The church entrusts the mission partner with the work and pledges support

**B. Commissioning Service**

This marks the start of the new partnership and the putting into service of the mission partner. There is a farewell service, at which we would like representation from the mission agency if appropriate. At the service the church prays, blesses and farewells the mission partner, entrusting them to the grace of God and to the work to which they are called.

### **4. Finance**

Mission is a priority for Westchurch and this should be reflected in the budget. It is expected to be greater than 50%.

Westchurch expects our contribution to a mission partner to be a significant proportion of

their budget e.g. a minimum of around 20%. We would prefer this to supporting lots of people with small amounts.

Steps in ascertaining Westchurch's financial commitment to a prospective mission partner

1. Determine the costs from the partner and the mission using the GCIM budget template as a framework (see Appendix 1).
2. Determine Westchurch's level of support. Some important factors to consider, besides those considered under "recognition of mission partners" above, are:
  - The clarity and articulation of the call by the prospective mission partner, and the response to this in the hearts and minds of Westchurch people.
  - The maturity, prior experience and coping ability of the mission partner
  - The estimated costs and their level of uncertainty
  - The support coming from other sources
3. Give assistance as required in finding finance from other source.

We need to work with the prospective partner to decide what is an acceptable level of difference between budget and support. For instance we may accept that someone goes out with a shortfall in support that we are unable to meet, if that partner has a clear call that is echoed among Westchurch people, and they have had previous experience coping with living in the situation with part-support previously. Some missions will pool support so any shortfall will be spread across the mission team and will not all fall on the individual.

However, in a case like this Westchurch needs to consider its commitment carefully. The support may be a matter of faith for the mission partner but it is a matter of responsibility for the church.

Westchurch would not expect a mission partner to take on more deputation than is sufficient to provide the required support. The role of fundraising should be balanced with the need for rest and relaxation and building relationships with the commending church(es).

One particular responsibility is to look after mission partners when they return permanently (see section 8). This will depend on their length of time away, their age, employment prospects, and the level of government support available. The Steward's Trust also provides some support for Brethren missionaries, in terms of low-interest mortgages etc.

Westchurch has in the past been able to rise to special giving requests that arise unforeseen or as emergencies, but as much as possible, the budgeting process should attempt to consider anticipated future costs.

## **5. Partnership**

### **a. With the mission agency**

Westchurch would expect to work in partnership with the mission agency prior to acceptance of the mission partner and would invite a representative of the Mission agency to participate in the commissioning of the mission partner if practical.

Westchurch should expect regular contact with the mission agency, such as receiving a regular newsletter and receipts for money from the agency, and contacts or meetings with agency representatives from time to time

### **b. With the receiving church**

Ideally there would be a partnership in mission or “kingdom aims” between Westchurch, the field agency and the receiving church, with the mission partner acting as Westchurch’s “agent” or link. In many cases this will not be possible through lack of an identified receiving church, inability to communicate with same (e.g. language barrier/cultural/belief structure barrier).

### **c. Job description.**

Developing a job description will vary for different mission partners – e.g. if Westchurch has initiated a mission outreach, vs. a Westchurch partner or an outside agency initiating a mission outreach. Westchurch may be involved with the agency in setting a focus for the work.

## **6. Accountability**

a. **Mission partner to church.** There should be regular communication from the mission partner to the church regarding change in circumstances, in direction, brick walls or new openings. The mission partner should be encouraged to ask for advice or comments from Westchurch regarding these issues, particularly if they involve major shifts in direction or location, risks or difficulties. Westchurch may need to be involved in facilitating support or advice from other sources.

The mission partner will be expected to provide Westchurch with an update of activities and responsibilities (see above), and a brief reflection on their work at least annually. In many cases the work a mission partner does may change on location from what was originally planned, owing to local or personal circumstances or findings, hindrances or opportunities, and activities may change over time. Feedback from a field director, or local church would also be helpful.

In addition we suggest that Westchurch send, on a 3-monthly basis, a list of questions for the mission partner to reflect on. This would include pastoral and accountability issues.

The following issues should be considered.

- Personal
  - Health
  - Spiritual life
  - Mood, optimism
  - Rest/relaxation
  - Job fulfillment/satisfaction
- Relationships
  - Family
  - Fellow workers
  - Sources of mentoring, support & pastoral care

- Work issues
  - Achievement
  - Problems, dilemmas
  - Financial situation – detailed accounting is not usually expected
    - are the regular and incidental bills and expenses being met?
    - are their significant unmet needs?
    - if unexpectedly more funds are needed for personal needs, maintenance or new project work, a detailed explanation of the need should be given.
  - Other resources
  - Time pressure and management
- What recently has been interesting, surprising, challenging, or educative?

Part of the value of such questions is for the mission partner’s own reflection. It would be helpful, however, for the mission partner to send to the agreed contact or team in Westchurch a freeform response, e.g. one A4 side, focusing on what is relevant to the mission partner and important to Westchurch. In some cases Westchurch may request a specific response to one or more of these areas.

Such reviews are personal and confidential between the mission partner and the agreed contact or the mission team. The mission partner may reserve certain personal information or information held in confidence at their own discretion, but it would be helpful to Westchurch to know that there were such issues, if they had an impact on the work or partnership.

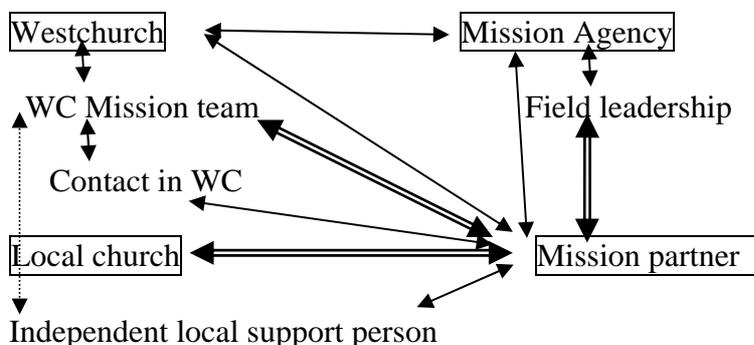
The mission partner should attach with their reflective response a brief (e.g. one paragraph) “press release” that can be shared with the church or in Westpress.

The mission team is responsible for overseeing the accountability of pastoral care of the mission partner.

## 7. Pastoral support

The mission team take responsibility for ensuring that adequate communication takes place with the mission partner and with the mission agency.

The potential linkages that could take place are as follows. Not all of these will necessarily be active in a particular case. The double lines indicate the main directions of accountability for the mission partner



### **a. Helpful means & processes in pastoral support**

Email contact, personal letter, phone call, personal visit, mentoring, local input or a support person who is independent of the work or mission itself.

More than one person involved is helpful. The mission team should be the ones to *monitor* what pastoral care is going on.

The mission agency will often have their own plan of pastoral care

### **b. Helpful items in pastoral support. Westchurch can:**

- Share what is happening in the church
- Send: parcels, Westpress, church meeting minutes, Newsgram (sent by GCIM monthly)
- Share: new/good books, new topics of discussion or crisis in church and in secular life, items of common interest - rugby tapes, local “gossip”, articles of interest on the internet and in magazines,
- Remember birthdays, family members at home, children, and friends.
- Reassure the partner that they are remembered, cared for, people are interested, praying, identifying, involved in partnership.
- Facilitate access to specialist help if necessary
- Encourage and facilitate continuing development & refreshment through workshops, retreats, conferences and conventions.

## **8. Home assignment and Repatriation**

### **Home assignment (previously known as furlough, home leave)**

Planning for home assignment should commence six months before returning.

Reasons for Home assignment

1. Rest , Recreation, Relaxation
2. Spiritual Refreshment : training ,courses (input exceeds output)
3. Health, mental and spiritual checks
4. Re-orientation
5. Encourage attendance at WC Camp when home to renew ties
6. Reporting back to sending churches
7. Building relationships with sending churches, catching up
8. Reflection, regathering, planning ahead and reformatting.
9. Deputation (a form of marketing): meetings to gain financial and prayer support, educating people of mission in general ,inspiring and motivating

Frequency and duration of home assignment will depend on distance, expense and need, eg. children at school/university to visit . Typically this would be 3yrs service followed by a three months home assignment.

Westchurch financial support will continue during home assignment.

The mix of these will depend on the length of time available and priorities need to be set and opportunities taken into consideration. A health check, physical ,spiritual and emotional should be done at the start of the home assignment . Some reorientation to life in NZ may also be required. It is recommended once the mission partner has had adequate rest they should be involved in a specific role in Westchurch.

## Repatriation

Needs to be planned in advance

Many of the same needs as Home assignment

- Re-entry – reorientation, adjustment and integration.
- Demobilisation, decommissioning, debriefing.
- Reporting to sending churches
- Refreshment, recreation and health check.

Need to provide:

- pastoral care
- a contact, someone to be available to help
- needs assessment
  - what are the provisions and expectations of the mission agency for repatriation?
  - accommodation (Stewards trust)
  - transport
  - availability of Superannuation if retiring or
  - employment prospects and need for re-training, updating
  - Location – we should not assume the mission partner will come back to Westchurch – they must be able to choose the place where they can exercise their gifts and fit in, the needs of the whole family including the children should be considered.
- Celebration service, decommissioning .

### *When does support close?*

This will depend on the circumstances.

Allow up to a period of time equivalent to length of home assignment e.g 6 months

## 9. Education & Exposure to Missions

We need to see mission as an integral part of what we do. Some of the ways we can foster this are:

- Continued focus in Sunday services – teaching and worship, visiting people & speakers with cross-cultural experience
- Focus in home groups.
- Mission partners, representatives, contacts of mission partners or Mission team to give updates in Sunday services with prayer (need advance warning to worship leader and consideration whether alternative time such as over an after-church lunch etc may be more profitable)
- Regular snippets in newsletter with prayer points for mission partners
- Updates on notice board – “meeting our mission partners over coffee” - it might be a consideration to put snippets about Westchurch people in their daily lives there as well
- Hearing (“testimonies”) from people about their experiences.
- Encouragement to do Biblical training and get experience in organized mission ventures, e.g. camps, outreaches, short term programs in NZ or overseas.
- Reminding each other of opportunities that are available or come up (see below) through Westpress, notices, notice board, email list, and personal invitation

- Calendar of regular mission happenings a possibility but may be a large task keeping it updated
- The Mission Team to act as a conscience reminding WestChurch of mission. The mission team might consider a prayer chain or other method of circulating prayer needs to home groups and others.

It is not enough just to support mission partners. We must not lose sight of our total mission as a church both in Christchurch and with our partners connecting us to mission in other situations.

Encourage Westchurch people to be involved in -

- Short courses in biblical studies (BCNZ, Apostolic training college, Theology House) or practical studies
- Short term outreach or aid programs
- GCIM have a gap year program.
- Regular outreach or aid in Christchurch (OAC, SU, City Mission, Flame.)

## 10. The Missions Team

The Mission team is to be set up like the pastoral team.

### a. Job description

- **Leadership** in mission policy
  - Adapting or changing aspects of mission policy according to best practice or practical necessity, recommending major change in focus of policy to WC.
- **Education**
  - Ensure mission kept as a focus for WC.
  - Education of WC- exposure to mission courses, speakers, opportunities,
  - Fostering of prayer for mission
  - Encouraging people to undertake training
- **Resource**
  - Knowledge of opportunities, organizations & the practical aspects of preparing for mission partnership
  - Guide and help those considering mission partnership
- **Management** of the mission partnership. Involves leadership, oversight and ability to delegate. It is not anticipated that the Team will personally handle all the following, but they should know *how and whether* each function is being performed.
  - Help in processing applications
  - Liaison and communication with mission partners
  - Pastoral support (See Pastoral support section)
  - Knowledge of lines of contact and responsibility for the mission partner
  - Managing financial support and budget assessment
  - Management of repatriation, home visit, and closure of partnership.
  - Accountability

**b. Desirable qualities to be represented in the Mission Team**

- Mature Christians (essential)
- Passion for mission (essential)
- Good communicators
- Administrators
- Intercessors
- Previous cross-cultural experience
- Pastoral gifting
- Inspiring/encouraging

**c. Setting up and size of the Mission Team**

The Mission team should be a small group of 3-4 who are prepared to delegate tasks, and replace themselves, as the Pastoral team do.

## Appendix 1

**GLOBAL CONNECTIONS IN MISSION  
TEMPLATE FOR BUDGET**

**Name of mission partner**

**Period of budget**

**date**

*fill in either the monthly column or the annual column, not both.*

<b>1. Set up costs in country of mission and preparation for going</b>		<b>\$ total</b>
1.1	Travel to country	
1.2	vehicle	
1.3	freight for personal effects	
1.4	household items	
1.5	visas, work permits	
1.6	inoculations, injections	
1.7	computer hardware, software	
1.8	expenses in New Zealand	
1.9	training	
1.1	deputation costs	
1.11	other	
<b>Total 1</b>		

<b>2. Personal expenditure</b>		<b>\$ annual</b>	<b>\$ annual</b>
2.1	food		
2.2	clothing		
2.3	rental		
2.4	presents		
2.5	power and utilities		
2.6	insurances		
2.7	personal spending		
2.8	giving		
2.9	personal development / books		
2.10	communication / mail		
2.11	bank fees / costs		
2.12	personal vehicle expenses		
2.13	other		
<b>Total 2</b>			

<b>3. Ministry Costs</b>		<b>\$ monthly</b>	<b>\$ annual</b>
3.1	vehicle running / maintenance		
3.2	literature		
3.3	postage, stationery		
3.4	phone and communication		
3.5	internal travel		
3.6	medical costs		
3.7	tools and equipment		
3.8	building and development		
3.9	team expenses, fees		

3.10	support of local people		
3.11	other		
Total 3			

4. Health, education, repatriation		\$ monthly	\$ annual
4.1	health insurance		
4.2	medical costs		
4.3	dental costs		
4.4	medicines		
4.5	school fees		
4.6	return airfares		
4.7	retraining		
4.8	contingencies		
4.9	set up on return to New Zealand		
4.10	other		
4.11	other		
Total 4			

Total required for support		
60% required from commending church		
80% required before leaving		

5. Income sources and amounts		\$ monthly	\$ annual
5.1	personal support (investments etc)		
5.2	family / friends		
5.3	house rental		
5.4	commending church		
5.5	other churches in personal network		
5.6	indications from other sources		
5.7	income from employment		
5.8	other sources		
5.9	other		
5.10	other		
Total 5			

Total required for support		
Total shortfall		

6. Sources of shortfall income:		\$ monthly	\$ annual
6.1	brethren network		
6.2	discretionary funds if GCiM missionary		
6.3	unknown sources (No more than 20% budget)		

5% of monthly amount sent deducted for GCiM administration.

Expectation that all funds should be sent through GCiM. If not then GCiM should know other sources and amounts.