

The Westchurch Bible Training Grant for Young People

Purpose:

Grant-in-aid to encourage young people to get Bible/theological training

Rationale

1. Westchurch is a lay, non-professional church. We rely on teaching and preaching input from within our fellowship. We do not have a guaranteed succession of biblical scholarship as in an ordained ministry. A number of our middle age group have had Biblical training, but over time younger people will need to become increasingly involved in preaching and shepherding in Westchurch and few of them at this stage have had such training. Biblical training is extremely helpful to understanding the faith in a broader than local context, and to gaining valid Biblical understanding and application. If we wish Westchurch to continue to have a solid Biblical grounding and a faith that is true to the Bible and encompassing of the wider framework of Christian belief, it will be important to encourage younger people to be involved in such training.

2. We are a church that majors on lay witness and workplace lifestyle evangelism. Again Biblical training is an extremely helpful means of understanding the faith at a deeper level, which in turn is as helpful for lifestyle mission as it is as preparation for inter-cultural mission. This too is a good reason to encourage young people to undertake some Biblical training.

3. Another reason for a specific grant-in-aid to encourage young people to undertake Biblical training is that they will undertake their "secular" education without specific incentives, whereas this may not be the case with theological/Biblical training. Secular education and training has its own funding stream through student loans and grants. These apply to some Bible training courses but as the Government is moving tertiary funding to a performance based research basis, as opposed to an EFTs basis, this may decrease the funding to non-research based institutions such as Bible Colleges, and fees may increase.

Amount

\$200-\$500 as grant-in-aid depending on nature of application and existing support/finance. Amount to be subject to revision by Westchurch from time to time, as economic circumstances dictate.

Application

The grant will normally be open to applicants who are:

- under 25 years of age
- established and committed in the Christian faith
- have made a public declaration of that faith
- committed to and in regular fellowship in Westchurch

Applicants should submit a 1-2 page application to the elders. The application should state

- the applicant's reason for wanting to do Biblical training
- the reason for choosing the particular course (if this is not a well known course they should include a prospectus or detailed description of the nature of the course)
- the expenses of the course
- the finance or other funding available from other sources.

The amount and number of grants in any year is subject to revision from time to time. Granting of this money, and the amount granted, will be at the discretion of the elders who will report to the end of year church meeting about the disbursement of these grants-in-aid.

The applicant if successful will be requested to maintain contact with Westchurch and provide Westchurch with a brief written (1 page) and oral report at the conclusion of their training.

Scope of funding

The grant-in-aid under discussion here is specifically designed to encourage young people into training. As a grant-in-aid it is to go towards the costs of training but is not intended necessarily to be full reimbursement of the costs of training. If successful applicants have difficulty obtaining the full funding required for the training and wish for Westchurch to be involved in this, this needs to be discussed separately with Westchurch via the elders.

The grant-in-aid does not oblige Westchurch to undertake long-term financial support of successful applicants. If applicants take part in a course that is geared to subsequent involvement in a particular mission enterprise (such as Wycliffe jungle boot camp, YWAM DTS, etc.), the issue of their support and commendation from Westchurch as professional Christian workers should be discussed separately with Westchurch via the elders.

It should also be stressed that the grant-in-aid is not the only incentive we should offer to young people to undertake Bible training. Encouragement needs to be happening as well through:

- personal contact and mentoring
- prayer
- information about courses
- recommendation/refereeing