

MISSIONS POLICY OF THE HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH
June 1, 2008

A. Purpose

1. Scriptural Basis
2. Purpose Statement
3. Exceptions and revisions

B. Membership of the Missions Committee

C. Administrative Chairs

1. Chairperson
2. Vice-Chairperson
3. Secretary
4. Communications Secretary

D. Sub-committees of the Missions Committee

1. Convention Sub-committee
2. Finance and Administrative Sub-committee
3. Missions Education Sub-committee
4. Missionary Care Sub-committee
5. Partners at Home Sub-committee

E. Member Responsibilities of the Missions Committee

F. Responsibilities of the Missions Committee

1. Goal Setting
2. Prayer Support Development
3. Missions Education
4. Missionary Recruitment
5. Budget Preparation and Administration
 - a. Proposed Budget
 - b. Guiding Principles of our Career Missionary Support
 - c. Selection Criteria for Career Missionaries
 - d. Salary Support Financial Allocations
 - e. Support of Third World Churches, Agencies and National Workers
6. Short Term Missionary Deployment
 - a. Goals
 - b. Categories
 - c. Support Guidelines
7. Special Project Development

MISSIONS POLICY OF THE HOUGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH

A. Purpose

The definition of missions at the Houghton Wesleyan Church shall be any ministry, the purpose of which, is to fulfill the great commission by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism, discipling, church planting, and ministries of compassion.

1. The Scriptural basis for the Houghton Church involvement in mission is as follows:
 - a. To fulfill the great commission of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20).
 - b. To see people saved and brought to the knowledge of God (John 3:16, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:13-15).
 - c. To build up the body of Christ through discipling (Eph. 4:12-16).
 - d. To minister to the totality of human need (Matt. 22:37-39 and Matt. 25:31-46).
2. The purpose of the missions policy is:
 - a. To educate, challenge and inspire the congregation to be involved in missions
 - b. To help achieve a clear sense of direction
 - c. To promote thoughtful evaluation of crucial issues
 - d. To avoid making important decisions on an emotional and haphazard basis
 - e. To prevent confusion, inconsistency, misunderstanding, and hurt feelings
 - f. To define the relationship of our church to the individuals involved in ministry and their sponsoring organizations, where applicable
 - g. To ensure better stewardship of human and financial resources
 - h. To maintain consistency as the Missions Committee membership changes
 - i. To inform church members, pastoral staff, other boards of the church, individuals and organizations of the principles by which our Missions Committee operates
 - j. To ensure accountability in the missions program.
3. Exceptions and proposed revisions to this policy can be made by a simple majority vote with members of the Missions Committee. While the policy has been created for structure and direction, exceptions can be made, but must be approved by the committee, which is in session, and recorded in the minutes as an exception to policy. Revisions, changes, or additions made in the policy on approval should be updated, approved by the Board of Elders, and made available to the congregation as a whole.

B. Membership of the Missions Committee

The manner and selection of persons serving on the Missions Committee are determined by the church bylaws as governed by *The Discipline*. They may be nominated by consensus of the existing members of the committee, and shall be elected annually by the local Board of Elders from the congregation of the Houghton Wesleyan Church. The term of office is one year, which may automatically renew, unless a given individual indicates a desire to take a sabbatical or retire from the committee. There will be, in addition, at least one member from the Board of Elders, and at least one member from the Pastoral staff for a total committee membership of at least 12 on the Missions Committee.

C. Administrative Positions

1. Chairperson.

The Chairperson will be nominated from within and elected by a simple majority of the members of the Missions Committee, and after such election has been confirmed by the Board of Elders the chairperson will carry out the following duties:

- a. Prepare the agenda and preside at meetings.
- b. Nominate the Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Communication Secretary.
- c. Appoint Sub-committee chairpersons.
- d. Serve as ex officio on all mission Sub-committees.
- e. Be responsible to delegate all matters relating to correspondence, contact, and coordination with the individuals involved in ministry and their sponsoring organizations.
- f. Be responsible for developing long-range mission programs and goals.
- g. Be responsible to review missions policies and practices annually.
- h. Submit an annual report to the congregation.
- i. Facilitate annual missions programming.

2. Vice Chairperson.

The Vice Chairperson is nominated by the chair from the membership of the Missions Committee and confirmed by the same. The Vice Chair is responsible to preside at meetings in the absence of the chair.

3. Secretary.

The Secretary is nominated by the chair from the membership of the Missions Committee and confirmed by the same. This person is responsible for informing members of meetings and arranging for typed minutes and appropriate correspondence.

4. Communications Secretary

The Communications Secretary is nominated by the chair from the Missions Committee and confirmed by the same. This person is responsible to:

- a. Receive communication from those involved in ministry and/or their sponsoring organizations and pass on urgent needs and requests to church leaders and Missions Committee members.
- b. Prepare the “Missionary Mailbag” from news received from those involved in ministry and their sponsoring organizations.
- c. Prepare the “Family in Ministry” article for the weekly Sunday bulletin.
- d. Submit the “Missions” article to the church office for monthly publication in the Houghton Highlights, being careful to represent both Home and International ministries.

D. Sub-committees of the Missions Committee

At the first meeting of the fiscal year, the Missions Committee Chairperson will appoint chairpersons for all standing Missions Sub-committees with the approval of membership of the Missions Committee.

The Sub-committee chairperson will select from the Missions Committee and/or congregation others to serve on such committees; see that the responsibilities of such committees are discharged; and give progress reports to the Missions Committee Chairperson and as requested at regular Missions Committee meetings. The Missions Committee may occasionally use regular meeting times to meet as Sub-committees of the whole and bring recommendations for action to the regular Missions Committee.

In addition to the following standing Sub-committees, other standing and special Sub-committees will be added as needed.

1. Convention Sub-committee—responsible for planning and coordinating the annual missions conference. Planning should begin at least six to eight months prior to the convention with consultation of the pastoral staff and regular reports to the Missions Committee.
2. Finance/Administrative Sub-committee—responsible for preparing the annual budget review and recommendations as well as studying and recommending action on requests for support or funds during the year. The Chairperson may assign other administrative tasks, such as policy issues to this Sub-committee.
3. Missions Education Sub-committee—responsible for educating, challenging and inspiring the congregation to be involved in missions. This should include using various methods and means and working with those responsible for Christian Education in the church.
4. Missionary Care Sub-committee—responsible for coordinating communication activities (including special days, holidays, etc.) between the church and those involved in our supported ministries, and to coordinate efforts to provide welcome and hospitality to any who might visit Houghton for short or extended stays.

5. Local Ministries Sub-committee--- responsible for overseeing and ensuring the involvement of our congregation in ministering to the needs of people in Allegany County, WNY/NWPA and the Northeastern U.S. (Ministries like those that have traditionally fallen under the supervision of the “Partners at Home Committee” would fit into this category.)

E. Member Responsibilities of the Missions Committee

Each member of the Missions Committee is expected to:

1. Attend both regular and specially called committee meetings.
2. Serve on one or more of the Sub-committees as assigned.
3. Actively participate in carrying out the responsibilities of the missions committee as outlined in section F.
4. Maintain an interest in communication with supported missionaries and ministries.
5. Be familiar with the missions policies and practices of the Houghton Church.
6. Serve as a source of missions information to any member of the congregation.

F. Responsibilities of the Missions Committee

1. Goal setting. The Missions Committee will set short and long-term goals. Our results are to be reviewed annually leading to a process of adjusting future goals in light of strategic alignment with the objectives of the Church and our committee.
2. Prayer Support Development. The Missions Committee will endeavor to develop an increasing awareness of the absolute necessity and positive results from intercessory prayer for missions:
 - a. Presentation of news and needs by special prayer from the pulpit regularly,
 - b. Presentation of news and needs of the people we support in Sunday School, the church bulletin, or church newsletter for visual displays,
 - c. Presentation of prayer requests at the mid-week prayer service.
3. Missions Education in the church. It is the responsibility of the Missions Committee to educate and inspire the congregation to service in missions and personal/family support of missions. Working with the appropriate individuals and committees in Christian education, the Missions Committee will:
 - a. Implement a missions education program for all ages. (e.g. WKFM, Youth Group programming, Urbana, Missions Convention, etc.)
 - b. Encourage interaction between the congregation and the ministries we support.

4. Missionary Recruitment. It is the responsibility of the Missions Committee to identify, encourage, counsel, disciple, and commend members of the congregation for missions and outreach service. To this end, the Missions Committee will:
- a. Urge our congregation to pray for sensitivity to God's leading as to where and how they can best serve him.
 - b. Encourage and support those in the congregation who have committed themselves for service,
 - c. Encourage mission organizations in general, and the Wesleyan church in particular,
 - d. Involve youth and adults in short-term missions, at home and overseas.

5. Budget Preparation and Administration.

The Missions Committee will prepare an annual budget with detailed specifications for submission to the church board and will administer the budget subsequent to the approval by the congregation. It will be the responsibility of the Missions Committee membership to encourage the congregation to provide support for church mission activities through continued and generous financial contributions.

- a. The proposed budget shall include a reasonable balance between salary support and organizational support.
- b. Guiding Principles for salary support.
 - 1) Evangelistic Opportunity. The missions budget will give preference to those areas in which preexisting opportunity for hearing the gospel is relatively small.
 - 2) Significant support will be given to relief, development, and specialized needs such as, medical, education, technology, Bible translation, sports, and etc.
 - 3) A portion of support will be given to the encouragement of national churches through training of leadership and partnering in mission outreach
 - 4) A majority of the budget will be given to the support of career missionaries.
 - 5) We will endeavor to generally favor the support of a fewer total number of career missionaries at a larger individual annual dollar amount per missionary (as opposed to a larger number of missionaries at lesser amounts each).
 - 6) We will endeavor to provide at a minimum, an "inflation adjustment" each year for our supported missionaries.
 - 7) As a Wesleyan Church, our aim is to commit a majority of our career missions budget to works supported by Global Partners or World Hope
 - 8) Approximately 5 percent of the missions budget may be designated for contingency purposes defined as urgent special needs.

- 9) Retirement Policy: For currently supported missionaries (as of June 1, 2008) the maximum allotment shall be 1/3 share. For newly supported missionaries, it will be expected that there will be provision of an adequate retirement plan apart from our local church support.

c. Salary Support Selection Criteria.

The Missions Committee wants to be assured of the personal integrity of the candidate; that he/she is acting in the will of God, that his/her ministry will be fruitful, that he/she is capable of handling the tasks to which he/she is called. The Missions Committee will consider for support only those who are serving or expect to serve under approved missions boards or agencies.

Consideration for new support of career missionaries will be given as follows:

- 1) Only mission works that fit into our guiding principles will be supported.
- 2) Those set apart for service from our own congregation will be given priority over others not specifically connected to our church.

d. Salary Support Financial Allocations

- 1) We will strive to maintain ongoing financial support to active missionaries who are currently being supported, under the Guiding Principles above.
- 2) Rather than give specific dollar amounts, which will change from year to year, the amounts will be expressed in numbers of shares. (In the 2007-08 budget year, one share was \$3,700.00.)
- 3) One share per couple per year.
- 4) 2/3 share per single person per year.
- 5) 2 shares per couple per year for those set apart from the local congregation serving under Global Partners.
- 6) 1&1/3 share per single per year for those set apart from the local congregation serving under Global Partners.
- 7) For missionaries currently supported as of the implementation of this Missions Policy who have entered retirement status, the maximum allotment shall be 1/3 share.
- 8) These policies are for the committee's guidance. There may be times when an exception should be made because of special circumstances.

- e. Support of third world churches, agencies, and national workers
 It is church policy to endeavor to strengthen the ministry of third world churches, evangelical agencies, and national workers by prayer and financial support. Support for nationals training in their own country or continent will be given first funding priority. Secondly, support for nationals studying in the United States may be considered when:
- 1) Equivalent training is unavailable in his/her own country or similar culture, and
 - 2) The program of study is being undertaken in the United States on the recommendation of the national church of his/her country and will enhance his/her ministry, and
 - 3) The student purposes to return to his/her own country or culture for ministry, and
 - 4) There is a positive recommendation from the missionaries or the college or seminary, which is working in conjunction with him/her.

6. Short-term Missionary Deployment.

Our short-term ministries are intended to enhance and support the same objectives as our career missionaries. Therefore, compliance with the applicable guiding principles listed above (section F5a, 1-3, 7) will be the first determining factor for approval of any short-term ministries.

a. Goals:

- 1) To involve many of our people, who have demonstrated their Christian walk in our community, in significant and strategic ministries across cultures,
- 2) To link with our supported missionaries and ministries at home and abroad, especially under Global Partners,
- 3) To provide accountability and assure adequate preparation at home and abroad in these endeavors, including appropriate training in cross-cultural and missions principles,
- 4) To foster ongoing commitment to cross-cultural missions through participation in and subsequent reports of these outreaches.

b. Categories. (These are examples, not priorities or an exhaustive list.)

- 1) Locally initiated and repeated ministries and partnerships (e.g. Haiti, Kingsley) with recognized organizations.
- 2) Locally sponsored ministry/work teams with recognized organizations.
- 3) Extended (one month or longer) and typical (under one month) short-term ministries with recognized organizations.
- 4) Other locally initiated independent ministry of substantial duration and direction in accordance with our guiding principles.
- 5) District/denominational partnerships

c. Support Guidelines.

- 1) The annual missions budget shall include ongoing allotments for short-term ministries from which the committee shall distribute funds.
- 2) Regular support in the budget shall include assistance to non-local church young adults through Global Christian Fellowship allotment, and a regular allotment for Houghton College Sports Ministry.
- 3) Approval of requests and distribution of funds for short term/extended short term missions endeavors shall be prioritized in the following order:
 - (i) Ministries sponsored by Houghton Wesleyan Church.
 - (ii) Pastoral staff missions trips.
 - (iii) Global Partners affiliation.
 - (iv) Other recognized mission organization programs.
 - (v) Other locally initiated independent ministries.
- 4) Steps required for seeking assistance from missions funds include:
 - (i) Completion of our application form (description, length, agency, need of ministry),
 - (ii) Interview with and endorsement of a member of the Missions Committee or the whole committee, and
 - (iii) Approval and allotment by the Missions Committee as a whole.
- 5) Guidelines for requesting tax exempt coverage from the church. (Normally gifts should be channeled through a sending mission agency.)
 - (i) Must be an officially sponsored ministry with recommendation of the Missions Committee and approval of the Board of Elders.
 - (ii) Group or team ministries have priority over individuals.
 - (iii) Age and maturity, nature and goals of the ministry, and local church involvement in planning will be taken into consideration.

7. Special Project Development

The Missions Committee may from time to time present special projects above the budget to the church and encourage giving to them both for the benefit of the project and as a means of missions education. Such special projects must be approved by the church board.