

# Trinity Grace Church, Ramsbottom: Missions Policy

Trinity Grace Church takes very seriously our Lord's last command which is for the church to make disciples of every nation, of every people (see Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15). We are thus committed to the sending and supporting of obedient, gifted, proven and thus truly called disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who will make disciples of Jesus Christ elsewhere. It is with this in mind that we have formulated the following policy with regards to missionaries that Trinity Grace Church both sends and supports.

We recognise that this is a fallible document and thus there will always be the need for periodic review and subsequent necessary changes as the light of Scripture and missions experience fine tune our viewpoints. Nevertheless, it shall serve as a binding document as administered by the elders of Trinity Grace Church.

## I. Terminology

- A. "Missionary" – A disciple of Jesus Christ that has been called by God and sent out by the local church to go to another culture overseas to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. In most cases, this will be with a view to establishing a New Testament local church. The main task of missionaries is church planting, church strengthening and/or training of leaders, and because of that they must be elder qualified.
- B. "Sent Missionary"—Those whom Trinity Grace Church has sent under the leadership of the elders, commissioned to represent Trinity Grace Church as missionaries.
- C. "Support"—This speaks of financial support.
- D. "Furlough"—Period of time, approved by the eldership, wherein the missionary takes a break from his field of service, returns to Trinity Grace Church, and reports on his ministry, re-establishes relationships within the church, and is refreshed to resume ministry.
- E. "Retirement"—When the missionary ceases to fulfil the ministry that he was sent to accomplish.
- F. "Term"—Refers to the period of service in which the missionary is serving on the field in his capacity as a missionary. The length of the term will vary but it is expected that the missionary will serve an uninterrupted term of at least three years before taking a furlough.
- G. "Missions Support Worker" – One who does not meet the definition of "missionary" but who receives missions support for their service. In this category a disciple of Jesus Christ has been called by God and sent out by the local church to go to another culture overseas to support in the work of making disciples of

Jesus Christ, but the focus is not on church planting and/or training of leaders, but in supporting roles such as teaching, translating, children's work, administration etc.

## **II. The sending of missionaries**

Trinity Grace Church will only commission its own members to represent her as missionaries. She will send men who have proved their call to be missionaries by virtue of a long and continued observance of character, conduct and competence.

- A. Character — In terms of 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9, which are required in fullness by the missionary without exception. Support workers must meet all the character / moral qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, but depending upon their role, may not be required to have the teaching or discernment qualifications. All missionaries and support workers must show evidence of sustained fruit of the Spirit and godly living.
- B. Conduct — The proving ground of the above.
- C. Competence — The missionary's proven ability to effectively minister the gospel of Jesus Christ as evidenced by the making of disciples in his home, within Trinity Grace Church and elsewhere.
- D. Communion — The relationship of the missionary / support worker with the local church must be above reproach and there will be a proven track record of submission and service to the local church, under the counsel of the elders.

The elders will undertake to discern the biblical qualification of a missionary candidate (see Acts 13:1-4). The qualified and sent missionary will minister under the authority of Trinity Grace Church.

With regards to this, it is essential that the missionary reflects the doctrine of the church in his ministry. When it comes to major doctrinal issues there must be loyalty to the position of the church as is reflected in the public ministry of the word. It is however recognized that there are various issues that fall under the heading of 'things disputed' and charity must prevail in these issues of conscience. However, the missionary must fully subscribe to the 2<sup>nd</sup> London Baptist Confession of faith. (See ACBC constitution appendix for a definition of full subscription).

The missionary is being sent by the church to reproduce the biblical ministry of Trinity Grace Church, especially those called to do church planting, (we acknowledge that biblical contextualisation must take place as far as no biblical command/doctrine and teaching are compromised), and thus it is essential that the missionary be in close contact with the church. It is also equally incumbent upon the elders to keep close contact with the missionary.

Missionaries sent by Trinity Grace Church are deemed to be fully trustworthy and thus much freedom is given to the missionary as to how he engages in his ministry. After all, he will know the culture better than we. And yet within this freedom it is assumed that there will be faithfulness to the doctrine and polity of Trinity Grace Church, as well as a commitment to the preaching of the whole counsel of God.

Missionaries are encouraged to enter into partnership with other like-minded churches or ministries on the field, wherever possible. However, they should only do this with prior discussion with the elders, except in exceptional circumstances. This may protect the ministry from some subtle and yet grave dangers.

Trinity Grace Church will seek to prepare the missionary before he is sent, as far as possible. This preparation will include theological training, cultural, linguistic training (where appropriate) and medical training (where appropriate), and an assessment of the possible difficulties that may be encountered.

### **III. Financial accountability**

All financial support for the missionary must be channelled through Trinity Grace Church. The missionary must inform all supporters outside of Trinity Grace Church that this needs to take place.

Missionaries will not be sent to the field of service until all debt incurred by them has been satisfied unless by agreement of the elders to the contrary, such as student loans or a mortgage on a property where repayments are being maintained.

The Church Council will establish the monthly support level for the missionary, his family and ministry, in consultation with the Church Members' Meeting. The eldership may refuse to release the missionary to his field unless sufficient funds have been raised. In the event of the missionary losing considerable support while on the field, the eldership may call him home for the purpose of raising sufficient funds.

Missionaries receiving designated funds for specific projects, ministries, etc. will be required to limit those funds for such designated expenses.

As a member of Trinity Grace Church, it is expected that the missionary will give his offerings to the church that he is partnering with on the mission field, or the church plant that he is working to establish. The missionary is free to give offerings to his home church or any other church or ministry he pleases.

Missionaries should not seek directly to raise funds from individuals who are members of Trinity Grace Church, or others outside the church. Wherever a member desires to support the missionary, this should not be at the expense of diverting funds from other commitments at Trinity Grace Church. Any support for the missionary must be sent through Trinity Grace Church.

Missionaries are expected to fulfil all financial obligations in the field of their ministry and are not permitted to acquire any fresh debt while serving overseas.

#### **IV. The support of missionaries / support workers**

##### **A. Those sent by Trinity Grace Church**

Trinity Grace Church will endeavour to sacrificially support (financially) its member missionaries. The giving status of the church will determine the actual amount. It is the stated goal that Trinity Grace Church will meet the financial needs of its missionaries as far it is able to do so. The church must ensure that the missionary and his family are adequately supported for their present needs and future provision of income and housing for retirement, and that the missionary finds contentment in the level of support, so that he can focus upon his ministry, which will often be very challenging.

Our missionaries will be supported primarily by the sacrificial giving of our membership through our “Missions Fund” and designated giving.

The “General Fund” may be used if there are available funds and if the eldership deems this to be a wise and prudent use of such funds.

On behalf of their missionaries, the church may seek financial support from like-minded churches and Christians. This may involve the missionary making presentations to other churches or Christians with the knowledge and support of Trinity Grace Church, but all funds should be directed through Trinity Grace Church’s bank account.

Depending upon the circumstances, as the work of church planting progresses, the church plant should take on an increasing measure of the support of the missionary, in conjunction with Trinity Grace Church.

Missionaries are also encouraged to raise prayer support from churches and individuals through their prayer letter and personal acquaintances. However, Trinity Grace Church fully commits to supporting the missionary in prayer and will seek to encourage the missionary through correspondence, not only from the elders, but also with individual members.

##### **B. Non-member missionaries**

In order to ascertain whether Trinity Grace Church can support a particular missionary from another church of like faith, the eldership will interview them.

Those missionaries must be sent from and under the authority of their local church.

Those missionaries must agree with the doctrine of Trinity Grace Church concerning the Great Commission, as well as the great doctrines of Scripture, God, Christ, salvation, preaching and the church.

Though Trinity Grace Church's priority is the sending and supporting of her own, she is willing to help those, when possible, from other local churches when funds are available and when the leadership senses the Lord's leadership to do so. Partnership with the churches that share confessional association with us through ACBC will be given priority.

Trinity Grace Church will primarily focus on supporting missionaries who will be making disciples in areas where there is no other biblical local church doing so, and/or in areas where there is a lack of biblical churches, and/or where God has called the missionary to serve to evangelise the lost, disciple believers and/or train leaders in an area of spiritual need.

C. Missions support workers

Missions support workers, even though they do not meet the non-character qualifications for a missionary, may be considered for financial support provided that the following criteria are met:

The support worker must be a member in good standing of a biblical local church of like faith in accordance with Trinity Grace Church.

The missions work being supported by the worker must be under the authority of, and thus accountable to a local church, or the elders of biblical likeminded churches.

Trinity Grace Church recognises the local church as God's instrument for the furtherance of his kingdom, not parachurch organisations. Hence those involved with parachurch organisations must demonstrate that they are accountable to their local church and overseen by a biblical eldership.

V. Selecting a field of service by those sent out from Trinity Grace Church

These are some of the factors to be considered in determining the field of service for a missionary or missions support worker:

- A. Survey of need.
- B. Survey of required support, both financial and in terms of support workers.
- C. The convictions / burden / interest of the missionary.
- D. Survey of feasibility.
- E. Matching of missionary's gifting and experience with the need identified.

- F. Government restrictions, likelihood of persecution / sufferings etc.
- G. Missionary's personal and family circumstances.
- H. All the above examined in the light of the providence of God, believing that the providence of God should always be given the highest priority in our missionary considerations.

## **VI. Furlough**

- A. The eldership of Trinity Grace Church will review all requests for furlough and will make necessary recommendations concerning the viability of such leave.
- B. The eldership also reserves the right to *require* a missionary to take furlough when they deem it to be necessary.
- C. All missionaries on furlough must submit their plan and schedule for the eldership's approval. This is to safeguard both the missionary and the church.

## **VII. Correspondence**

- A. Trinity Grace Church requires its missionaries to send a prayer letter from the field at least quarterly to report to its supporting churches as well as to give recognition that funds have been received. Trinity Grace Church will render assistance when needed and if able, but the responsibility rests on the missionary.
- B. Trinity Grace Church-sent missionaries are required to identify Trinity Grace Church as their sending church on all prayer cards and newsletter stationery.
- C. Trinity Grace Church requires all non-member missionaries to send a prayer letter to Trinity Grace Church at least quarterly. Failure to do so may result in the withholding of funds until correspondence is resumed.

## **VIII. Assessment of ministry**

- A. Missionaries sent from Trinity Grace Church will be assessed as to the effectiveness of their labours over the period of their ministry. Occasional visits will be made by one or more of the elders for the sake of encouragement and instruction. Trinity Grace Church is not interested in a 'numbers game' with regard to converts, but rather in the effective ministry of making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. Non-member missionaries and support workers will also be assessed periodically as to whether their service is in line with the biblical objectives of Trinity Grace Church. We desire to support and encourage all that is being done to promote the work of the Great Commission as far as we are able.

## **IX. Retirement**

- A. As a missionary is considered to be an employee of Trinity Grace Church, his retirement falls under the concern of the church, and the church will assist in every possible way with planning and preparation for each missionary's retirement years, under the providence of God.
- B. Though one never retires from service to the Lord, practical considerations sometimes require that a missionary retire from his sphere of service. Thus, the eldership of Trinity Grace Church will help in the assessing of when such retirement is advisable.
- C. Once retirement commences, Trinity Grace Church's contractual financial obligation ceases.
- D. No missionary from Trinity Grace Church will be sent to the field without his monthly commitment to contributing to a pension fund. In this way the missionary will have a pension for his retirement.
- E. Depending upon the extent of any hardships experienced and the difficulty of the work, retirement will normally be considered from the age of 55 years up to 67 years. The elders will use their discretion to make exceptions where necessary.

## **X. Medical aid and emergencies**

- A. All Trinity Grace Church-sent missionaries, along with family members and dependents with them on the mission field, are required to have medical aid in the country in which they are ministering. This will be a vital part of the planning and preparation process, supervised by the elders and Church Council.
- B. In the event with God blessing the missionary's wife with a pregnancy, Trinity Grace Church will work with the missionary concerning what is best for them. In some circumstances it may be prudent for some of the pregnancy and birth to be in the UK.
- C. There may be emergency situations, where the missionary and/or his family may need swift repatriation to the UK. For example, through ill health, death, kidnap, etc. Trinity Grace Church will seek to do its utmost to facilitate any needed repatriation as soon as possible.

## **XI. Retrenchment**

- A. The eldership of Trinity Grace Church is entrusted with the stewardship of the gospel and also with that of the church's finances, direction and ministry. Thus, if a Trinity Grace Church-sent missionary is deemed to be heretical (doctrinally perverse or significantly doctrinally contrary to the 2<sup>nd</sup> London Baptist

Confession of faith) or unqualified to represent Trinity Grace Church due to character and / or conduct failure, the eldership has the responsibility and right to call the missionary home from the field to (1) restore the missionary and / or (2) to remove the missionary permanently from his sphere of service. In the event of either of the above, the church and any other churches / Christians sending support will be informed.

- B. Such action will entail eventual cutting off of all financial obligation within a stated period, as indicated contractually.
- C. All Trinity Grace Church-sent missionaries that change their membership to another local church will, in so doing, render null and void all of Trinity Grace Church's administrative and financial obligations.

**XII. Short-term mission trips**

From time-to-time Trinity Grace Church may choose to send an elder or gifted brother on a short-term mission trip. The priority of such trips will be to preach God's word, train men for ministry, encourage missionaries and strengthen churches. In such cases, the applicable sections of this policy must be adhered to.

In terms of financial support for these trips, Trinity Grace Church will ensure that the costs of the trip are covered, either by her own funds, or encouraging the beneficiaries of the trip to contribute (where appropriate). The elder or gifted brother is free to waive the support, but it is an important principle that the church does not presume on this.

**XIII. Statement of agreement with the missions policy of Trinity Grace Church**

I hereby declare that I have read the above document and that I agree with its terms and stipulations and that I am committed to abiding by it.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of local church to which ministry is accountable: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of elder: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of elder: \_\_\_\_\_