

GUIDELINES FOR MISSION CHURCHES AND NEW CHURCHES

(Original 1990-91, Rev. 7.94)

I GUIDELINES FOR MISSION CHURCHES AND NEW CONFERENCE MEMBER CHURCHES

A. INCEPTION OF A MISSION CHURCH

Outreach ministry is an essential mission of our Conference member churches, regardless of the congregation size or constituent population. When such outreach ministry results in membership growth, a determination must be made as to whether the mother church continues to handle the mission as her outreach ministry or to take step to start a new church. The following stages are to be followed to help make this decision.

1976 General Conference (Rev. Suzuki & Rev. Tsujimoto).

- 1st Stage: Research by local church.
Research by Mission Committee with approval of Executive Council.
- 2nd Stage: Mission work under supervision of 'mother church'.
- 3rd Stage: Mission church - approved as a Conference recognized work in cooperation with the Mission and Finance Committees.
- 4th Stage: with appointment of a full-time pastor, church may be installed into full membership and authorized to incorporation proceedings.

(1976 Gen. Conf. - Revs. Suzuki & Tsujimoto)

B. EMERGENCE OF A NEW CONFERENCE MEMBER CHURCH FROM MISSION CHURCHES:

As our conference Member church is accountable for ministering to a new born member and outreach/mission congregations, so our conference as a corporate body of sister churches to a new-born member church.

1. Have at least 25 adult members in each department started.
2. Have adequate meeting facilities either owned or leased.
3. have at least one-half of the financial support for each department started. (1978-79 Gen. Conf.-Rev. Y. Nakano)

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR STATUS MISSION CHURCH

Introduction

General Guidelines for Status of a Mission Church (hereafter referred to as “the Guidelines”), drafted by Church Planting committee and reviewed and approved by the Executive council, will guide the outreach ministries and church planting projects within the Conference. The process and adoption of the Guidelines are the result of our attempt to bridge policy-making related decisions of the Conference, including the church planting proposition in 1992, which was a response to the relevant proposition in 1988. The Guidelines were produced not only because of such administrative duties, but also because future developments of and the current needs for supervision of church planting activities within the conference have been necessitated by current developments.

Therefore, this committee presents this document to the General Conference for acceptance of the General Guidelines for Status of a mission Church of the Conference.

I. Definition of a Mission Church

A Mission church is defined as a church planting or an outreach ministry with a serious interest of becoming a Conference Member Church, (see attachment for its definition), initiated by the Conference, a Conference Member church (CMC), a group, or an individual of CMC, or any combination of these entities. In other words, a Mission Church is a pre-Conference Member church status, being short of fulfilling the CMC criteria. (See attachment for its criteria.) With the following criteria being met, a Mission Church will become an integral part of the conference ministry.

II. Criteria for Being Recognized as a Mission Church

To be recognized as a Mission Church, one of the following criteria must be met:

1) Financial Commitment by the Initiator

A church planting initiator, other than the Conference, must be able to meet all financial needs of the intended church planting without Conference aid. This criterion, however, does not preclude the Conference from participating financially, if the Conference so chooses.

2) Personnel Commitment by the Conference

The Conference is committed to appoint a full-time or part-time minister to an outreach ministry. This personnel commitment by the conference does not waive the financial commitment

- 3) Waiver for Criteria
The Conference may waive the above-mentioned financial commitment criterion to recognize a church planting work as a Mission Church, should the Conference's assessment show that it is viable and has strong potential to become a CMC. A decision for waiver will be made upon the recommendation by Church Planting Committee (CPC), subject to review and approval by the Executive Council.

III. Status of a Mission Church

A Mission Church, which is in the developmental stage to become a CMC, is categorized into two modes. Each is equally entitled to receive the following privileges that CMC receives.

- 1) Two Modes of a Mission Church
 - A) A Mission Church under a Conference (MC?CMC).
This is our traditional church planting mode, which has been in practice for many years, wherein a mother church initiates an outreach ministry that eventually grows into a full-fledge Conference member church.
 - B) A Mission church Under the Conference (MC/C)
A Mission Church under the Conference is a new and expanded mode of our traditional one, in which the Conference, taking the place of the traditional role of mother church, initiates planting a church, or encourages others to start an outreach ministry.
- 2) Supervision of A Mission Church
To make the ministries of a Mission Church more effective, a MC/CMC shall operate directly under the supervision of its mother church, and a MC/C shall operate directly under the supervision of the CPC.
 - A) Since a MC/CMC has a mother church, members of the MC/CMC shall be deemed members of its local mother church. For example, anyone from a MC/CMC who is baptized will hold his/her membership at the mother church.
 - B) A MC/C is without a local mother church, thus can establish

its own membership. For instance, anyone from a MC/C who is to be baptized shall become a member of that Mission Church.

3. Quasi-Board

The initiator shall form a Quasi-Board by appointing several members of the Mission church who shall be responsible for making decisions for the ministries. Important and crucial decisions made by the Quasi-Board must be reviewed and approved by the CPC. CPC shall send a representative to the Quasi-Board as an ex-officio.

4. Status of a Conference Appointed Minister

A Conference minister who is appointed to a Mission Church on a full-time basis is fully entitled to enjoy all the privileges and benefits as are received by other conference ministers. When a minister is appointed to a Mission Church on a part-time basis while holding a full-time position with CMC, the privileges and benefits which he receives from the church where he serves full-time shall remain undisturbed, except additional monetary compensation may be considered for his extra services to the Mission church.

5. Membership Standing of an Initiator

When a church planting initiator is a layperson(s), his/her membership shall remain with the church where he/she held membership immediately prior to assuming the role of a planting initiator. In addition, the initiator is considered an active members as long as he/she meets the guidelines of active membership.

6. A Non-Voting Delegate from a Mission Church

A MC/C is privileged to present one non-voting delegate to the General conference with equal financial assistance from the Conference to CMC if the number of active members is more than fifteen (15). If a Mission Church has been in existence for less than one year, the average number of worship service attendance should be at least 15 or more for six consecutive months after recognition of Mission Church. No Mission Church can cast more than one vote, inclusive of the minister's vote, to the General Conference.

As a MC/CMC, the number of its active members can be counted toward that of the mother church to determine the total number of the church's delegates to the General Conference. (A double counting should be avoided.)

IV. Proposal for a Mission Church

To become a recognized Mission Church by the conference, the initiator

must present a proposal to CPC. CPC will make a recommendation to the Executive Council and the commendation will be reviewed and approved by Executive Council. A typical proposal should include the following information:

- 1) Vision of Church Planting
- 2) Plans and Strategies
- 3) Reasonable Research - demographic and others
- 4) Leadership
- 5) Request for personnel if needed
- 6) Financial commitment
- 7) Activity and progress report, if applicable

V. Responsibility of a Mission Church

All Mission Churches must be responsible for the following:

- 1) Use of the Conference Name
A Mission Church must print on its letterhead, the Conference name, "Oriental Missionary Society (or OMS) Holiness Church of North America", to identify itself as a part of the corporate body of the Conference.
- 2) Ordinance Performance (submitting Proposition regarding this issue at 6/98 Gen. Conf.)
The two ordinance, Holy Communion and Baptism, must be conducted by a minister approved by the conference, while other ceremonial services can be performed by a pastor chosen by the Mission church.
- 3) Financial Participation (considering revision in 1998)
A Mission church must participate financially by making contributions in the form of a Conference assessment, as soon as it is recognized as a Mission Church. They can, at their own discretion determine the rate and at which basis to calculate the contribution. The current assessment rate is 12.5%
- 4) Progress Report
At the request of the Conference, the Mission church should make a progress report to the CPC on its ministries, growth strategies, planning, finances, and others. Any problems and issues detected should be reported for earlier resolution.
- 5) Incorporating Non-Profit Status
A Mission Church is to inform the Conference of their name. If a name is not yet selected, the Mission church must inform the Conference of their plans and schedules to incorporate its non-profit status. A copy of the legal documents relevant to incorporation must be submitted to the Conference.

VI. Church Planting Funds

The conference shall establish a church planting fund account to be designated for each Mission Church, if requested by them. To facilitate and to make the processes convenient, a Mission Church can utilize this designated account for the purpose of accumulating and disbursing funds for their ministries.

VII. Closing Down Mission Church

Contrary to the initial expectations and visions, should a Mission Church not show any signs of growth or potentiality, the Conference could rescind the recognized status of the Mission Church or withdraw the Conference appointed minister from the Mission church. A closing-down of Mission Church should never be hastily done, but with prayers, thoughts, and considerations for all parties involved. As a benchmark, a decision for closing-down should be made between 3 years and 5 years after the recognition of the Mission Church status is granted. Guidelines and policies for closing-down should be developed later by the CPC.

Summary

It should be clearly understood that not all of the Mission churches will eventually become a conference Member church. Only those which qualified under the present guidelines shall be conferred such status. The Guidelines are not only intended to promote individual's as well as a group's desire to plant a new church, but are also intended to encourage a cohesive teamwork of winning lost souls through outreach ministries and to accept challenges from individuals, groups, and Conference Member Church who are willing to make commitments with their time and resources to plant churches. Traditionally, the Conference has not taken the initiative to plant churches but has merely relied upon conference Members Church's works and visions. The time has arrived! The conference must now challenge and motivate itself and its constituents to jointly participate to plant churches, by offering resources, options, and making commitments toward the vision.

It should also be clearly understood that these Guidelines are not intended to fill a vacuum created after the start of the outreach ministry and prior to recognition of a Mission church.

Looking back in our history, the 1976 General Conference minutes made positive comments on the subject of a mission church and of a new Conference Member church. Yet, we have only seen the birth of only two new conference Member Church since then. Two years ago, in 1992, the Conference passed the conference long-term vision by adopting the Church Planting Proposition, which has since played a vital role as the source of spiritual stimulus for some constituents. As a result, we are seeing a potential for six to seven church plantings to burgeon in our conference. Let us be ready to respond to the vision of the Conference constituents and focus on our vision as a corporate body.

“The Harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the Harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.”
Matthew 9:37-38