

Anchorage Grace Church (AGC) Missionary Handbook

Approved by AGC Elder Board 2/11/2024

This handbook is intended to function as AGC's guidelines for the evaluating, selecting, and commissioning of missionaries sent and/or supported by AGC. It contains the requisite qualifications for both missionary candidates and current missionaries as it delineates the priorities, processes, and responsibilities AGC shall undertake when considering the current and future support of missionaries for long- or short-term mission endeavors.

Qualifications for Missionary Candidates

Character Qualifications

All missionary candidates must manifest consistent spiritual maturity and meet the character qualifications for church leaders or deacons (depending on their ministry function) found in 1 Timothy 3:1–15 and Titus 1:5–16.

Missionaries Serving in Elder Capacities

For those serving as missionaries in the ministry capacity of a shepherd/teacher/elder as defined in Scripture (such cases shall be evaluated by the AGC elder board), they should consistently manifest the biblical qualifications of an elder as defined in 1 Timothy 3:1–7, Titus 1:5–16, and 1 Peter 5:1–5 (along with other relevant biblical passages as represented in AGC's Church Constitution).

Missionaries Serving in Deacon Capacities

For those serving as missionaries in the ministry capacity of a deacon or deaconess as defined in Scripture (those serving in the church to enable church leaders to focus on the teaching ministry of the Word – see Acts 6:1–4; 1 Tim. 3:1–15; Titus 1:5–16; 1 Pet. 5:1–5). Such missionary candidates should meet the qualifications for a deacon or deaconess found in 1 Timothy 3 and manifest consistent spiritual maturity, bearing the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22–23) as a genuine manifestation of godly character in submission to the direction provided by their overseers (1 Pet. 5:5).

Missionary Character Evaluation Process

If missionary candidates are members of AGC, an evaluation of their character will be performed by the AGC elder board to determine their ministry readiness. This shall include (but not be limited to) an evaluation of their current ministry service at AGC and partner ministries. If deemed necessary, character references shall be sought from trusted members AGC. Such references will begin with those supplied by the missionary candidate but may include others in addition to the references provided.

If missionary candidates are members of a church other than AGC, an evaluation of a candidate's character will be requested from the elders of their sending church. This shall include (but not be limited to) an evaluation of their current ministry service at their sending church and partner ministries. All missionary candidates who are not members of AGC shall provide character references for the AGC

missions committee and elder board to review. Such references will begin with those supplied by the missionary candidate but may include others in addition to the references provided.

Summary

Only those men or women whom the AGC elders have determined to be elder/deacon qualified (depending on their anticipated ministry role) and have sufficient ministry experience (as determined by the AGC elder board) will be suitable candidates for AGC. The evaluation of a candidate's character will be accomplished through the reference forms submitted with the AGC application and a review of the entire application with an elder.

Essential character qualities of a missionary are:

- Personal holiness: They possess a life above reproach that results in them being an instrument ready to be used by the Lord and someone others want to follow (2 Tim. 2:21; 2 Thess. 3:7–9).
- Faith: They trust the Lord and possess confidence in the Lord to attempt new and great things for Him. Instead of being discouraged at unforeseen challenges, they are flexible and adapt to new situations recognizing God is in control of all things. Their ministry is to God's glory and does not seek praise from men (1 Cor. 4:1–5; 1 Thess. 2:1–5).
- Humility: They recognize that the head of the church is Jesus Christ, not themselves (Eph. 5:23, Col. 1:18). Their humility will be evidenced in a willingness to entrust aspects of the ministry to local men rather than seek to accomplish all ministry by themselves (1 Cor 12; Eph. 4:1–3, 7–13; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:2–5). They recognize that they are merely God's worker, and that God causes the growth in the church (1 Cor. 3:5–9). They are not self-willed and do not seek their own (1 Cor. 13:5; Phil. 2:3–11; Titus 1:7).
- Love: They love others because God loves them (1 John 4:7–21). This love is evidenced by their patience, gentleness, and forgiveness (Col. 3:12–15).
- Passion: They are those who long to see others come to the knowledge of the truth. They are motivated by a love for Christ and His church that results in a willingness to show initiative, not satisfied with the status quo (Rom. 15:20; 2 Cor. 5:14–20; 1 Tim. 4:7–16; 2 Tim. 4:1–5).
- Mercy: A person in a supporting role often is provided with opportunities to meet the needs of those who are suffering (Acts 6:1–4; 1 John 3:17–18).

Spiritual Giftedness of Missionary Candidates

Spiritual Giftedness Expected of Missionaries Functioning as Elders/Shepherds/Leaders

In addition to these character qualities, a missionary serving in a shepherding leadership capacity must be spiritually gifted for such ministry. Every Christian has been given spiritual gifts, but not all have the same giftedness and not all are well-suited to the same type of ministry (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4–11; 1 Pet. 4:7–11). The man who has been chosen by God to be a church planting missionary or a missionary in a shepherding leadership role will have some measure of the following gifts (unless they are serving in a support role):

1. **Evangelist:** He must have such a passionate love for God that he longs to bring others to know and worship Him (Acts 17:16, Rom. 1:16–17). He must have compassion and a heart of mercy that strongly desires that those who stand under God's judgment might be forgiven and know

Christ (Matt. 9:36–38). He must be able to effectively communicate the truth of the Gospel so that the lost would come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Cor. 2:1–5; Eph. 6:19–20).

2. **Preacher:** He is gifted as a teacher who can clearly communicate biblical truth and is willing to stand firm for the truth in the face of opposition (Matt. 28:19, Eph. 4:14–16; 2 Tim. 2:24–26; 4:1–5; Jude 3).
3. **Leadership:** He is able to think strategically about the next steps of ministry and able to effectively communicate that vision to others. He delegates so that each team member has responsibility, can use their giftedness, and truly has a part in the ownership of the ministry (1 Cor. 12:14–25).
4. **Shepherding:** He identifies other men in the church who may become leaders in the church and develops a plan to come alongside them to help them grow in character, knowledge, and teaching (1 Thess. 2:7–12; 5:14). He is faithful to admonish those who may cause harm to the church (Matt. 18:15–20; Acts 20:28; Gal. 6:1–2). He provides counsel and care for the flock of men and women under his care (1 Pet. 5:1–5).

Spiritual Giftedness Expected of Missionaries Functioning as Deacons/Supporting Roles

Missionaries who are serving in a support role must possess the same character qualities of other missionaries (according to the deacon/deaconess requirements listed above) but may exhibit differing spiritual gifts. Support missionaries will exhibit some measure of the following spiritual gifts:

- **Service and Helping:** The work of missions not only requires those who can lead and teach, but also those who can provide practical assistance and help (Acts 6:1–4; Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28). Such ministry allows those in preaching and training roles to focus on those tasks and use their spiritual gifts. A missionary in a support role will minister with humility, diligence, and cheerfulness.
- **Faith:** They will have the ability to trust God even when faced with much difficulty and hardship because they have confidence in the power and promises of God (2 Cor. 12:9–10; 2 Cor. 4:13–18). They will not waver in their commitment to serve the Lord despite the presence of many adversaries (1 Cor. 16:8–9).

Theological Qualifications for Missionary Candidates

It is of great importance that AGC carefully evaluates a person's theological understanding before that person is sent as a missionary, particularly when sent to function in a ministry leadership role. This evaluation is guided by the following sets of qualifications.

Qualifications for Missionaries in Church-Planting/Shepherding Leadership Roles:

Although the majority of biblical qualifications for a biblical elder focus on a man's character, there is also a requirement that the man is "able to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2) and that he holds "fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9). Added to these qualifications is the instruction that Paul gives to Timothy that he must "pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching" (1 Tim. 4:16). As such, any missionary seeking to minister in a shepherding function should seek to present himself as one approved by God who rightly handles the Word of truth keeping a close eye on his faith and doctrine (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:14).

There are different ways such qualifications can be developed through training and experience. Therefore, AGC expects such missionary candidates to have received some level of biblical and theological education. The extent of training and education deemed sufficient shall be determined by the AGC elders on a case-by-case basis, however it shall not fall below AGC's current eldership requirements as stated in the AGC Constitution. The preferred qualifications are as follows (while exceptions can be made, such exempted candidates must demonstrate their biblical knowledge, gifts, and teaching ability qualifications to the satisfaction of the elder board):

- **Biblical Training:** All missionaries sent from AGC for the purpose of leading church-planting or pastoral-training mission efforts will be men who have graduated from TMS, another equivalent like-minded seminary, or have received/demonstrated an equivalent level of biblical education (as determined by the AGC elder board). Such rigorous coursework will propel him toward a rich understanding of God's Word and prepare him to teach Scripture effectively and faithfully (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:14).
- **AGC Missions Application:** Each candidate is required to answer a number of theological questions in the AGC missions application. The application also requires a statement of subscription *without reservation* to the AGC doctrinal statement and constitution.
- **Ministry Qualifications for Missionary Candidates:** Missionary candidates will only be considered for ministry overseas if they have demonstrated faithfulness in ministry in their local church. A reputation for faithful service in the church must be verified by the missionary candidate's pastor(s).

Missionaries in a Support Role:

- **Biblical Training:** All missionaries sent from AGC for the purpose of serving in a deacon or pastoral training mission efforts will have received some measure of biblical training either through a biblical education institution or their local church. The sufficiency of their training and ministry experience shall be evaluated and determined by the AGC elder board through interviews and their application.
- **AGC Missions Application:** Each candidate is required to answer a number of theological questions in the AGC missions application. The application also requires a statement of subscription *without reservation* to the AGC doctrinal statement and constitution.
- **Ministry Qualifications for Missionary Candidates:** Missionary candidates will only be considered for ministry overseas if they have demonstrated faithfulness in ministry in their local church. A reputation for faithful service in the church must be verified by the missionary candidate's pastor(s).

In addition to demonstrating past ministry service, the missionary candidate must develop a ministry plan for future service in the context they are seeking to serve that is in line with the distinctives, goals, doctrinal statement, and mission philosophy of AGC and the principles stated in this document. The ministry plan must be strategic and clear.

Selection Priorities for Anchorage Grace Missionary and Outreach Ministry Support

1. **Members who are church planters.** Monthly support to missionaries who are members of Anchorage Grace Church who are directly involved in establishing and strengthening self-

propagating local churches, or who have as their ultimate aim the formation and strengthening of local churches.

2. **Members who support church-planters.** Monthly support to missionaries who are members of Anchorage Grace Church who serve in support roles (e.g., pilots, mechanics, teachers, administrators, etc.) for other missionaries who are in the first category above, and who are committed to making disciples in their sphere of influence.
3. **Non-members who are church-planters.** Monthly support to missionaries and organizations known and trusted by AGC who are directly involved in establishing and strengthening self-propagating local churches, or who have as their ultimate aim the formation and strengthening of local churches.
4. **Non-members who support church-planters.** Monthly support to missionaries and organizations known and trusted by AGC who serve in support roles (e.g., pilots, mechanics, teachers, administrators, etc.) for other missionaries (above), and who are committed to making disciples in their sphere of influence.
5. **Outreach ministries.** Monthly support to outreach ministries/missionaries (e.g., community service ministries, evangelistic ministries, discipleship ministries unaffiliated with a local church) known and trusted by AGC whose mission is to reach people evangelistically through meeting specific needs of people in the community.
6. Short-term missions support for church ministries and members if funds are available.
7. Short-term missions support for church members if funds are available.
8. Short-term missions support to missionaries and organizations known and trusted by AGC if funds are available.

These priorities will serve as guidelines when people ask to receive missionary support. If two missionary candidates approach the Mission Committee at the same time asking for support, the strength of each candidate's ministry will be thoroughly examined. For example, someone in category 3 (above) may have a broader impact or greater opportunity than someone in category 2. In such cases, the Mission Committee and AGC Elder Board may choose to support a candidate in category 3 over someone in category 2 after prayerful discussion and elder approval.

Pre-Selection Questionnaire for Interviewing Long-Term Missionary Applicants

1. What is your conversion story?
2. What led you to seek serving in missions?

3. Describe what confirmations you have received from your church leadership about this desire to serve as a missionary.
4. How will your ministry proclaim the gospel to the lost?
5. How will your ministry relate to the local church or support church-planting?
6. How have you prepared or are preparing for your upcoming ministry?
7. What is your relationship to AGC or how did you hear about AGC?
8. Share the details regarding your anticipated timeline with training, language study, etc.
9. Tell us about your sending organization. How will your ministry be held accountable?
10. How does your sending organization relate to the local church?
11. What are your sending organization's chief goals and what ministries do they focus on to support those goals?
12. Will you be working on a team with your sending organization and if so, how does your sending organization structure their teams?
13. Please clearly state your team's vision.
14. What is the strategy you are using this year to fulfill the above vision?
15. What is your role within the framework of this strategy?
16. What do you see as possible obstacles that your team, you, or your strategy face this year?
17. What plans have you made or how might you plan to deal with those obstacles?
18. Describe how God is using you in making disciples and mentoring others.
19. Describe the heart attitudes God has been developing in you through prayer and study of the Word.

The Ministry of the Word

From a biblical conviction, Anchorage Grace Church has always had an expository preaching ministry from the pulpit. We highly value the Word of God and sound doctrine and are aware of doctrinal and cultural threats to God's authoritative truth. Many influences subtly attempt to undermine the place of God's Word in our ministries, and we are eager to guard against it. The following questions are designed to help us understand your perspective on some of these issues.

- a) How is the authority and sufficiency of Scripture reflected in your ministry?
- b) What is the position of propositional preaching in your ministry? Is this position articulated in a philosophy of ministry? How is this position practiced in your ministry?
- c) What is your view of a theological position known as a "limited view" of the inerrancy Scripture?
- d) Do you believe people receive authoritative revelation from God today? How do you counsel people (positive or negative) who believe they have received direct revelation from God?
- e) What is the relationship between the sufficiency of Scripture and your counseling ministry? What is the role of secular psychology in counseling people? What is your conviction concerning integration practices in missions?
- f) There are some who teach that there is no place for physical suffering in the life of a believer. Why do you believe that there are Christians who suffer physical illness?
- g) Would you be willing to receive input from AGC leadership if we see ways your ministry might be strengthened by a deeper or different understanding of doctrine?
- h) Based on the missionary journeys of Paul, launched in Acts 13, we believe that God's design to fulfill the Great Commission is through establishing and strengthening local churches throughout the world. If you are not a church-planting pastor, we want to know how your ministry is

designed to support the work of the local church in your area of ministry. Would you please describe how your ministry is connected to the local church?

Philosophical Strategy and the Local Church

- a) What is your view regarding the priority of the local church in God's purpose/plan for ministry?
- b) How does your ministry direct converts and current believers you encounter into the local church?
- c) What is your connection to a local church? What is your ministry in your local church?
- d) Would you be willing to receive input from AGC leadership if we see ways your ministry might be strengthened by a closer connection to a local church?
- e) What is your position on biblical separation in the context of local churches/ministries?
- f) What is your position on church polity, specifically in the area of church leadership qualifications and the Egalitarian vs. Complementarian understandings of Scripture?

Regarding Budget

- a) TOTAL BUDGET – means your personal and ministry needs.
- b) INCOME - means actual dollar amount received for personal and ministry expenses.
- c) Please provide a copy of your current approved annual budget.
- d) Your budget year begins in: _____ and ends in: _____
- e) What was your actual 12-month income for your last annual budget cycle of the most recent complete year?

Process for Selecting and Approving Long Term Missionaries and Organizations

1. Missionary applicant submits pre-selection questionnaire (see above):
 - a. The Missions Committee will review the applicant's completed pre-selection questionnaire.
 - b. The Missions Committee will use the Pre-Selection Questionnaire to consistently and fully vet each applicant to discern whether they are in complete agreement with our Missions Philosophy and are willing to accept input from AGC leadership if needed, prior to recommending the applicant for affirmation by the AGC elder board.
2. The Missions Committee will conduct a pre-selection interview, if necessary. Items covered in an interview will include:
 - a. An individual candidate must show a clear indication of conversion and call to the ministry.
 - b. The candidate/organization must agree without reservation to the doctrinal position of AGC and our Missions Philosophy.
3. When a new missionary is approved by the Missions Committee, the Committee will recommend that missionary to the AGC elder board for approval.
4. Missions Committee will provide a revised budget and/or following FY budget to the elder board to get a commitment on providing funds for the new missionary.

5. Support of a missionary begins when the candidate has been officially accepted by an approved sending agency or sending church.
6. Outgoing expenses for missionaries to reach the field will be considered separately. The Missions Committee will work with the sending agency on this as needed.
7. Insurance for the missionary, education of missionary children, and retirement for the missionary is the responsibility of the missionary or sending agency and should be built into their proposed budget.

For AGC members who are being sent out as long-term full-time missionaries, the church will conduct a public commissioning ceremony to recognize and affirm God's call for them to this ministry service. This ceremony will normally be conducted during a Sunday morning worship service. [OB]

Short-Term Missions' Application and Selection Process

1. Applicant submits a short-term missions application (made available upon request) by the deadline indicated on the form. Include a copy of the sending organization's statement of faith.
2. Applicant meets with the Missions Committee for a personal interview where the Committee will use the following criteria for determining support:
 - Evidence of genuine conversion and an ability to articulate the gospel clearly.
 - A sincere interest in missions.
 - Proven interest and responsible involvement at AGC or another local church.
 - If a minor, parental approval.
3. The applicant will be notified of the decision which may require elder approval.
4. These funds are not intended for short-term high school mission trips.

Missionary Accountability

Ultimate Authority: God's Word

The ultimate authority for AGC and its supported missionaries is the inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word of God (Ps. 19:7–9; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). It is in God's Word that He has revealed Himself and provided us all that we need to know Him and live for Him. AGC therefore submits itself to the authority of Scripture on all matters of faith, doctrine, and ministry service and expects its supported missionaries to do the same.

Church Authority: Elders

The Word of God clearly designates elders as leaders of the church (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). These elders have been found to be above reproach. They lead and shepherd the church based on the Scriptures and godly wisdom. Missionaries are accountable to the elders of their sending churches for their lives and ministry. This is seen from the example of the earliest missionaries in the book of Acts (Acts 14:26–28; 15:22; 18:22–23). AGC expects all its supported missionaries to submit themselves to the elders of their local/sending church that they might have biblical oversight in their ministry endeavors.

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