

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES for Graduation

- **Self-Supporting Assessment**
- **Committed Participants Assessment**
- **Elder Candidates Assessment**

Board of Church Extension

(Revised July 2010)

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Self-supporting Assessment

Procedure

- The Transitional Leadership Team and church planter shall inform the director in writing that the mission church is prepared to have its finances reviewed in order to determine: (1) whether the mission church can offer a call to a pastor and provide a salary package that will meet the requirements of the Bible Fellowship Church (BFC) and; (2) whether the mission is financially able to maintain its ministry outreach and facility costs.
- The director will inform the Board of Church Extension (BOCE) concerning the Self-Supporting Assessment and request that members of the Finance Committee accompany him to the mission church and to review the mission church's financial records, in order to verify its ability to be financially self-supporting.
- The director will report to the BOCE the results of the assessment and if approved, the director will arrange with the mission church the preparations for the Committed Participant and Elder Candidate Assessments. The Self-Supporting Assessment must be favorable and approved by the BOCE before moving on to the next assessments. If the Self-Supporting Assessment is not favorable, the director and Finance Committee will assist the mission church with a plan for becoming self-supporting.

Committed Participants Assessment

I. Definition and Responsibilities of Committed Participants

- A committed participant is a person 18 years or older who is convinced that God is calling him/her to be part of the work of establishing a new mission church. Committed participants of a church of the BFC shall give testimony and evidence of faith in Christ and the new birth. They shall be in sympathy with the *Faith & Order*, have been baptized by immersion subsequent to salvation, and seek to live in conformity to the likeness of Jesus Christ.

- Committed participants shall joyfully accept the following responsibilities:
 1. To live in keeping with the doctrines and standards of the Bible Fellowship Church.
 2. To exercise willingly their spiritual gifts in the mission church.
 3. To minister under the direction of the mission church.
 4. To communicate the Gospel to the outside world.
 5. To pray regularly for the church planter and the ministries of the mission church.
 6. To support the program of the mission church financially with the regular giving of tithes and offerings.
 7. To submit to those God has ordained as leaders in the mission church.
 8. To be a faithful part of the ministry and life of the mission church.
 9. To observe the Lord's Supper.
 10. To demonstrate mutual care and concern for others in the mission church.
 11. To protect the unity of the mission church.

- An individual may become a committed participant in the mission church at any time after he/she has given testimony and evidence of faith in Christ, has been baptized by immersion subsequent to salvation, and has agreed to the duties and responsibilities of a committed participant.

II. Procedure for Committed Participant Assessment

- The Transitional Leadership Team (TLT) and church planter shall inform the director of Church Extension Ministries in writing that the mission church has at least 20 committed participants, as described by the definition, and desires to be assessed by the BOCE.

- The director shall present the request to the BOCE.

- The BOCE may approve the request and appoint an Assessment Committee. The director will designate one of the members of the Assessment Committee to act as chairman.
- The chairman of the Assessment Committee will inform committee members of their appointment. If anyone declines to serve, the chairman will contact the director and he will seek another candidate to be approved by the BOCE.
- The chairman of the Assessment Committee will then make arrangements with the church planter for a visit to the mission church and a meeting with at least 20 committed participants. There are several options for holding a meeting:
 1. A Saturday might be chosen, allowing the group to have a time of refreshment in addition to the assessment discussion.
 2. A weeknight might be chosen with the assessment discussion taking place after some fellowship.
 3. A Sunday afternoon may also be selected.
 4. A typical format for a weekend assessment may include refreshments (30 minutes), the assessment discussion (2 hours), a break (30 minutes or more if a lunch is prepared), and an elder assessment, if scheduled (2 hours).

III. Assessment Discussion

The group should meet in a circle. The chairman of the Assessment Committee will begin the discussion with prayer. Each committed participant should respond to the following:

1. Please share your testimony of how God saved you.
2. Please share how you were led to be a part of this mission church.
3. Please share your vision of this church. Please explain.
4. Are you willing to support the church with your prayers, involvement and finances? Please explain.

(The chairman and committee have the freedom to ask other questions but should remember to limit the time. This group time should be kept to around two hours, with a short break.)

Note: Some committed participants may be members of another Bible Fellowship Church and will be transferring their membership to the new church. The chairman may use his discretion during the assessment discussion process of BFC members.

IV. Evaluation

The chairman and Assessment Committee will meet to evaluate the discussions with the committed participants of the mission church. This meeting should take place immediately following the assessment discussion. If the committee believes that there are at least 20 committed participants qualified to become members of the mission church, the chairman will prepare a resolution to be sent to the director. These recommendations will be presented to the BOCE at its next meeting.

Sample resolution:

Resolved that, after evaluation of the committed participants presented by the Transitional Leadership Team of the (mission church), the Assessment Committee

acknowledges the (mission church) has a minimum of 20 Committed Participants prepared for membership.

Note: The Elder Candidate Assessment should take place following the Committed Participant Assessment – see the following section.

Elder Candidates Assessment

I. Definition

- “In the New Testament church, Christ has provided men called elders, whom He has enabled and commissioned to govern with ministers in His church...Men who bear this office share equally with the ministers the authority in and responsibility for the life of the church; but in contrast to ministers, whose primary authority and responsibility are in the Word and doctrine and secondarily in ruling, the primary authority and responsibility of elders are ruling and governing and secondarily in the Word and doctrine...Those who fill this office should be examples to the flock of their sound faith, their blameless life and conduct, and their wisdom and discretion...Elders, as leaders of people, are chosen by membership of the church on the basis of Scriptural qualifications.” (*Faith & Order*, section 204-2.1 - 2.4)
- Review *Faith & Order* section, “The Board of Elders” - 401-1.1 - 1.9

II. Biblical Qualifications

1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5.

III. Procedure

- The Transitional Leadership Team and church planter shall inform in writing the director and secretary of the BOCE that the mission church has at least two men prepared as elder candidates, other than the church planter, and desires that the men be assessed by the BOCE.
- The secretary presents the request to the BOCE.
- The BOCE approves the request and appoints an Assessment Committee. Normally the committee to assess committed participants would conduct the Elder Candidate Assessment. The BOCE will appoint a new Assessment Committee if necessary.
- The director of the Church Extension will designate one of the appointed Assessment Committee members to act as chairman of the committee.
- The chairman will inform the other men on the committee of their appointment. If anyone does not want to serve, the chairman will contact the director and he will seek another candidate to be approved by the committee.

- The chairman will arrange with the church planter for a visit to the mission church and a meeting with all elder candidates. (See suggested format in previous section on Committed Participants, II. Procedures.)

IV. Assessment Interviews

The elder candidates should meet individually with the committee. Each interview will begin with prayer. The following areas should be covered with each elder candidate:

1. Doctrinal compatibility and agreement with the *Articles of Faith* of the Bible Fellowship Church.
2. The definition of an elder, and the biblical qualifications, should be read and reviewed with the candidate.
3. The candidate's conviction that he is qualified to be an elder.
4. The candidate's spiritual gifts, leadership qualities, teaching ability, shepherding ability, and governing ability.
5. The candidate's personal devotional life, family life, and church service history. (The chairman and the committee may ask other questions.)

Note: Some candidates may have served previously as ordained ministers or elders in the BFC. The committee can use its discretion about how thoroughly to examine such men.

V. Evaluation

The chairman of the Assessment Committee will meet with his committee and evaluate its discussions with the elder candidates. This meeting should take place immediately following the assessment interviews. If the committee believes that there are at least two men, other than the church planter, qualified to become elders of the mission church, the chairman will prepare a resolution to be sent to the director and secretary of the BOCE. These recommendations will be presented to the BOCE at its next meeting.

Sample resolution:

Resolved that, after evaluation of the elder candidates presented by the Transitional Leadership Team of the (mission church), the Assessment Committee for the (mission church) acknowledges that the (mission church) has a minimum of two men, other than the church planter, prepared to serve as elders and further,
Resolved that, we recommend that the BOCE recognizes (names of recommended elder candidates) as qualified to serve in the office of elder at the (mission church).

Follow-Up Procedures upon Completion of Assessments

I. The Board of Church Extension

The BOCE will consider the recommendations from the Assessment Committee at its next meeting. The secretary of the committee will inform the church planter and the Transitional Leadership Team of the mission church regarding the committee's findings and decisions.

II. The Mission Church

1. The Transitional Leadership Team and elder designees of the mission church will establish a membership roll.
2. The Transitional Leadership Team and elder designees will appoint one of the elder designees to be the delegate at Annual Conference, and prepare for the mission church's reception into BFC Conference. The Transitional Leadership Team should dissolve at this point unless it would be advisable for them to remain for a period of time to train and counsel the new elders.
3. Following the reception at the BFC Conference, the new elders and church planter will arrange with the chairman of the BFC Conference for a chartering service to be held.

Note: The committed participants may be the charter members along with others who present themselves for membership after the assessment. These individuals will sign the charter for the church at the chartering service.

4. Following the chartering service, the call of a pastor will be implemented by the elders (see *Faith & Order*, Section 409). At this point the church planter will move on to another assignment unless he is called to be the pastor.
5. The pastor and elders will organize and govern the church and set forth a plan and vision for the church.
6. The elders will arrange an installation and ordination service for the new pastor and the elders (see *Faith & Order* 401-1.8 *Installation of Elders* and 703-7 *Installation of a Pastor*).

Addendum: Forming the Committed Participant Roll

Forming a committed participant roll is a preliminary step to the formation of the membership roll after the mission church is recognized at the Bible Fellowship Conference.

I. The church planter of the mission church shall make an announcement regarding the formation of the committed participant roll. The formation of the committed participant roll may begin at any time during the stages of the mission church in consultation with the director of Church Extension Ministries. Committed participants may be added to this roll as often as is necessary and according to the direction of the church planter and the Transitional Leadership Team.

II. Forming a roll shall include, but is not limited to the following:

- Qualifying a Committed Participant:
 1. Is the individual at least 18 years of age or older?
 2. Is the individual convinced God is calling them to be a part of the new mission church?
 3. Does the individual give testimony and evidence of faith in Jesus Christ?
 4. Is the individual in sympathy with the *Faith and Order* of the BFC?
 5. Has the individual been baptized by immersion?
 6. Does the individual seek to live in conformity to the likeness of Jesus Christ?
- Explaining the responsibilities for a committed participant and reviewing the responsibilities of the church to its members (*Faith and Order 202-2*).
- An instructional time in which the *Articles of Faith, Biblical Principles for Living, and Form of Government* of the Bible Fellowship Church are introduced and explained.
- An interview with the church planter and at least one member of the Transitional Leadership Team to determine if the candidates satisfactorily meet the requirements and agree to the responsibilities of committed participants.

III. Committed Participants in the mission church who are members of other Bible Fellowship Churches may transfer membership once the mission church is received into the Bible Fellowship Conference.

**COMMITTED PARTICIPANT APPLICATION FOR A BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP MISSION CHURCH**

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_____ (Name of Mission Church)
(Please type or print)

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Place of birth _____ Date _____

Are you married _____

Date of marriage _____

Where married _____

To whom married _____

Divorced _____ Date of divorce _____

Children – names and ages _____

Occupation _____

Membership in other organizations _____

II. CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

Conversion (or approximate point in your life when you were saved)

Give a description of how God saved you (use back of sheet if necessary – explain fully):

Have you been baptized by immersion?

Date _____ By _____ Where _____

If not, are you willing to be baptized by immersion? _____

Church membership: Will you be transferring a BFC membership? _____

Name of present church _____

Location _____

Will you obtain a letter of transfer?

Have you ever been disciplined by a church (if yes, explain)? _____

Please list the following:

1. Christian service training or experience: _____

2. Please list any Christian service you may desire to perform in the mission church:

III. **STATEMENT OF FAITH AND PRACTICE**

What is your belief concerning the Bible? (Explain fully)

What do you believe a Christian is? (Explain fully)

What do you believe it means to live a Christian life? (Explain fully)

IV. **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST**

Will you seek to manifest the virtues of love, peace, joy, longsuffering, forgiveness, self-control, brotherly love, and kindness for the sake of Jesus Christ?

Will you seek to refrain from the sins of improper attitudes and motives as well as questionable activities and practices for the sake of Jesus Christ?

Will you, by private worship, Bible reading, prayer, and relationships with others, seek to maintain a positive, vital Christian testimony that will glorify and please Jesus Christ?

Will you seek to fulfill the “Great Commission” by being a witness to others of the Gospel in your life and in your conversation, and invite and gather people into this mission church?

Will you seek to submit to the Lord and pursue an active walk with Christ, knowing that there are worldly pursuits which could impede your spirituality?

Will you be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading as to how you might serve Christ in ways He would lead?

V. **STATEMENT OF RELATIONSHIP TO THE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

Have you read the “*Articles of Faith*” of the “*Faith and Order of the Bible Fellowship Church*” or attended an instructional class for committed participants?

Are you in sympathy with the *Articles of Faith* of the Bible Fellowship Church?

Will you submit to the authority, discipline, and spiritual leadership of the Bible Fellowship Church as stated in the “*Faith and Order*”?

Will you faithfully support this mission church with your talents, spiritual gifts, and finances?

What do you consider your gifts or talents (if music, list instrument or vocal)?

Will you endeavor to be responsible for faithful attendance at the services, fellowship times, and other events of the mission church?

Will you seek to work together with the other Christians for the glory of God?

Will you seek the counsel of the mission church when in need or distress?

- VI. Comments – Briefly state why you believe God is calling you to be committed to this particular mission church. Add any other comments or questions (Use the reverse side of this page if needed).

YOUR SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

Date approved by Transitional Leadership Team _____

Church Planter _____ Initial _____

Comments _____
