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SELECTION AND TERMS OF SERVICE

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Introduction

A number of churches are considering employing full-time workers. If you are one of the leaders of such a church, the following discussion of selection procedures and a range of non-financial conditions of service may help you to find someone suitable. Although many of the issues mentioned apply primarily to the worker who is an employee, they will need to be considered for someone who is self-employed. In following the procedures set out below, you should not lose sight of the fact that the primary qualifications are spiritual.

Selection

There are three distinct stages in selection: establishing the job to be done, finding suitable candidates to interview, and interviewing them.

The job

Identify the tasks to be performed; eg evangelist, pastor, social worker. Draw up a specification of the work which you want the person to do. Rank the different tasks; ie essential, desirable, or merely optional. From this list produce a detailed job description. If the job is for a limited period, decide how long it should be; eg 2 years.

The qualities required

Against each major element of the job identify appropriate qualifications, experience and/or personal qualities. Distinguish the essential from those that are only desirable.

Finding suitable candidates

Take the initiative in looking for suitable candidates. Use more than one of the following approaches:

1. Find out if someone in your church wants to enter full-time Christian work.
2. Contact other churches in case they have such a member.
3. Advertise in Christian magazines; eg *Harvester*.
4. Contact Bible colleges: eg LBC, MBC. Careers services in Bible colleges are not as highly developed as in other colleges and universities, but they may be able to make known your requirements and help you draw up a short list of suitable people.
5. Contact Christian organisations who may have staff looking for new work; eg Counties Evangelistic Work, London City Mission. But do not poach!
6. Contact missionary societies in case there are missionaries coming home from the field (eg for children's education).

There is no equivalent to the dedicated professional recruitment agency of the secular world. However, there may be a role here for an existing Christian organisation; eg CBRF might be enhanced to provide such a service.

Information for candidates

Provide potential candidates with as much information as you can about what is expected of them. This will save you time later; you will receive fewer enquiries from unsuitable candidates and avoid the embarrassment of finding out, too late, that your appointee misunderstood your requirements.

Shortlisting

Check that the person(s) you interview do have the qualities you need. If there is a significant amount of preaching/systematic teaching, look for clear evidence of capability. References from previous churches, college staff, etc should give some assurance on this. If the job is mainly social work, you will probably need someone with professional qualifications. In this case, ask for professional referees.

Interviewing

Do not rely solely on your own judgement. Ask other people from within your own or another church to help you interview the candidates either as

a single board or separately. In the latter case, review together the merits of the candidate before making up your mind.

Conditions of Service

If you prepare a clear statement of conditions of service, both parties to the employment will have no doubt about what is expected of them and it may prevent later misunderstandings. But what should be included in such a statement? Employees in secular work are entitled to a minimum set of conditions under the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 (EP(C)A 1978). You may like to use them as a model. (More details can be found in *Contracts at Work* by Erich Suter, IPM.)

The Contract

There is no requirement under Common Law that a contract should be reduced to writing. However, the EP(C)A 1978 obliges the employer to give the employee a written statement of conditions of service within 13 weeks of starting work. This statement is not in itself a contract although it can become one if the employee signifies acceptance of the statement as a true record of the agreed contract.

Terms of Service

The EP(C)A 1978 requires the statement of conditions of employment referred to above to cover certain particulars:

1. The parties

The 'legal employer' is probably the trustees. The legal status of the trust deed may have to be amended to ensure that the trustees constitute a legal entity. The elders would continue to be responsible for day-to-day matters.

2. The date when employment began

3. Job title

The title should be broad enough to cover the range of duties that you have agreed with the individual. EP(C)A 1978 does not require you to include a job description but there are advantages in doing so.

4. Method of calculating pay

What is the rate of pay, and when and how will it be paid?

If the employment is for longer than a year, what provisions will be made to review the rate of pay?

5. Hours of work

When are the duties listed in the job description to be performed? What about time off during the week?

6. Entitlement to holidays including public holidays and to holiday pay
How much annual holiday is allowed and how does it accrue?

Will all holidays be paid or is there a provision for unpaid leave? What about arrangements to deal with holiday not taken during the year?

7. Sickness and sick pay

Unless specifically excluded, the employee is entitled to sick pay. Sick pay schemes often cover such things as: minimum service qualification, production of a valid medical certificate, contributory insurance schemes.

8. Pensions and pension schemes

9. Notice of termination required by either side

Length of notice on both sides; the EP(C)A 1978 provides for one week for the first 2 years of employment and one week per year thereafter up to a maximum of 12.

10. Rules and disciplinary procedures

The statement must include a note about any disciplinary rules which apply to the employee; eg teaching false doctrine, so that the employee is not dismissed without a fair hearing.

11. Grievance procedures

If the employee has a grievance, what procedure should be followed to resolve it, and to whom is the individual answerable (eg church meeting or the elders)?

Non-Contractual Conditions

Finally, you may like to consider making provision for some non-contractual matters.

1. Status

What will be the position of the full-timer with respect to the elders? Will attendance at the elders' meeting be normal or only as necessary?

2. Training

Will time be allowed for this? How will it be arranged (eg time spent with an experienced elder in the same or another church, occasional courses at Bible college etc)? What might be covered (eg pastoral counselling)?

3. Outside occupations

What scope/limitations for accepting commissions from other churches and other organisations (eg preaching engagements, free-lance writing)?

4. Review of progress

How will the elders review the worker's progress on the jobs set out in the job description?