

GUIDELINES FOR PWMU BRANCHES

A branch is a group of members who meet together, usually on a monthly basis. Branches are formed within a parish, with the approval of its Session. Members of nearby parishes may join if they do not have a Branch of their own. Branch meetings should not clash with those of the PWMU Council or state-run meetings, which are held on the first or third Thursdays of the month. Branches need to submit an annual report to PWMU State Council. Branches are urged to promote interest in cross-cultural mission within their congregations. This includes subscribing to Dayspring magazines (free) for primary-aged children known to them, and encouraging such families to go to Dayspring Day.

PCV expectations of branches

- Any office bearers must be members of the congregation (unless the Session permits otherwise).
- If a branch holds funds in its own name they must use a bank account expressly opened for that purpose and keep regular accounts of income and expenditure. They are also required to submit an annual financial statement to the members (normally at an AGM) that has been checked by a competent person (who is not a member of the branch).
- A written review of the activities of the branch should be submitted to session annually.
- The permission of the Board of Management must be obtained prior to conducting any special fundraising or appeal.
- All financial activities should be consistent with the laws and standards of the PCV.

Guidelines for branch meetings

- Begin with a Bible reading and prayer. PWMU produces a devotional booklet each year that contains devotions for each month. Each devotional has a Bible reading, prayer and commentary. Guidelines are provided to assist with praying intelligently for the needs of cross-cultural workers.
- Close with prayer.
- Conduct the meeting in an orderly manner.

Options

- Support mission workers, through prayer, writing letters, offerings.
- Hear from an invited speaker or hear news of mission work.
- Report on Council matters.
- Watch a DVD on a mission topic

What about business meetings?

- PWMU branches are not expected to hold formal business meetings. However, they can be useful to prompt memory and record decisions.
- When any business meeting does occur
 - Minutes must be kept
 - The minister should be notified of the meeting
 - Session has the right to decide who will preside

A business meeting usually consists of

- Recording those present and apologies
- Approving minutes of the previous meeting
- Noting any conflict of interest
- Business arising from the minutes
- Correspondence received or sent
- Financial report

- General business – any matters that require a decision to be made by the members. Reports may be given also, perhaps of state level meetings that members have attended.

Annual General Meetings (AGMs)

An AGM should be held within three months of the end of the financial year to present the Annual Financial Statement and appoint office bearers. Members should pay their annual PWMU subscription prior to the end of the financial year so they are eligible to vote. This can be done individually or through the Branch. If the latter is adopted details of the church affiliation and members' details need to be provided to the PWMU office.

Keeping business to a minimum

- Minutes and financial reports can be circulated beforehand so that they can be 'taken as read' rather than being read out in full at the meeting.
- In line with current church practise, instead of moving and seconding the apologies, minutes, correspondence and financial reports, have a show of hands as to whether members agree to accept them, then write as 'received'.
- When making decisions, do the same - if the majority of members agree, it becomes the decision of the meeting, and is recorded in the minutes as: 'Agreed to....'.
- Only important correspondence needs to be read in full. Otherwise just indicate in general terms what the item is about (eg: Mrs Citizen indicated that she could speak at the meeting...)

What about financial considerations?

Offerings

Supporting workers financially is encouraged. This can be by individual members or a Branch with offerings directed to nominated workers.

In recognition of the formation of PWMU on 25 August 1890, August has been designated Thanksgiving month and members are encouraged to make a special collection during this month to support the administrative work of PWMU. Members are encouraged to attend the state-level Thanksgiving Event, held online or in the city.

General considerations

Any cash given at a meeting in collections, membership dues or whatever, should be counted at or immediately after the meeting by 2 people. The amounts, and what they are for, are recorded in a receipt book signed by both. If a member pays their fee via the branch, they should be issued with a receipt.

All money should be banked as soon as practicable. No cash is to be kept for any reason. If petty cash is required this should be obtained with a cheque (so that a record is generated), should always be less than \$100 and expenditure of it be recorded in a separate book.

Branch with own bank account

- Financial statements need to be presented to the members on a regular basis, and should consist of opening and closing balances together with income received and expenditure.
- The financial records need to be checked by a competent, independent person annually after the close of the financial year.
- This statement has to be presented to an Annual General Meeting of the branch, be given to Session for the congregation's AGM and be sent to the PWMU Council.
- All financial records (ledgers, receipts, bank statements etc) should be kept for five years but can then be disposed of, as long as the information is contained in annual statements.

Branches without a bank account

- The money should be banked into an agreed, designated bank account (eg Board of Management account, never a private one) as soon as practicable.
- The branch should keep a record of all monies banked, as well as the treasurer of the account.
- A process should be agreed on to enable the branch's money to be disbursed as required.

Duties of officer bearers

President:

Chairs the meeting and commences with bible reading/devotional and prayer
Introduces any guests/speak
Closes the meeting with prayer

Vice President:

Carries out the duties of the President in her absence

Secretary:

Prepares an agenda and distributes minutes of previous meeting
Notifies members of the meeting
Presents and deals with correspondence
Writes an annual report on the activities of the year
Notifies PWMU office of any changes to office bearers
Fills out information sheets provided annually by the PWMU office

Treasurer:

Counts offerings collected at meeting with another person
Banks monies received
Keeps financial records
Presents financial statement at meetings
Presents annual statement at AGM, sends to Session and Council.
Pays travel allowance to guest speakers

What about the raising of funds?

Some branches may want to raise financial support for cross-cultural workers and this is encouraged. It is entirely the decision of the branch as to how this is done.

- Highly recommended is the method of taking up a freewill offering at each meeting, as this has proven to be effective while not requiring a lot of effort.
- Other forms of fundraising can be used if a branch wishes to, such as holding sales of goods, morning teas or a 'no-bake' sale.

Things to consider:

- Is what is proposed within the capabilities of members (especially physically)?
- Will the event align with the purposes of PWMU?
- Will the Session give its approval?

Branch closure

- If a Branch or RA decides to close it must notify Council.

Regional associations (RAs)

- A Regional Association (previously Presbyterial Association) does not have to be limited to presbyterial boundaries. It can meet to host mission speakers or other activities to further the aims of PWMU. The Council and PWMU may be able to assist in providing information and contact details of mission workers who may be available to speak.

- The venue, date, time and its advertising need to be decided, an agenda prepared, tasks allocated and speaker determined. If required, the Council can assist with banking and dispersal of funds.

Finances managed by State Council

Grants

These include departure grants when a worker first commences mission work; homecoming grants paid to workers when they come home or, in the case of those in Australia, paid annually; marriage and baby grants. An exit grant is paid to each Presbyterian candidate who has completed studies at PTC and is commencing ministry. Special grants may be paid to missionaries at any time if a need is identified.

Bursary Fund

A bursary fund is available to provide a bursary (scholarship) for a student, either overseas or local, to study at a recognized college to better equip that person for service in their homeland. PWMU undertakes to pay the fees, accommodation and living allowance from these funds.

Todd & Campbell Fund

Women intending to undertake mission work can apply for a grant towards the cost of their training. Young people on short term mission trips can also apply for a grant towards meeting expenses.

Elizabeth Notman Bequest

Grants are available to churches for outreach to children.

Dayspring Day and Dayspring magazines are funded by the interest from this bequest.