

Co-Mission Planting Training Code of Conduct for Students and Planters

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Background

a. Co-Mission is a church planting movement that God has been growing in London since 2005, driven by Christ's compassion for people who need saving. Co-Mission Planting Training, which has been running since 2014, has (since 2019) been opened up to planters from other networks as part of the Planting Academy.

b. The Planting Academy (also known as the LCPA) is a ministry of Co-Mission Initiative Trust (CMIT), a limited company registered in England and Wales (no. 08848067) and a registered charity (no. 1157383) with offices at Dundonald Church, 577 Kingston Road, London SW20 8SA.

c. All training works best in the context of a good culture of healthy relationships and that environment is fostered by clarity of expectation. The following guidelines are intended to give that clarity regarding the sort of relating to one another that we expect so as to enable productive, gospel-shaped and God-honouring times together.

d. This code of conduct covers both the Wednesday CPT sessions and the monthly Bi-vocational Planting Training provided by Co-Mission.

Key Expectations

Co-Mission Planting Training operates on the following basis:

1. Our ultimate authority and reference point is the Bible (66 books) as the infallible Word of God. We value experience and common-grace wisdom but we do not argue a point on the basis of extra-biblical revelation.
2. We respect the Co-Mission Statement of Faith as the framework for the training provided. This does not mean that those who are not part of the Co-Mission network need to agree with every detail of this statement but we do all agree that we will not use up valuable training time by disputing the points of this doctrinal basis or sharing contrary opinions in a contentious way during the sessions.
3. We relate to one another, especially in conversation and in discussion, with graciousness, humility, love, gentleness and respect. We seek to listen more than we speak and to value the contributions of others. When we speak we do not boast, belittle or battle but rather aim to build one another up by sharing honestly and speaking the truth in love.
4. We show particular respect for programme trainers, guest speakers and older brothers.
5. We show great sensitivity towards the mission situation of the church in whose building we meet (Hope Church Vauxhall). We are conscious that we are visible to the community and will be associated with Hope Church by those who see us coming to Planting Academy training. So we are very careful, particularly in the way that we enter and leave the premises and in the way we walk around the estate, to give no cause for offence and to relate to one another and to all we meet in a way that reflects well on the reputation of the church and the name of Christ.
6. We commit to attending as many of the training sessions as possible (for the term or year for which we have enrolled). We commit to arrive in good time for a prompt start and stay through to the end of the sessions. Where we know an absence is unavoidable or we will have to slip out early we are courteous to send our apologies, letting the Acting Principal or administrator know at least 24 hours before the session.
7. We commit to paying promptly (before the beginning of each term) for training sessions. We understand that if we have not paid we will not be able to attend.
8. Above all we seek to honour the Sovereign Lord God with an atmosphere of thanksgiving and prayerful dependence. We desire glory to go to him rather than to man. We do not take the Lord's name in vain. We meet together with a joy in Christ and laugh often but we also have a right seriousness in that we are dealing with serious matters of eternal destiny and the glory of Christ.

Unacceptable behaviour

While we do not expect to face any of the following, they are listed below for clarity and as the basis on which disciplinary action may be taken:

a. Directly challenging or undermining the authority of the Bible or the Co-MIssion Statement of Faith.
b. Any form (verbal or non-verbal) of bullying, harassment, threatening, exclusion, aggression or violence.
c. Theft or intentional damage to property (belonging to LCM, Hope Church, the Planting Academy or Co-Mission).
d. Behaving (or dressing) in an indecent or offensive manner – both within training sessions and while in the area surrounding Hope Church.
e. Using crude, offensive or blasphemous language (including casual use of 'O my God' or 'Jesus Christ').
f. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in Co-Mission training sessions or in the area surrounding Hope Church Vauxhall.
g. Misuse of Wi-Fi internet provision or webinar meetings – including searching for or displaying pornography or terrorism related material, virus dissemination or sending of fraudulent messages.
h. Obstructing and/or refusing to submit to the trainers and teachers in their lawful leading of the training sessions.
i. Persistently missing sessions or arriving late or leaving early from sessions without a respectful request for permission at least 24 hours before (except in cases of emergency).
j. Attending training sessions without paying (except with explicit permission).
k. Persistent failure to communicate or to respond to emails.
l. Sharing of confidential information learned during Co-Mission training sessions (either from trainers or from other planters) or spreading of slander regarding Co-MIssion or members of the Planting Academy (via social media or otherwise).
m. Being under church discipline or convicted of a criminal offence at any time during the time of training with Co-Mission.

Disciplinary, complaints and conflict resolution procedure

General principles:

- Any concern should be made known to the Acting Principal of the Planting Academy (Andy Harker).
- Where it is not possible to appeal to or raise a grievance with the Planting Academy Acting Principal, the issue may be raised with any of the trustees of the Co-Mission Initiative Trust.

- The leadership aims to respond to all issues confidentially (as far as possible), fairly, promptly and in a sensitive way, acting in the best interests of all concerned and the reputation of Christ.
- Activity (and allegations) of a criminal nature will be reported to the police and other authorities as required.
- It may be necessary or wise, particular in serious cases, to involve the local church and/or other church leaders.
- No-one will be disadvantaged by raising a complaint, dispute or grievance.
- Situations will be dealt with in a manner proportionate to their seriousness. It is expected that minor personal conflicts and mild offences will be dealt with informally. More significant conflicts, offences and concerns will require a meeting of those concerned with either the Planting Academy acting principal or a Trustee of CMIT (or both if appropriate).
- Those invited to such a meeting have the right to be accompanied by a friend.
- In the case of breaches of the Key Expectations or Unacceptable Behaviour, the pattern of escalation is 1) verbal warning, 2) written warning, 3) dismissal from the programme. However, with very serious cases the escalation may go straight to dismissal.
- While not attempting to be a local church, we are guided by Scriptural principles regarding conflict and grievance – e.g. Matt. 18:15-20; Luke 6:41-42; Col. 3:8-17; 1 Tim. 5:19-25.

Dismissal:

- We will seek to avoid this sanction if at all possible.
- Someone may be dismissed from Co-Mission training for:
    - Serious rejection of or persistent minor failure to uphold the spirit of the Key Expectations.
    - Serious offences or persistence in less serious offences in the list of Unacceptable Behaviour.
- While all attempts will be made to be fair, reasonable, proportionate, evidence-based and gracious, ultimately Co-Mission reserves the right to dismiss anyone from a Co-Mission course at any time for any lawful reason.
- In the case of dismissal the Planting Academy and CMIT are not under obligation to refund any money received for future training sessions.

Co-Mission Statement of Faith

God – the Holy Trinity

There is only one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is immortal, eternal, and perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning. He is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator; Saviour and Judge, sovereign in the election, salvation and preservation of his people in Christ. God is

sovereign over all things, both good and evil; though, he is not the author of evil, nor does he delight in it.

The Bible

God has revealed himself and his promises in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is, in its entirety, the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible is clear to all who seek God's will and are willing to live by it, though the human mind is finite and fallen in its reading of it. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

The Human Race

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. This dignity is not annulled by gender role distinction or male headship in marriage and in church leadership. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. Adam and Eve, our first parents, rebelled against God and plunged themselves and their offspring into ruin. Because of Adam's sin, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be reborn, justified, forgiven, reconciled to God in Christ in order to know and please him.

The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood and reconciling to God all those who believe. He rose bodily from the dead and so was vindicated by his Father. He broke the power of death and defeated Satan, and brought everlasting life to all his people. In his resurrection body he ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father. Salvation is in and through the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Salvation

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. From all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from all peoples, and to this end foreknew them, predestined them and chose them. This plan of salvation has been accomplished in history by the Lord Jesus Christ's once and for all penal substitutionary death, resurrection and ascension. This salvation now is offered freely and openly to all through the gospel. God in his love sovereignly applies this accomplished salvation to the elect through union with his Son. In Christ he effectually calls, regenerates and grants his elect repentance and faith. The elect are justified through faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone. In Christ, God mercifully imputes to believers the righteousness of his Son, so that they are declared righteous in his sight and pardoned of all sin. In Christ they are adopted into the family of God, progressively sanctified by the Holy Spirit for holiness and are preserved for the coming Kingdom and New Creation.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and is fully God. He has been sent by the Father and the Son. In his work He glorifies the Son and applies the work of salvation to God's people through union

with the Son. He regenerates and imparts spiritual life to spiritually dead sinners, so that they are convicted of sin and repent and believe. The Spirit inspired all Scripture and speaks in Scripture today. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and, while believers still battle personal and corporate sin, the Spirit progressively produces in believers increasing likeness to Christ. He gives gifts to build up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

The Church

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are central to the saving plan of God, and are led by godly, accountable elders. They are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, and the administering of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are to engage in pastoral care and discipline, mutual love and encouragement, to call all people to repentance and faith in the gospel of Christ, and to equip believers for world mission, mercy, and justice. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

The Future

The Lord Jesus Christ will personally and bodily return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. Unbelievers will be sent to eternal conscious punishment where they are separated from the benevolent presence of God in Hell. Those who live by faith in Christ will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God in the promised New Creation. God will make all things new and will be glorified in all things forever.