

Missions Policy and Procedure of Grace Bible Chapel

1. AUTHORITY of MISSION POLICIES

The following statement of missionary policy for Grace Bible Chapel (GBC) of Adams County has been formulated with the purpose of directing its missionary interests for the promotion of the worldwide proclamation of the precious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's commissioning orders to the Church (Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:19-20) make it imperative that a vigorous, balanced, worldwide ministry of missionary endeavor be supported. Therefore, it is our duty and privilege as a church to prayerfully consider "front-line" and support-role mission endeavors for our prayer and financial support.

It is not the intention of the Missions Committee to make a permanent and unchangeable law regarding the church's missions ministry; and the Missions Committee fully recognizes that each decision will have to be reached individually. However, it is believed that having practical guidelines and goals in the form of policy will be helpful to our committee, church, and missionary family. This policy is a framework or guideline by which the membership, missionary family, and friends may be informed and therefore, better able to cooperate in all mission matters.

2. OBJECTIVE

We want to make the greatest use of the Lord's resources being sensitive to the direction of God regarding individual missionaries and opportunities. Therefore, we believe the focus of our missions ministry should reflect to the glory of God the biblical priorities of evangelizing, baptizing, and discipling with the purpose of establishing or integrating into a local body of believers (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Acts 16:5). Further, it is our purpose to encourage the people of GBC to give due consideration to missionary service in the will of God.

3. THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The work of the Missions Committee shall be coordinated with the total church mission ministry and with other committees within the church. This will enhance productivity, provide guidance as needed and establish good communication to the Pastor, Board of Deacons, and the church as a whole. The Missions Committee shall stand in an advisory capacity to the Board of Deacons and may not, in and of itself, commit the church to any ministry, policy, or obligation apart from the approval of the Board of Deacons.

The Missions Committee shall be composed of the pastor, one deacon, and at least two members in good standing with a love for the lost. Members are re-evaluated annually by the pastor, deacon board, and nominating committee.

The pastor shall be the chairman. The committee shall also choose one of its members to serve as the committee secretary. In the event of an interim period, the committee shall choose a chairman from among the committee members.

The chairman's responsibilities include:

1. Plan an agenda for each meeting,
2. Schedule and conduct each meeting, providing agendas and necessary resources,
3. Assign responsibility to committee members,

4. Oversee the work of the committee,
5. Report committee actions or recommendations, and
6. Assure cooperation between other committees.

The secretary's responsibilities are:

1. Record committee activity and meetings,
2. File committee records in the church office,
3. Communicate with missionaries on a quarterly basis,
4. Communicate to the congregation reports from supported missionaries and organizations.

The committee shall hold meetings as needed and at least quarterly with the time and place of the meeting to be determined by the committee.

The purpose of the Missions Committee shall be to recommend and maintain mission policy, monitor activities of present missionaries, recommend for approval future missionaries and projects, and develop and promote means for involvement in missions. This shall be done through prayer, counsel, guidance, and encouragement.

The Missions Committee shall seek to establish a harmonious relationship among the church, the candidate for missionary service, and the missionary on the field.

4. THE MISSIONARY CANDIDATE

Candidates for the missionary family of GBC shall be persons purposing to go into missionary service or veteran missionaries needing additional support.

The missionary family of GBC is considered within the framework of this directive to include all missionaries who receive regular support from the church.

Only candidates who meet the criteria hereby set forth as follows shall receive consideration by the missions committee and the Board of Deacons to receive regular support:

1. That the candidate is a born again believer, as demonstrated by their personal testimony and is an active church member;
2. Candidates shall be approved by a mission board with doctrinal positions consistent with those doctrines set forth in the Constitution of GBC, or sent specifically by GBC (if the missionary is not a member of a board, he must have a pre-determined accountability structure in place before financial support will be provided/continued);
3. The committee and/or board of deacons shall, by personal interview or other acceptable means be satisfied;
4. That the candidate is a born again believer, as demonstrated by their personal testimony and is an active church member;
5. That the missionary has received a missionary call;
6. With the adequacy of preparation, scholastic background (where applicable), personal work, etc. In addition to other considerations of adequacy, the candidate must be thoroughly grounded in the Word of God; and
7. With satisfactory recommendations of pastoral and peer references.

In order for GBC to support a new missionary the church will determine the amount of support based on the missionaries' ministry, and their relationship and involvement with GBC. The support of any candidate is subject to the availability of funds.

The missionary interview shall be used as a basis for evaluation. The Missions Committee and the Board of Deacons will prayerfully consider the candidate. Communications of actions and decisions with the candidates must be made in a timely manner.

5. MISSIONARY ORGANIZATIONS

It is recognized that mission boards, associated support agencies, and other missionary organizations are important for a balanced missions ministry.

Organizations and/or mission boards must have a doctrinal statement consistent with that set forth in the constitution of GBC.

It shall be the policy of the church to reevaluate any organization when there is a change in purpose or practice.

Support of any organization is subject to availability of funds.

6. EVALUATION OF SUPPORT AND EFFECTIVENESS

As the Lord leads it shall be the purpose of GBC to:

1. Provide support in amounts as designated in the annual budget. Generally, all support shall be paid quarterly;
2. Begin support as the Missions Committee deems, subject to approval of the Board of Deacons, and finally the congregation. It shall be proper to begin support prior to the missionary leaving for the field in order to help with the costs incurred from deputation travel expense and outgoing expense to arrive on the field;
3. Continue with the support of the missionary during the regular furlough period subject to the needs of the missionary. In the event that a furlough is extended beyond the regular furlough, the Missions Committee shall review the circumstances and shall, subject to the approval of the Board of Deacons, and finally the congregation, determine whether support shall continue, and if so, for how long.

It shall be the policy of the church to carry a balanced missionary ministry, thus payments of regular support may be re-evaluated for continued support, reduction in financial support level, or termination when a missionary:

1. Changes location or field of service;
2. Transfers to another mission board or changes the nature of missionary endeavor;
3. Leaves the field permanently; or
4. Upon retirement or disability, each missionary will be evaluated according to their needs and assets. Should the church determine to discontinue financial support, support will be terminated after six months, or, in extenuating circumstances, after no more than one year.

At least once every two years all missionaries will be re-evaluated and their support level may be raised or lowered, dependent on any changes in ministry, relationship to GBC, missions priorities, the need of the missionary, the quality of ministry and progress (relative to each unique setting), and/or the financial condition of the GBC missions ministry.

All of the above are subject to re-evaluation by the Missions Committee and Board of Deacons.

Evaluation of each missionary shall be done annually by contacting individual mission boards. The evaluation shall include current support level needs, annual report, and progress of the missionary effort. To assist in this evaluation these are the requirements of each missionary:

1. Correspondence: All missionaries are required to correspond regularly with the GBC body and the mission board to inform them of their activities and prayer needs. One form of written/electronic correspondence is required every three months and is considered minimum to enable the missions committee to adequately serve the missionaries and keep the congregation informed.
2. Furlough or Home Ministry: Our supported missionaries are expected to visit GBC at least once and share their work with the congregation of GBC during home ministry. The missionary will meet with the mission committee for an oral review of their ministry at least once every five years. Missionaries that have not visited GBC for an extraordinarily long period of time are subject to termination of their support upon further review.

Our desire is to be faithful stewards of the money that is designated for missions. To this end, depending on the severity of the issue, up to three letters seeking resolution will be given to resolve the issue or issues.

7. SHORT TERM MISSIONS

“Short Term Missions” will be defined as those serving on the field for three months or less.

“Extended Short Term Missions” will be defined as those serving on the field for three months to three years. Extended Short Term Mission applicants will be processed similar to regular missions applicants, except with an understanding of a specific, finite term and commitment.

Short Term Missions projects should be encouraged by the Missions Committee throughout the year for all ages. However, each prospective team member between thirteen and eighteen years of age must be sponsored by a committed adult team member who is at least twenty-one years old and a member of or sanctioned by GBC. An adult sponsor agrees to take personal responsibility for supervising the sponsored youth(s), as approved and agreed upon by said youth's parent or legal guardian. Adult team members may choose to sponsor up to but no more than five youths. Any children twelve years of age or younger must be accompanied by a parent, grandparent, or legal guardian. It must be the goal of all team members to make every reasonable effort to self-fund and/or self-raise their own full support. To assist and provide for those who, through every reasonable effort, are not able to raise their own full support, some funds for short-term missions may come from a designated amount raised through a special offering of the church. All funds collected from individual individuals and church offering, will be maintained in a collective ‘pool’ according to individual accounts until sufficient time has been granted and according to a date set by the Missions Committee and in line with payment deadlines. At this time, team members who have not raised full support may apply for financial support in accordance with their need, effort and dedication and any relevant personal factors at the discretion of the Missions Committee. In this process, team members who are members of GBC will be given first preference over those who are not.

Upon an applicant’s initial contact with the Missions Committee for support, an application, along with a letter of explanation of responsibilities to the church, shall be sent to the applicant. The letter from the committee shall include:

1. An explanation that the application is to be completed and filed with the missions committee no less than three months in advance of the applicant's ministry (unless otherwise specified);
2. Reporting responsibilities to the church;

3. Testimony of plans prior to leaving for the field;
4. Regular communication from the field to the church (for extended short term missionaries);
5. Presentation of ministry to the church upon return;
6. That the applicant must be actively involved in a church ministry;
7. That a minimum of three references is required, not to include family members; as well as a pastoral recommendation;
8. That a copy of the sponsoring organization's doctrinal statement shall be required and must be consistent with GBC's doctrinal statement;
9. That non-church member applicants must sign a copy of the church's doctrinal statement indicating his/her agreement with the statement; and
10. A notation that individual letters should not be sent to the congregation requesting additional funds, if approved for funds through the church.

A fact sheet shall be available to the congregation indicating short term projects and needs to afford the Spirit's leading in the matter of prayer and further assistance.

Once the application, references, and the sponsoring organization's doctrinal statement are received, the missions committee shall consider and determine whether or not to approve support. The committee shall then notify the applicant of the decision and the monies, if approved, will be sent to the sponsoring organization.

8. FINANCES

Those who support the ministry of GBC are encouraged to give faithfully to the regular church offerings. A substantial portion of these offerings are used for a planned, balanced missionary ministry submitted annually by the Board of Deacons with recommendations for approval by the membership of GBC at the annual congregational meeting.

The members and friends of GBC will be encouraged to give additional offerings as the Lord enables during the annual missions conference.

Individuals may give designated gifts for GBC's missions ministry, however, the designated fund account must be established before the church receives the cash or cash equivalent designated gift. Any member of the church must make a verbal or written request to the Board of Deacons, which will decide whether or not to refer the request to the congregation. The congregation must then approve to establish an account for the requested designated gifts. Included in the final approval, a written document must declare the purpose of the fund and how it furthers the church's mission, the procedure by which the funds will be spent, the procedure for closing the account, and the procedure for dispersal of remaining funds in the account. These procedures and requirements may be modified as needed to meet IRS standards for qualifying designated gifts. These changes in order to comply with IRS regulations may be made without congregational approval.

Missionary guests participating in a church service shall normally receive a special offering taken at the service. Exceptions may occur and where circumstances warrant, an honorarium may be given in accordance with the current church honorarium schedule.

The Missions Committee shall take under advisement any financial emergency occasioned by a missionary's illness, accident, or death. The financial need shall be taken from the general fund and/or special offering.

To provide general guidelines in order that bookkeeping may be alleviated of unnecessary, laborious computations, all support that is adopted shall be on a per month amount.

9. MISSIONARY MINISTRY PLANNING

A comprehensive and consistent, year round ministry of missionary emphasis shall be promoted by the Missions Committee with the following objectives:

1. To present the challenge of the Great Commission, "make disciples of all nations";
2. To encourage believers to consider thoughtfully and prayerfully the part they should have in the missionary effort;
2. To keep believers advised of the work, problems, and needs on the mission field; and;
4. To support the missionary effort of GBC with special gifts beyond regular giving.

To accomplish this the missions committee shall emphasize missions regularly and plan a conference once a year to reemphasize and focus on the above objectives, and renew relationships with the GBC missionaries.

Guest missionaries are to be approved by the missions committee.

10. CHANGES TO MISSIONARY MINISTRY POLICY

Changes to this policy must be approved by the Board of Deacons and then referred to the congregation for acceptance by a simple majority vote.