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# **Missions Manual**

*Philosophy, Policy, and Procedure*

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## OUR VISION

**TO PERMEATE OUR CONGREGATION WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GREAT COMMISSION WHILE BUILDING A PASSIONATE MOTIVATION FOR COMPLETING THE TASK THROUGH THE WIDESPREAD USE OF ALL OUR RESOURCES.**

## THE REASON FOR OUR WORK

We need to remember that Jesus Christ is the owner (Acts 20:28), builder (Matthew 16:18), and head (Colossians 1:15-18) of the church. Therefore, we are to embrace His agenda for the church rather than develop our own.

### **Three Biblical Reasons:**

1. Because of the command of Christ.  
Isaiah 42:6-7; Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-47
2. Because of the character of God.  
John 3:16; Luke 19:10; II Peter 3:9; I John 4:9-10
3. Because of the condition of man.  
Psalms 51:5; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12-14

### **Three Theological Imperatives:**

1. The coming of Christ (I Corinthians 15:51-52; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Romans 13:11-12)  
Christ's return for the church can occur at any moment. This is a compelling reason to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. The Great Commission and Christ's coming need to be harmonized in the thinking and living of the church.
2. The exclusiveness of the Gospel (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 15:1-4)  
Jesus Christ is the only way to God. It is a specific, receptive trust in Jesus Christ alone that brings salvation. Those who have never heard the Gospel should be given the opportunity to hear and respond.
3. Human involvement ( II Corinthians 5:17-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15; Acts 8:26-31)  
God has chosen us to be bearers of the Gospel through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The mission of the church is to be fully implemented by members of the church.

# First Baptist Church Philosophy of Missions

## Introduction

Every local church should to some degree be uniquely used of God in missions. What God desires for our church may vary greatly from others. Yet every church should seek a biblical understanding of missions and then determine how God wants it to exert mission influence around the world. The following statement is our philosophy of missions ministry. It is meant to direct the missions program of the church. It is not intended to dictate the program. It is, however, to keep us on task unless God clearly redirects in program efforts.

## Our Missions Philosophy Regarding Focus

First Baptist Church's missionary endeavors will focus on the following areas:

Area 1            Our church is committed to missions activity among unreached people groups where there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize their own people without requiring outside (cross-cultural) assistance.

We believe that people should be called out for His name from all the nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:45-47; Revelation 5:9) *“And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”* Luke 24:27

Area 2            Our church is committed to partnering with missionaries and organizations whose field ministries are primarily (not exclusively) evangelism/ church planting/leadership training ministries. Partnerships are not limited to western missionaries or organizations.

We believe the church was commissioned to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 14:21; 2 Timothy 2:2). *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* Matthew 28:19

Area 3            Our church recognizes opportunities unique to our times and changing world, including our local community. Consideration may be given to ministry opportunities due to political, social or economic changes favorable to the spread of the gospel.

We believe that the church should recognize God's sense of timing to advance the Gospel through open doors of opportunity to reap a harvest (I Corinthians 16:8-9; John 4:34-38; Revelation 3:7-8). *“I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”* John 4:38

## Our Missions Philosophy Regarding Personnel

We acknowledge the sovereignty of God in calling members of our church to the place and ministry of His choosing. It is important for the church to affirm God's calling in their lives. A member's location and role in missionary service will determine the amount of monthly support they receive.

Support Level One – Those involved in evangelism/church planting/leadership training outside of North America are given primary consideration.

Support Level Two - Those involved in other missionary roles outside of North America are given consideration.

Support Level Three – Those involved in any missionary role in North America are given consideration. Support decisions take into consideration that these missionaries have immediate deputation accessibility year around.

Any other potential missionary partners from outside the church, whether individuals or organizations, should identify with Area 1, Area 2, or Area 3 under our missions focus. When new partnerships are formed, they are all subject to the financial support structure of our missionary support policy.

### Right of Review

First Baptist Church considers the missionaries supported by our church to be an extension of the church's ministry and philosophy. We consider this a strategic partnership. Therefore, we reserve the right to review and respond to major changes in the missionary's status (i.e., location or role). This review will determine compatibility with our missions philosophy and ensure that our missionaries continue to be an active extension of the missions ministry of the church. Upon review, it may be appropriate to alter the financial support commitment of the church. It is understood that a missionary may be pursuing the will of God in an area that is not necessarily the will of God for First Baptist to support. For this reason it is vital that the Missions Committee of the church be notified promptly when such changes are being considered so the review process can be handled in a proper and expeditious manner.

# **Missions Policy and Procedure**

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Our desire**

It is the desire of First Baptist Church to effectively carry out the command of Christ's great commission obediently and energetically (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 10:2; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) Therefore, we view missions as a major ministry of our church and our individual members.

### **B. Our manual**

Over time it became clear that a more comprehensive missions manual was needed. To that end, the previous policy positions have been carefully studied. Past and current circumstances have been considered so this document reflects the historical and current thoughts about our total missions program.

### **C. Our purpose**

The purpose of this manual is as follows:

1. To help achieve a clear sense of direction.
2. To build confidence and cohesion in the total church ministry.
3. To guide in making fair, objective decisions.
4. To define the specific responsibilities of the church, the missionary, and the mission agency in working together toward world evangelization.
5. To inform the congregation how the missions program is conducted, thereby promoting both its trust and participation.
6. To facilitate the administration of the missions program.

### **D. Exceptions to this manual**

Exceptions to the manual require the concurrence of the Missions Committee and the Church Board. Review of all policies will take place by the committee whenever a new committee chairman is secured. This will allow for modification or explanation of all policies to better serve the missions program.

## **II. Missions Defined**

Missions at First Baptist Church shall be defined as any ministry carried on outside this local congregation not directly under the jurisdiction of First Baptist Church for the purpose of fulfilling the great commission.

## **III. Ministry Structure**

### **A. The Missions Committee Goals**

1. We desire to minister to and assist the missionary family God has brought together in service at First Baptist Church by every means available.
2. We desire to mobilize the church body into ever increasing partnership roles of sending, supporting, praying, and helping toward the fulfillment of the great commission for the glory of God.
3. The missionary directory will be updated every five years to aid the congregation in communicating with our missionaries. The next update will be in 2010, and continue every five (5) years thereafter.

## **B. The Missions Committee**

### **1. Chain of Command**

Per the currently approved Constitution and By-Laws.

### **2. Membership**

Per the currently approved Constitution and By-Laws.

### **3. Membership Qualifications**

All individuals should demonstrate spiritual maturity, interest in missions, dependability, and be a member of the church. In addition to these vital qualifications, anyone also possessing cross-cultural experience may make a unique contribution to the committee.

### **4. Membership Commitment**

- a. Attend the meetings of the committee.
- b. Pray regularly for our supported missionaries.
- c. Be familiar with the missions policy of the church.
- d. Be engaged in an active study of missions.
- e. Actively help with the missions program of the church through assuming role assignments given by the chairman.
- f. Attend missions-related services of the church.

### **5. Terms of office**

Terms of office will be five (5) years with terms expiring in rotating years. Members may be eligible for re-appointment after a one-year absence.

### **6. Duties**

Each committee member will be assigned a specific role(s) by the chairman. These roles reflect major responsibilities of the committee. They are finances, correspondence, hospitality, policies, missions conference, missions education, prayer, secretarial duties, and/or any other roles assigned by the committee chairman. Specific job descriptions for each role are available upon request. Each committee member may involve other supportive individuals within the congregation in activities that help complete role responsibilities. Committee members are not to initiate any major course of action in their respective responsibilities without first consulting the committee. Each retiring chairman will serve an additional three (3) months with the newly appointed chairman to ensure a smooth transition.

### **7. Meetings**

The committee will hold regular monthly meetings and any additional meetings deemed necessary. The quorum for conducting business will be a simple majority of committee members.

## **IV. Candidate Relationships**

### **A. Identification**

Our church desires to participate as a sending church as well as a supporting church in world missions. We desire to pray for laborers to go into the world's harvest fields from within our congregation. The Missions Committee will seek to provide encouragement and counsel to any who express interest in missions to the committee. The committee desires to promote and see growth in potential candidates in areas of discipleship, Christian character, education, and spiritual gift development. Upon acceptance by a recognized mission agency, additional guidance will be given

concerning deputation or other areas of need. The church may also consider supporting those outside the church family.

## **B. Application Process**

In identifying any suitable candidates or missionaries, the Missions Committee will use the following process and criteria to help determine any potential partnership:

1. Affiliated with First Baptist Church or a church that holds to the same doctrinal beliefs as First Baptist Church.
2. Church doctrinal agreement with the sending agency.
3. Completing the missionary questionnaire.
4. References from a church leader in one's home church as well as one additional individual. No references will be received from relatives. Reference forms will be made available.
5. An attempt to determine sound qualifications for missionary service through information provided by the mission agency and missionary.
6. A personal interview with the Missions Committee.
7. Any additional steps believed helpful in assessing the opportunity by the committee. At the conclusion of this process the committee will notify each candidate of the decision.

Any missionary candidate seeking support from First Baptist Church must have prior approval of the committee, then the Church Board, before presenting their work to the congregation. Due to this process, no immediate decisions can be made. The candidate should allow as much time as possible for a fair assessment of the situation.

## **C. A Candidate's Personal Qualifications for Support**

1. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ (John 1:11-13, 3:16-17; Romans 6:23; Acts 4:12).
2. Evidence of past commitment and dedication to Christ through works of service (Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 4:11-16).
3. A satisfactory explanation of God's leading and call upon their life (Acts 13:1-4; Galatians 1:1, 15-16).
4. Evidence of Christian character (Acts 6:3; Galatians 5:16-24; I Timothy 3:1-13).
5. A personal desire and commitment to see individuals come to faith in Christ (Romans 10:1-4; II Timothy 4:5; Romans 10:13-15; John 3:16-18).
6. Acceptance by a mission agency recognized by the church.
7. Agreement in writing to the doctrinal position of the church.
8. Evidence of the candidate's suitability (education, spiritual gifts, motivation, etc.) for the proposed task. Availability and need do not in themselves create a fruitful ministry context or wise ministry investment.
9. No indebtedness that cannot be resolved quickly.

## **D. The Missions Committee's Collective Preferences for Support**

1. A member of First Baptist Church. Any member meeting all the requirements will automatically be recommended to the congregation for financial and prayer support.
2. A non-member of First Baptist Church. Any non-attendee meeting all the requirements may be recommended to the congregation for financial and prayer support. Political changes or new strategic methods or initiatives may shape priority in candidate selection due to unique opportunities in our changing world.

## **E. Short-Term Missions**

1. Short-term work is encouraged. Any commitment longer than two (2) years will be treated on the same basis as regular missionaries providing there is a compelling need for their gifts and expertise.
2. Any ministry commitment longer than three (3) months up to two (2) years will be taken on a case-by-case basis to determine recommended financial involvement. A decision will be determined by a candidate's personal qualifications for support (see paragraph D), membership status, ministry assignment and need.
3. Any ministry commitment shorter than three (3) months desiring recognition and support should follow the prescribed process.
  - a. The request should be directed to the Missions Committee to the attention of the Mission Committee Chairman.
  - b. There should be as much advance notice with a financial request as possible. The committee meets once a month to conduct business. In addition, the committee would like time to thoughtfully and prayerfully review the request. When possible, at least a two-month time frame is desired. A time line of less than two (2) months may prohibit the committee from making a decision.
  - c. All requests should be in writing. Using e-mail is also acceptable. The request should include:
    - 1) When the need developed
    - 2) What parties you have contacted about meeting this need and any response to date
    - 3) Why the need is important
    - 4) Money requirements to meet the need and a specific financial breakdown on how those funds will be used
    - 5) If the request is time sensitive
    - 6) All requests must come directly from the individual and not through any third party.

*Following this Policy will enable a more thoughtful and prompt response by the committee.*

4. Ministries under three (3) months' time may be due to seasonal availability such as teachers or students in the summer months or self-employed individuals engaging in work projects over the winter months, etc. Certain projects for young people over the summer through mission organization programs or our church would also qualify.
5. Finances for Short-term Ministries
  - a. All individuals should personally assume some financial responsibility for ministry obligations. This is not to be misunderstood as a means to discourage anyone from participation. Assuming financial responsibility will cause an individual to learn and grow.
  - b. The church may take a free-will offering to help offset ministry expenses.
  - c. Funds may be allocated following recommendation from the Missions Committee and support of the board of deacons. The missions committee will recommend support when all previously stated procedures have been conscientiously followed. First-time participants may be given preference should funds be limited.

6. All individuals receiving short-term support are required to make a presentation to the church detailing their experience. For short-term experiences lasting longer than one (1) month, the individual should communicate back to the church while on the field.

## **F. Support of Organizations**

Christian organizations seeking to be added to the missions budget of the church must reflect the following missions distinctives:

1. They are described as a missionary sending organization.
2. They directly contribute to the task of establishing indigenous, reproducing local churches.
3. Organizations that provide an evangelistic opportunity.

## **V. Missionary Relationships**

### **A. Furlough Interview**

Upon return from missionary service, missionaries supported by the church should arrange for an interview with the Missions Committee. This should be done at everyone's earliest convenience.

### **B. Furlough Evaluation**

The committee will require a self-evaluation of the missionary on furlough as well as an evaluation from the missionary's sending agency. If the sending agency requires the missionary to complete a self-evaluation this will satisfy our requirement. This will guide the church in ministering to the missionary and in decision-making.

### **C. Furlough Extensions**

Furloughs longer than the regular time will be reviewed regarding continuance of support. It is the responsibility of the missionary to communicate extended furlough plans and their reasons to the committee as soon as possible.

### **D. Field Communication**

1. First Baptist Church believes in the strategic role of prayer as it relates to world missions. Regular communication from a field of service to the church will promote a partnership through prayer. Missionaries are expected to communicate with the church at least every three (3) months. Prayer requests can be received by letter, e-mail, phone, or fax and directed to the church staff or Missions Committee for circulation. Each supporting organization is expected to comply with the same guidelines. Negligence in communication will result in a review of the church-missionary relationship.
2. All financial needs should be directed to the committee (special needs for ministry or personal needs can also be communicated).
3. If there is loss of monthly support or increased financial needs, each missionary should communicate their need to all their supporting churches or individuals. This will help distribute the financial responsibility more equitably. The committee will review annually the support needs of its missionaries.
4. The committee should be informed of any change in field or work by the missionary. Any change of ministry that does not reflect our missions focus may decrease support levels (See Philosophy of Missions section).

### **E. Church Communication**

The committee desires to support missionaries in many practical and personal ways along with financial support. Regular communication from the congregation to our

## **VI. Missionary Support**

### **A. The Principle of Support**

It has been the policy of First Baptist Church since its inception to support individuals called by God into missionary service. The support of its missionaries is based upon faith in God that He will provide. The congregation is regularly informed of recommended financial obligations to intelligently and prayerfully support missionaries as the Lord enables.

### **B. The Sources of Support**

1. Missionary candidates as well as supported missionaries are expected to engage in a deputation ministry. They are to look to God to touch the hearts of others outside the congregation for involvement with them in their work.
2. When an individual is engaged in deputation to the satisfaction of the committee, support may be recommended from our church.

### **C. Agencies and Support**

It is our policy to support missionaries who serve under agencies having a reputation for integrity and stability, whose doctrinal statements are in agreement with First Baptist Church, who are sound and open in their financial policies and practices, who operate under clearly defined principles and practices, who demonstrate good management, and whose missionaries are given thoughtful direction. All agencies are to be approved by the Church Board.

### **D. Support of Independent Missionaries**

We believe missionaries are more effective when working under established mission agencies. It is our policy to not support missionaries who are independent of such sponsorship, accountability, and direction. Exceptions may be made only by the Church Board upon the unanimous recommendation of the Missions Committee.

### **E. Specifics of Support**

1. Any couple or individual missionary who are members of First Baptist Church will be eligible for the Missions Committee to recommend a minimum of 10% of their total monthly support up to a maximum of 30% beginning after congregational approval.
2. Any individual missionary or couple who are not members of First Baptist Church will be eligible for the Missions Committee to recommend a minimum of 5% of their total monthly support up to a maximum of 20% beginning after congregational approval.
3. The recommended minimum support for any North American missionaries (U.S. and Canada) is 5% of their total monthly support and a maximum of 15%. Exceptions to this can be made after the committee consults with the sending agency and is approved by the Church Board. This policy takes into consideration that in most North American ministry settings, missionaries have immediate deputation accessibility year-round. Those outside North America do not have this opportunity and are completely dependent upon support for long periods of time without personal deputation options.

### **F. Outgoing Expenses**

It is understood that missionaries going to an appointed field for the first time have outgoing expenses for language school, housing equipment, freight costs, etc. The

## **G. Solicitation of Support, Projects, One-Time Gifts, etc.**

Career missionaries supported through the church are to refrain from soliciting funds through organized church ministries of First Baptist Church. Monthly support or project needs are to be directed to the Missions Committee for any possible actions. This is to assure continuance of missionary support by the church in the event support by individuals is discontinued. It guards against support being determined by popularity or personality of missionaries. It also protects the corporate support base from financial erosion.

## **H. Special Group Projects**

From time to time missions-related needs arise and classes or groups within the church are asked to meet these needs by various individuals. The meeting of these needs may involve money, or specific items, such as computers, materials or travel expenses, etc. The following guidelines will help clarify what is an appropriate request and how to manage these opportunities.

1. Individuals initiating requests or classes asked to meet a missions-related need should seek the cooperation of the Missions Committee.
2. The contact person is the Missions Committee Chairman.
3. Any needs presented to classes should be related to the missions ministry of the church. The Missions Committee can determine if the need is appropriate should there be any questions.
4. A class can immediately undertake any monetary need under \$500.00 when interest exists.
5. Any need over \$500.00 should have the approval of the Missions Committee.
6. Any requests to meet a need above \$500.00 should be submitted to the Missions Committee Chairman.
7. Any need not requiring money, should be approved by the Missions Committee.
8. Any situation requiring ongoing support must be taken to the Missions Committee.

## **I. Time of Support**

Support will ordinarily begin the month following the congregational vote to accept the candidates as members of our church missionary family. Under certain circumstances the committee may advise to begin support after certain deputation responsibilities are met.

## **J. Termination of Support**

Support may be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Failure to return to the field after the entitled furlough period as determined by one's mission agency.
2. Change of assignment or agency affiliation not meeting the approval of the committee and board.
3. A resignation or the beginning date of a leave of absence.
4. Clear evidence of incompetence, moral failure or doctrinal deviation. Such a termination would only follow a careful consultation with the mission agency involved.
5. If service is terminated by the mission agency due to illness or disability of the missionary, any further support, if deemed advisable, must be recommended by the Missions Committee and Church Board and approved by the congregation.

## **K. Revision of Support**

The committee will review annually the support of each missionary to see that there is adequate support. Revision representing any recommended increase in support will be determined by the need of the missionary, communication of the need to supporters, and our ability to meet the need.

## **L. Retirement Support**

The committee strongly encourages missionaries to serve with mission agencies that have adequate retirement provisions. Adequate provisions should include housing, medical coverage, and retirement income. Any couple or individual retiring at the appropriate age with the complete agreement of their mission agency may be eligible for up to 25% of their current monthly support from First Baptist. Early retirement will disqualify anyone unless there are extenuating circumstances.

## **M. Missionary Children's Education**

It is presumed that certain educational needs of children are reflected in mission agency support levels. The committee believes that parents should shoulder responsibility for this along with their children when of age.

## **N. Insufficient Funds**

In the event funds available for the support of our missionaries are insufficient to meet regular support quotas, money will be transferred from the general account when funds are available. If these additional funds are still insufficient to meet regular support quotas, the funds available for disbursement in any given month will be prorated between all missionaries. Agency support will only be made after missionaries support levels have been met.

## **O. Emergency Fund**

When emergency needs arise, any missionary can request special financial support, preferably in writing from the Missions Committee. The committee may approve the meeting or partial meeting of a need upon the evaluation of the need and available funds. The committee will make recommendations to the Church Board based on any available emergency mission funds.

## **P. Bequests**

Individuals desiring to include the missions program of First Baptist Church in their wills may do so by using the following form of bequest: I give and bequeath the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_% of my residual estate) to First Baptist Church of Fremont, Michigan. It is my desire and request that said gift shall be used to meet the \_\_\_\_\_ needs of the missions program of First Baptist Church as established by the Church Board.

## **Q. Missionary Giving**

Missionary giving at First Baptist Church may be accomplished by:

1. Giving a cash gift through a church envelope designated 'Missions'.
2. Writing a check designating it for missions or designating part of it for missions.
3. Giving through the Sunday School, Wednesday night service, or other specially designated opportunities, such as a Christmas offering.

## **R. Designated Giving**

The committee recommends that gifts to individuals be sent directly to the mission agency rather than through the church.

## **S. Support of Nationals**

The financial support of national Christians is widely discussed today. Some potential difficulties for church involvement are accountability (how is the money being used?) and dependency (releasing the national church from responsibility to support their own work). The Internal Revenue Service requires that financial support must only be given through organizations with tax-exempt status in the United States. For these reasons, it would not normally be our policy to support national workers. Exceptions may be made under carefully investigated conditions.

## **T. Tent Making and Bi-Vocational Missionaries**

There is a biblical precedent for this missions strategy (II Thessalonians 3:8-9; Acts 18:1-3). This may be the way to gain entry into countries closed or hostile to the gospel or to conventional missionaries. It is choosing a self-supporting or partially self-supporting style of missionary work.

The committee requires the same preparation and spiritual qualifications of such individuals as of conventional missionaries. It is also necessary to identify with a mission organization to ensure accountability and supportive missionary care. When all requirements are met to the committee's satisfaction, an individual(s) will be recommended by the committee for service as a missionary.

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**Approved by Church Board on 10-19-05**

**Approved by Congregation on \_\_\_\_\_**

