



Missions Policy

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General Philosophy of Missions

What is Missions?

Missions is the obedience of a local church to the Great Commission of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20) which results in the salvation of individuals, their baptism, and establishment of local churches with national pastors and includes optional ministries which the church deems directly related to these goals. What should guide our church's mission program?

1. *Bible Baptist Church believes that the local church is the heart of missionary work.*
Jesus expressed that Christian mission was to progress in Acts 1:8. We must therefore consider both home and foreign missions adequate focus. We are responsible to be strong witness in the Otsego area and to help plant churches of like faith and practice in our area, state, country, and world. We must also pray that the Lord will send forth the laborers into his harvest from the membership of our church and other churches of like faith and practice (Matthew 9:38).
2. *Bible Baptist Church believes that there is a specific nature of missionary work.*
Because the New Testament clearly teaches that missionary work is evangelism, teaching, and discipling which results in the establishment of churches (Acts 2:41-47; 16:5), we shall support only those missionaries who are actively engaged in some ministry directly related to the establishment, cultivation, and/or assistance of local churches.
3. Bible Baptist Church believes that missions involve mutual responsibilities between the missionary and the supporting church. Each missionary is ultimately responsible to the local churches which send him, and owes a full report of his ministry when called upon to do so (Acts 14:27). Our Church is responsible to uphold a supported missionary by means of prayer, finances, and relationships (I Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Philosophy of Missions Personnel

New Testament missions must always have the goal of planting indigenous (self-supporting, self-propagating, self-governing) local baptistic churches. Therefore, we shall support only those missionaries who are engaged actively in some ministry directly related to the establishment, cultivation, and assistance of local churches. The New Testament clearly teaches that missionary work is evangelism, teaching, and discipling which results in the establishment of churches. Much activity is called "missionary work" which does not embody these aforementioned characteristics and thus would not be eligible for the missionary support of this church (Acts 2:41-47; 16:5).

We shall support only those missionaries, educational institutions, and agencies who are Baptist by conviction and practice, and whose doctrinal position is in agreement with that of our church (Acts 2:42). Because preparation for the Lord's work is so vital to the work itself, the church may support educational institutions and others which are sound in doctrine and in sympathy with the aims and purposes of our church. Obedience to Christ's "Great Commission" includes "teaching" (Matthew 28:19-20).

A mission agency is not a substitute for the local church. It is a means to assist the local church in fulfilling the Great Commission. The local church is the final authority concerning a missionary and his/her work. The church will seek to work closely with an acceptable and qualified mission agency but is not bound by its decisions.

Any candidate for missionary support shall first be interviewed according to guidelines laid down in this manual. We will support only those missionaries and agencies who are Baptist, separatist, non-charismatic, and adherents of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith by conviction and practice, and whose doctrinal position is in agreement with that of our church. The senior pastor will make the determination if an agency is acceptable.

In the missionary/church relationship, each party has responsibilities. The responsibilities of the church include the regular financial support of and informed fervent prayer for her missionaries. It is also our privilege to assist them in other ways including welcoming them and reacquainting ourselves with them when they are on furlough (Philippians 1:5). Whenever possible, the church should budget funds to allow pastoral staff or other church representative the opportunity to visit missionaries on the field to further strengthen the relationship and to provide assistance in any way possible. Each missionary is ultimately responsible to the local churches that send him, and owes a full report of his ministry when called upon to do so (Acts 14:27).

Definitions

The Primary New Testament Characteristic of a Missionary

The missionary is not one who has merely gone out but one who has been sent out (i.e., commissioned) by a local church (Acts 13:1-3; cf. John 20:21).

Career Missionaries

“Career missionaries” are those who have committed themselves to a lifetime of missionary service, if God so wills.

Non-Career Missionaries

“Non-Career missionaries” are those who are serving in a missionary capacity, but whose missionary ministry is anticipated to be for a limited time. This designation includes such missionary service as short term missionaries, missionary internships, and missions trips. Typically, a short term missionary is one who has not formally applied and been received by a mission agency as a career missionary.

Missionary apprenticeships and missionary internships are conducted to provide qualified young people with actual experience on a mission field and to encourage them to give prayerful and intelligent consideration to the possibility of vocational missionary service. Bible Baptist Church wants to help its younger members benefit by such a programs.

Sent Missionaries

“Sent missionaries” are members of Bible Baptist Church whom we have commissioned for missionary service, and for whom we are the home church. Because of our relationship with them, we have a greater responsibility for the prosperity of their ministry. We expect that our sent missionaries consult with our pastor prior to any change of ministry, agency, or entering into a team ministry.

Supported Missionaries

“Supported missionaries” are not members of Bible Baptist Church, but have been taken on for support by Bible Baptist Church. We expect that our supported missionaries consult with the pastor of their sending church prior to any change of ministry, agency, or entering into a team ministry.

While we may have a closer relationship with missionaries who have been sent out by Bible Baptist, both sent and supported missionaries are part of our church family and both equally are extensions of our ministries.

Non-Traditional Missionaries

“Non-traditional missionaries” are people sent to restricted access nations where their ministries are limited. While some tent making ministries might be outside the realm of missionary service, there may be instances, determined on a case-by-case basis, in which these individuals qualify for missionary support.

Missions Commitments

Prayer

A commitment to missions means a commitment to prayer. The Lord called his followers to pray after He points out the need/ (Matthew 9:37-38). The Apostle Paul also asked for the prayers of the saints that the Lord would open a door of faith among the Gentiles (Acts 14:27; Colossians 4:3). So too we must pray for the Lord to send and prosper missionary activity.

Committing Resources

A commitment to missions means a commitment to assign resources to the task. The work of missions is fueled by faith. At the same time, resources are a necessity for missions. We will commit to setting aside financial resources to the work of missions. “For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. [8] Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth” (3 John 7-8; cf. Romans 15:24; Philippians 4:15).

Outreach to all Nations

A commitment to missions means a commitment to all nations. Jesus commanded that we make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19) for the sake of his name among all the nations (Romans 1:5). Therefore we must involve ourselves in the word of both home and foreign missions.

Church Planting

A commitment to missions means a commitment to church planting. We discover that a relatively new church in Antioch sends out missionaries to do the work of evangelism and church-planting. Church planting is an essential objective in missions.

Interdependence

A commitment to missions means a commitment to interdependence. We see churches of like faith sharing the responsibility of missions through cooperative work (e.g., the church at Antioch and the church at Jerusalem in Acts 19:11-30) and giving (e.g., the churches in Macedonia in 2 Corinthians 8:1-4). Therefore, we need to be committed to cooperating with churches of like faith and practice to advance missionary endeavors.

Procedures

The Church shall support missionary work as it is led of God to do so, and will trust Him to enable the continual enlargement of the missions program.

Missionary Support Prerequisites

Missionaries and the churches that support them have a relationship that must be maintained and nurtured for the mutual benefit. Because care must be taken when entering into that relationship, the following qualifications must be met by those who desire to be Missionaries of Bible Baptist Church:

Personal Salvation and Spiritual Maturity

1. Evidence of a divine call to missions, and evangelistic zeal for souls, a heartfelt passion for missions, and personal suitability for ministry.
2. A reputation above reproach, including financial responsibility (however, reasonable amounts of student loans shall not preclude one from support).
3. Appropriate Biblical education and sufficient practical experience in Christian services. Different types of ministry require different levels of education and experience.
4. Active membership in the prospective missionary's home/sending church and full agreement with the doctrinal statement of Bible Baptist Church.
5. Appointment by an acceptable mission agency (See p.1)

*Above Qualifications #2, #4, and #6 may be adapted as appropriate for non-career or non-traditional Missionaries.

Process for Becoming a Missionary of Bible Baptist Church

1. Ministry in a public service upon invitation of the Senior Pastor of Bible Baptist Church. The Pastor will schedule missionaries who he feels may be prospects for support.
2. Interview by the Missions Committee.
3. The interview shall cover such areas as salvation, call to Christian work, doctrinal positions, personal convictions and practices, and any other areas deemed pertinent. The prospect shall give full information to the committee about finances and missionary needs.
4. Recommendations by the Missions Committee to the Deacons.
5. Recommendations from the missions committee to the Congregation.
6. Letters of Recommendation from other churches and or Pastors.
7. A two thirds (2/3) majority vote (66%) of the church. Support will be effective immediately and will begin on the next full calendar month.
8. A commissioning service will be held for missionaries who are members of Bible Baptist prior to their departure (Acts 13:1-3). The commissioning service formally authorizes and releases the missionary to the missions work to which he/she has been called. The missionary will go with the blessing of Bible Baptist and concurrently the sent missionary commits to faithfully represent his/her Lord and Bible Baptist in their field of service.

*The above process may be adapted as appropriate for non-career/non-traditional missionaries.

Missions Budget Procedures

Philosophy of Missionary Support

Our general policy is to assume a larger proportion of a missionary's support rather than giving smaller amounts to a larger number of missionaries. We will seek to support a missionary at \$200 per month before we take on another missionary for support.

The missions committee shall be proactive in assessing the support needs of our missionaries annually, during furlough, and in response to known special needs. Any recommendation for new or increased support shall be made to the Pastor and deacons.

Missionary Support

Continuation of Support

Regular reports in the form of letters or other communications are required. It is our desire when possible, to have furloughing overseas missionaries spend at least a Sunday with the church to give reports and become acquainted with the church. The missionary must notify the church of any change in their doctrine or practice which conflict with the position of Bible Baptist Church. A re-evaluation of support would then be made. Any missionary supported by Bible Baptist Church must consult with the pastor of his or her home church regarding change of ministry or ministry

location or being part of a “Missionary team.” Missionaries must understand that promised support will be sent only as God enables and provides the funds.

Discontinuation of Support

Normally, support will not be discontinued while missionaries are still on the field and before they have had an opportunity for a personal interview with the pastor and missions committee. In extreme and unusual situations this rule may be waived. Immediate discontinuation of support may be recommended to the congregation for any of the following reasons:

1. Departure from the doctrinal position of the church.
2. Acts of immorality or a pattern of behavior that, in the judgment of the pastor and deacons, is unworthy of a minister of God and /or are at variance with the church’s position.
3. Severance from an acceptable and qualified missions agency, unless the action has prior approval by the pastor and deacons.
4. Withdrawal from missionary services.
5. Failure to maintain close contact with the pastor, missions committee, and /or the church.
6. Inability of the church to continue support.
7. Change of ministry. Should a supported missionary elect to change from one mission to another, prior notification must be given to the church. The continuation of support can be reaffirmed by the church only after an investigation of the circumstances. Adequate justification must be given and the new mission must meet the standards of the church or support will automatically cease. When the missionary’s change of ministry is to become a part of the administrative or office staff of the mission, this personal support may be discontinued. However a portion of the amount he received may be re-allocated by the church vote to the general fund of the mission under which he serves.

Note: When allegations have been made against one of our supported missionaries, we will perform our due diligence concerning the situation, including communicating with the missionary and/or missions agency. The missions committee will deal prudently and wisely with the allegations, maintaining a balance between love and holiness. If/when the congregation needs to act on a missionary as a result of the truthfulness of the allegations, the missions committee will only disclose details that will allow the congregation to make an informed decision.

Reduction of Support

Should lack of funds not allow the continuance of the full support of all of the church’s missionary interests, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The congregation shall be notified and special prayer enjoined.
2. The support level of all mission interests should be reduced to the point required to balance the budget.
3. The missionaries and agencies shall be informed of the situation.

Retirement Support

Missionaries should make personal retirement plans throughout their careers so that retirement does not find them unprepared. To be sensitive to the retirement need, no support will be given to the missionary until the retirement fund had been verified and or addressed.

Outgoing Expenses

The expenses for getting sent or supported missionaries to the field shall be considered a prime responsibility of the church. Such expenses may be included in the regular budget, provided for through the mission’s fund, or raised through special offerings. These should be shared expenses with other churches / individuals in the missionary’s support network.

Emergency Medical Leave

Financial needs related to emergency medical leave for sent or supported missionaries shall be considered as individual cases and recommendations made to deacons by the committee.

Inactive Missionaries

If a missionary's circumstances require him to be on inactive status, the Missions Committee may recommend to the pastor and the deacons that his support be re-evaluated.

Honorariums and Accommodations for Invited Missionary Speakers

A base gift should be in the church budget, such as \$125.00. When necessary, accommodations for meals and lodging of invited speakers will be provided. Exceptions to this could be made at the discretion of the Missions Committee depending on the circumstances and or additional expenses.

Missions Committee

Composition

The missions committee shall be appointed annually in accordance with the provisions of the church constitution. It will also meet as necessary to conduct its business in the off months. All meetings will be documented. The missions committee shall be composed of no more than five persons, excluding the senior pastor

Purpose

The purpose of this committee shall be to promote and support the New Testament concept of missions by establishing guidelines and encouraging church-wide participation and response to the needs of missions within the concept of the local church. This committee recommends policy but is not a policy-making body.

Function

The committee shall

1. Encourage both the home and foreign missionary outreach of the church, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our total missionary program, and seek ways of and means for improving it.
2. Formulate plans to heighten our church's awareness of the need for worldwide evangelism.
3. Review the missions manual at least every three years and make recommendations to the pastor and deacons as to possible adjustments and or improvements.
4. See that up-to date files are maintained on each missionary supported by the church.
5. Maintain contact with the missionaries both on the field and on furlough, keep abreast of their needs and in consultation with the pastor, make recommendations as to how the church should respond to those needs.
6. Interview missionaries suggested by the pastor, deacons and the church for possible support. After the interview the missions committee will make recommendations to the pastor and deacons. After that time it will then be presented to the church.
7. Interview regularly supported missionaries when they return from the field and make recommendations to the pastor and deacons as to whether or not their support should be continued.
8. Review the current mission's budget annually and recommend any additions or changes that should be made.
9. Organize and direct any special missionary promotional items such as missions conferences, special events, etc.

10. Publicize the work of worldwide missions by distributing literature, creating displays, posting material on missions, and maintaining the church missionary map, the use of electronic media, etc.
11. Help secure housing when needed for furloughing missionaries and seek provide other needs they might have.
12. Oversee expenditures from the missions fund.

Missions Conference

Purpose

The purpose of the missions conference is to instruct the church about the Biblical basis of missions, as well as to challenge us to respond to the Great Commission both with our resources and our lives.

Administration/Leadership

The mission committee will have oversight of the planning of and preparation for missions conference with the guidance of the senior pastor or his representative (s),

Program/Personnel

Missionaries are invited to the conference upon the recommendation of the pastor(s) or missions committee or suggestion from the congregation or other source. It is our desire whenever possible to include our commissioned/supported missionaries, when available, potential missionaries being considered for support, and other veteran missionaries, agency representatives, and missionaries on deputation. We invite several missionaries because we want a variety of countries and ministries represented, and we try to feature countries from different areas of the world.

Meals and Accommodations

Meals will be provided by our members. Any dietary restrictions, meal time preferences, and unavailability for a certain meal times will certainly be considered. A schedule of arrangements will be given to conference participants. The Missions committee will assist with coordinating meals and accommodations as needed.

Housing and Transportation

Housing arrangements will be made as needed. Conference participants will inform bible baptist of any particular housing requests and transportation needs along with anticipated arrival times. The Missions committee will assist with coordinating housing and transportation as requested by the pastor.

Expenses and Honorarium

Out of pocket expenses incurred for travel/meals may be submitted to Bible Baptist for reimbursement. The missions committee will approve these expenses prior to the event. If an offering is received for conference participants checks will be mailed to their respective mission. Expenses for the conference itself are built into the church budget so that any offerings received during the conference go directly to the speakers.

Missions Fund

Collection of Funds

Regular collections for the missions fund will be received through our regular budget.

Request for Funds

When the church receives request for funds from missionaries and missionary causes, the missions committee will consider requests that are consistent with the church's missionary goals and philosophy, along with the advice of the senior pastor. If a special project request comes in it must be presented to the committee for approval. This request must come in written form with the following:

1. Name of person and or organization requesting the funds.
2. Date(s) of the event or trip.
3. Recommended dollar amount requested.
4. Purpose of the request and what it will be used for.
5. Report back to the committee with a report shortly after the event or trip.

The committee chair will be responsible for communications back to the person or agency making the request for the data and the status of the request. If the request is granted the committee chair or his designee will be responsible for the communication and the follow up report for the person or agency upon completion of the project.

Disbursement of Funds

The missions fund is under the direct oversight of the missions committee. The committee will decide by majority vote (though consensus is preferred) to disburse missions fund money.