

Grace Community Church

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MISSIONS POLICY

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1. General

1.1 Our Purpose

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify and worship God (Eph. 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13–16), by instruction of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2,15; 3:16,17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38–42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the uttermost parts of the world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8).

1.2 Our Missions Vision

It is the vision and goal of Grace Community Church to eagerly carry out the command of Christ's Great Commission. Missions are an essential ministry of the church and a vital responsibility of every member. We are committed to responsibly use our gifts, talents and resources to share the gospel to the uttermost parts of the world so that God's church will grow and His name will be glorified.

1.3 Missions Policy Scope

For the purposes of this policy, "missions" shall be defined as any ministry outside the local congregation of Grace Community Church whose goal is to reach the lost who exist in a cultural setting different from our own, and who generally do not have easy access to the Gospel. Therefore, the priority for missionary support by the Grace Community Church Missions Program is in the area of cross-cultural outreach outside of the United States, or in a subculture within the United States.

Also within the scope of this policy are Summer and Short Term Missions Projects. These projects serve to advance the gospel and stimulate interest in missions and to help members assess their commitment and role for possible career missionary service.

Local Outreach involving evangelical efforts in the Huntsville area to meet specific needs such as jail ministries, crisis pregnancy ministries and student ministries are beyond the scope of this policy and are controlled by ministry coordinators appointed by the Elders.

For the purposes of this policy a parachurch organization is any ministry whose organization is not under the control or authority of a local congregation. Our requirement that we maintain sound doctrine and accountability requires that any individuals or organizations we support be fully accountable to Grace Community Church. Therefore, since parachurch organizations, by definition, cannot meet that requirement we do not support parachurch organizations as a corporate body but we do encourage our members to individually support the parachurch organizations of their choice with their prayers, time, talents and finances.

2. Grace Community Church Missions Philosophy

The Word of God is the foundation of our missions ministry. Our missions philosophy is based upon 5 characteristics that are described in the Bible: prayer, sound doctrine, familial support (financial, physical, spiritual, training), personal involvement and accountability.

2.1 Prayer

Prayer is the foundation upon which all Christian ministries are based and sustained. It will be our objective to maintain a continuing, assertive prayer support for each accepted missionary.

Luke 10:2 “And He was saying to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”

Colossians 4:2-4 “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;”

2.2 Sound Doctrine

Rightly preaching and teaching the Word of God is at the forefront of our missions philosophy. We are to be constantly on guard that our members and missionaries are consistently nourished on the Word of God and the sound doctrine upon which the Christian faith is based.

Titus 1:9 “ holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Titus 2:7 “in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine . . .”

2.3 Familial Support

We consider all the missionaries we support to be part of our extended family. As our family members we have the privilege and responsibility to meet the financial, physical, emotional and training needs of our missionaries.

2.3.1 Financial

The Apostle Paul clearly taught the responsibility to financially support those devoted to preaching and teaching the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:7,11 “Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? ... If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?”

1 Timothy 5:18 “For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while it is threshing’ and ‘the laborer is worthy of his wages.’”

2.3.2 Physical

In addition to financial support we emphasize the necessity of meeting the physical needs of our missionaries: equipment, special projects, supplies, etc. Our desire is to develop suitable programs to address such special needs.

Romans 12:10-13 “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.”

2.3.3 Spiritual

We are to share in meeting the spiritual and emotional needs of each member of our missions family through prayer, encouragement and counseling. We have an obligation to see that those we send out are equipped to meet the obstacles they will face—spiritually, culturally, and emotionally.

Philippians 4:14-16 “Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;”

2.3.4 Training

In Ephesians 4:12 we are told, to equip the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. God has given the means and we need to assess and provide to the best of our ability the training needs of our sent ones both before and after sending.

Matthew 10:5 “These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them.... ”

1 Timothy 4:1 “Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.”

2.4 Personal Involvement

Grace Community Church’s mission’s effectiveness will be reflected in our members personal involvement. The ultimate personal involvement is when someone from our congregation is called by the Lord to serve as a career missionary or for short-term projects. We will endeavor to identify, encourage, and nurture potential missionary candidates.

Ephesians 4:11-13 “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

2.5 Accountability

We are accountable to be sure that the Word of God is being taught, the needs of our missionaries are being met, and the Lord’s resources are being effectively used. Therefore, we expect our missionaries to keep us informed of their plans, the status of their work, and their needs.

1 Corinthians 14:40 “But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.”

Acts 14:27 “When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”

3. Support Guidelines

3.1 Approach

Our approach will be to emphasize quality in what we do, not quantity. Our support will be directed to supporting a relatively small number of mission efforts in order that the church can:

- Effectively monitor each missionary and his work.
- Be intimately involved in the work through prayer, correspondence, meeting both physical and spiritual needs of our missionaries, planning, etc.

- Provide a significant level of support so the missionary can concentrate on his ministry and not spend time trying to establish and maintain financial support.

Grace Community Church places a high priority on the support of individual missionaries over projects or organizations, because we believe that we have the responsibility to support those we train and send out.

3.2 Priorities and Financial Support Guidelines

Grace Community Church will consider both members and non-members for support. However, Grace Community Church members receive special consideration because of our responsibility as a church to support those we disciple and send. Grace Community Church will consider the following categories of missionaries listed in their order of priority.

| Missionary Category | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Grace Community Church members who are already supported by Grace and serving on the mission field. |
| 2 | Grace Community Church members who have been actively involved in the ministry of the church, especially those who were trained within the church. |
| 3 | Missionaries already supported by Grace Community Church who are not members. |
| 4 | Missionaries who have had no prior association with Grace Community Church, in the following priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missionaries sponsored by any missionary agency approved by Grace Community Church. • Missionaries who are nationals working within their own culture. |

4. Career Missionary Support

4.1 Purpose

A Career Missionary is defined as someone who intends to spend more than two years on the mission field directly involved in evangelism, discipling, pastoring, church planting or teaching.

Christ’s statement in Matthew 9:38 to “...beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest” can best be carried out by missionaries committed to establishing long-term relationships with the peoples they minister among. Our first priority is to support career missionaries as they commit their lives to full-time service to Christ in other cultures.

4.2 Support Criteria

4.2.1 Requirements

A career candidate shall be considered for support based on the following requirements:

1. Agreement to adhere to the application process.
2. Affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
3. Record of active participation in the ministries of the local church and other Christian service.
4. Thorough familiarity and agreement with the Grace Community Church Missions Policy and Doctrinal Statement. Any possible differences in doctrine must be expressed in writing for consideration by the Elders. Once accepted, continued agreement with the doctrinal statement is a requirement for continued support.
5. The ability to work and communicate with church leadership in frankness and cooperation and an openness to guidance and counsel regarding preparation and plans.
6. Fulfillment of the Biblical standards for leadership as defined in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
7. Acceptance by a mission agency approved by Grace Community Church.
8. Recommendations from reputable sources.
9. At least one year of proven ministry experience.
10. An educational background and experience that qualifies the candidate for the intellectual and spiritual rigors of the assigned field.
11. A background of cross-cultural and language training necessary for the assigned field (or the commitment to receive such training).

Missionary candidates who are Grace Community Church members are expected to participate significantly in the ministries at Grace Community Church for at least one year before receiving support, in order for the church to judge that the Biblical standards for leadership (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1) are met.

4.2.2 Acceptance by a Missions Agency

For the purpose of this Missions Policy, Independent Mission Agencies are defined as umbrella organizations that facilitate the partnering of local churches for the support of

missionaries. Unlike parachurch organizations, Independent Mission Agencies are mere service organizations that are accountable to the local church. They may take the form of foundations or corporations. They provide capabilities that a local church cannot provide such as:

- general and administrative needs
- resources to quickly respond to the needs of missionaries on the field in times of emergencies or when political or legal issues arise
- language and cultural training.

Grace Community Church does not have the resources to fully support missionaries but can provide partial financial support by partnering with other like-minded churches. Before supporting a candidate, there must be a prior acceptance of the candidate by a mission agency approved by Grace Community Church.

The criteria for approval of mission agencies are as follows:

- a. Articles of faith and missions philosophy consistent with those of Grace Community Church.
- b. Adequate demonstration of financial responsibility and accountability.
- c. Overhead charges shall be consistent with services rendered.
- d. Grace Community Church allocated funds shall be used only for the work of the designated missionary and shall not be diverted to other ministries or missionaries, even if it exceeds the missionary's needs, without the permission of Grace Community Church.
- e. The Agency shall agree to provide an annual financial summary for each Grace Community Church supported missionary.
- f. The Agency must have the resources to provide the following:
 - Base salary;
 - Medical and dental insurance;
 - Education for children through high school;
 - Retirement benefits (e.g., 403(b) or IRA plans);
 - Employer paid State and Federal taxes (e.g., FICA and Medicare);
 - Travel to and from the mission field.

Agencies currently approved by Grace Community Church include:

Biblical Ministries Worldwide – a church-planting mission organization that helps local churches to establish new churches around the world through evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. It is located in Lawrenceville, GA

Grace Missions International – a mission agency founded by Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, CA.

Believer's Foundation – a non-denominational foundation that provides financial support to The Master's Seminary graduates.

Candidates applying for support must provide written evidence of support from an approved agency that includes their degree of support as well as the candidate's proposed ministry and immediate plans.

4.3 Application Process

Candidates will be given an application package which contains a written application form and a description of the application process. The completed application will be reviewed by the Missions Council and a decision made as to whether he meets the Grace Community Church requirements.

When the Council determines that the candidate meets the basic requirements the prospective candidate, with his spouse, will be interviewed by the Missions Council. The interview will cover topics such as:

1. Background and testimony
2. Education and related experience;
3. Family role in ministry
4. Financial status and needs;
5. Reasons for choosing missions, missionary agency, and ministry;
6. Abilities, spiritual gifts, and interests;
7. Understanding and acceptance of the Grace Community Church Missions Policy and Doctrinal Statement.

Missionaries seeking a support level of 50% or more shall be interviewed by the Elders in addition to the Mission Council, as the missionaries will be expected to have significant involvement in Grace Community Church ministries during home assignments.

Following the interview process the Missions Council and Elders will make a determination as to whether to support the candidate and to what level. The council will notify the candidate of their decision in writing.

4.4 Conditions of Financial Support

Grace Community Church's acceptance of new career missionaries shall be by recommendation of the Missions Council and approval of the Elders. The actual

financial level of support for each missionary will reflect other considerations, including support needs and the availability of budget funds at the time new candidates are considered.

Once accepted for support by Grace Community Church, continuing support generally is anticipated. Support status will be regularly reviewed as a part of the annual budget process. After budget approval, the council will notify the missionaries in writing of their support status for the coming year.

Support of a missionary may be terminated in instances such as the transfer to another mission agency, behavior unbecoming to the cause of Christ, ineffective ministry, an unapproved change of field or significant ministry redirection. Therefore, missionaries must notify the Missions Council in writing prior to making major changes in ministry, location, church membership or mission agency. Such changes will result in a review of continued support.

Grace Community Church will continue to support all of its missionaries when they temporarily leave the field for home assignment (deputation, continued education, administrative requirements, health issues, visa reapplication). Missionaries receiving support at a level of 50% or more will be expected to spend the majority of their time at Grace Community Church while on home assignment. They will serve within the church alongside Grace Community Church staff, using their gifts and skills to help build the church body. A ministry plan for the home assignment period, including a time of rest and relaxation apart from church duties, will be developed and agreed to by the missionary, the Missions Council, the Elders and the church staff. The expectation of hours worked per week will be in proportion to the percent support Grace Community Church supplies toward their total need.

In the event a missionary is away from the field for longer than one year, continuation of support will be reviewed and may be terminated by the Missions Council subject to final approval by the Elders. Grace Community Church will, when possible, continue support of missionaries during periods of advanced study (1-2 years) if the missionary plans to return to the field upon completion of this study.

5. Summer and other Short-Term Missions Support

5.1 Purpose

Summer and other Short Term Missions Projects are defined as mission projects that involve Grace Community Church members and last no more that twelve weeks for summer projects and no more than 12 months for Short Term Missions Projects.

Summer and other short-term mission projects serve to stimulate interest in missions and to help members assess their commitment and role for possible career missionary service. Projects may range from intense evangelistic efforts to providing needed

manpower to complete projects on the mission field for fledging churches. Such projects may be sponsored by Grace Community Church or other approved agencies.

The Missions Council will endeavor to make summer and short-term opportunities known to all members and will provide counseling, prayer, and partial financial support, if necessary qualifications are met.

5.2 General Guidelines

Summer and Short-term Mission candidates should exhibit the following characteristics:

- a. Evidence of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
- b. A heart for missions.
- c. A maturity commensurate with the field of service.
- d. Ability to articulate the Gospel to the Elders and in public.
- e. A demonstrated ability in the desired field of service.

Individuals interested in a short-term project should apply for support to the Missions Council by filling out an application form (Appendix 2) and meeting with the Council for a review of their proposed plans and approval of any financial assistance.

Each candidate must meet the requirements of the approved agency sponsoring the short-term program and provide the Missions Council with information from the agency to verify requirements, assignment, and financial needs.

The applicant is generally expected to provide at least 30% of their needed funding from their own personal resources. Normally, the applicant should fund as much as possible.

Pastoral staff participating in short-term missions activities will be fully funded from the missions budget.

Candidates will not be supported unless they have had, or will receive, appropriate training by the sponsoring agency to prepare them for effective participation in the project.

An individual seeking to become involved with a short-term missions project that has a duration of greater than 12 weeks shall be interviewed as if he were a career missionary.

The short-term missionary is expected to keep the Missions Council informed regarding plans and support status. Any changes in plans or assignments must be reviewed with

the Council. Short-term missionaries are expected to be available to report their missions experiences to the Missions Council and congregation when requested.

6. Missions Council

6.1 Appointment and Purpose

The Missions Council is accountable for the administration of Grace Community Church's Missions Program, under the authority and approval of the Elders and in accordance with this written Missions Policy.

The Council shall be appointed by and operated under the direction of the Elders.

6.2 Structure

The council shall consist of a minimum of four members.

All members will be appointed for a term of one (1) year and may be re-appointed by the Elders for successive terms.

The Council may use subcommittees, as needed, to carry out its duties and to recruit other church members. In most cases, only the subcommittee Chairman will be either a full or ex-officio member of the Council.

Besides the Missions Chairman, the Council may name other officers as needed, including a secretary and a treasurer.

6.3 Qualifications for Missions Council Membership

Candidates for membership on the Missions Council must meet the following qualifications:

- Be an active member of Grace Community Church;
- Exhibit spiritual maturity;
- Possess a heart for missions and shows evidence of a willingness to work actively and sacrificially for the missions program;
- Be committed to attending all Missions Council meetings and special missions events.

6.4 Duties of the Missions Council

6.4.1 Administrative Duties

The administrative duties of the Missions Council include the following:

- Monitor missionary activities and recommend changes concerning support levels and missionary status including adding, changing or terminating missionary support.
- Periodically review the Missions Program and recommend revisions to this policy to the Elders.
- Establish a personal working relationship with the mission agencies with which we partner.
- Plan and coordinate missionary conferences.
- Administer an active missions education program.
- Minister appropriately to missionaries on home assignment.
- Maintain the following records:
 - Individual missionary information.
 - Missions, agency, and organization data.
 - Minutes of the Missions Council meetings.
 - Correspondence and other materials necessary to the Council's operations.
 - Annual budgets.
 - Goals, objectives, annual reports, organization and job descriptions.
- Prepare an annual mission activities report that will be incorporated into the Grace Community Church Annual Report.

6.4.2 Budget Duties

The budget duties of the Missions Council include the following:

- Make recommendations for the allocation of funds to missions in accordance to this policy.
- Prepare an annual budget of missionary support and other expenditures, such as Missions Conferences, and submit it to the Elders.

6.4.3 Communications and Educational Duties

Duties of the Missions Council related to communications and education include the following:

- Promote missionary interest and provide missionary education throughout the church.
- Coordinate missionary correspondence and publish missionary news and prayer request at least quarterly in the church website. Communicate urgent prayer requests as quickly as possible by Grace e-mail and *Grace Notes*.
- Recommend books on missions and biographies of missionaries in the church library.
- Encourage church members to maintain contact with individual missionaries and the missions-related institutions we support.

6.4.4 Activities Requiring Approval of the Elders

The following actions require approval by the Elders.

- Mission Policy Revisions
- Support of new missionary candidates
- Termination of missionary support
- Support level additions or changes
- Special projects for education or fund raising
- Budget expenditures outside of approved budget or over the established guidelines.

7. Missions Budget Guidelines

7.1 General

The Missions budget recommendation will be developed within the guidelines and scope of the Grace Community Church by-laws and this missions policy.

In addition to the general Missions Fund a Missions Contingency Fund is to be included in the budget to provide a source of funds (1) to help meet the needs of individual missionaries and (2) to take advantage of special opportunities, which may develop during the year.

7.2 Disbursement of Funds

- a. Funds disbursed in compliance with the approved Missions Budget shall be taken from the Missions Fund. Checks will normally be prepared at the beginning of each quarter for the current quarter.
- b. Funds given to the church and designated to “missions” shall be deposited into the “General Missions” account and disbursed at the discretion of the Missions Council.
- c. Funds designated to approved individuals or organizations shall be given directly to that individual or organization and will not be recorded as part of the regular Missions Funds. Such designated giving through Grace Community Church will be discouraged. If the funds are designated to an individual, organization, or project not supported by Grace Community Church, the funds shall be returned to the donor along with the reasons for non-acceptance.
- d. Funds which are dedicated for purposes not budgeted should be forwarded without entry into the budget system. The Missions Council should be made aware of all such funds and a separate line-item established. *These funds should not be recorded as part of the Missions Budget.*
- e. Should the person giving funds for an unapproved purpose is not known, or the money cannot be returned for other reasons, the funds will be added to “General Missions” funds.

7.3 Shortage of Funds

Grace Community Church has a responsibility to its missionaries to maintain a financially viable missions program. If there is a shortage of funds, the following steps will be taken: (1) apply the mission contingency fund toward the shortage, (2) request that the Elders make the need known and unite the congregation in prayer for the balance, (3) give priority to the support of individual missionaries vs. organizations, (4) reduce funding to missionaries proportionately.

8. Policy Revision

This Policy may be revised at any time under the following procedure:

1. The Missions Council will review this policy at least annually and document any desired changes.
2. The council will submit the recommended changes to the Elders for approval.
3. The revised policy will be republished with changes noted and made available to church members and missionaries.

Appendix 1: Application For Career Missionary

Grace Community Church Career Missionary Application

| |
|--|
| Applicant |
| Name: |
| Address: |
| City, State, Zip: |
| Telephone: |
| E-mail address: |
| Spouse: |
| Children (Ages): |
| |
| Ministry |
| Name: |
| Mission Agency Name: |
| Address: |
| City, State, Zip: |
| Telephone #: |
| Website: |
| Information on Mission Agency Attached: |
| Ministry Purpose: |
| |
| |
| Start Date and Term Duration: |
| |
| Your Role: |
| |
| |
| Your Qualifications: |
| |
| |
| Your Objectives and Expectations: |
| |
| |
| Status of Application to Mission Agency? |
| |
| Financing |
| Annual Support Needs (including benefits): |
| |
| Amount of support from Missions Agency: |
| |
| Amount requested from Grace Community Church: |
| |
| Training (e.g., evangelism, language, cultural) |
| Describe training that will be given before departure: |
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| Describe training that will be given after departure: |
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| |
| Prior training or experience that equips you for this project: |
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| |
| Prior Missions Projects |
| |
| |
| |
| References: (Name, Address, relationship) |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| Christian Testimony |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| Doctrine |
| Have you read the GCC Statement of faith? |
| Please specify any areas of disagreement? |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| For Missions Council Use Only |
| Action: |
| |
| |
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| |

Appendix 2: Application For Short-Term Missions Project

Grace Community Church Short-Term Mission Application

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|--|
| Applicant |
| Name: |
| Address: |
| City, State, Zip: |
| Telephone: |
| E-mail address: |
| Member Grace Community Church Since: |
| What other family members will accompany you: |
| Ministry |
| Name: |
| Sponsor's Name: |
| Address: |
| City, State, Zip: |
| Telephone #: |
| Website: |
| Information on Sponsor Attached: |
| Ministry Purpose: |
| |
| |
| Start Date and Duration: |
| |
| Your Role: |
| |
| |
| Your Qualifications: |
| |
| |
| Your Objectives and Expectations: |
| |
| |
| Status of Application to Mission Agency? |
| |
| Financing |
| Total Cost of your Participation: |
| |
| Do you plan any personal travel connected with the project? If so, please explain: |
| |
| How much of your personal travel costs is included in the total cost above? |
| Amount of total cost you will personally fund: |
| Amount requested from Grace Community Church: |
| |
| Your plan for raising funds: |
| |

| |
|--|
| Proposed solicitation letter attached*? |
| Training (e.g., evangelism, language, cultural) |
| Describe training that will be given before departure: |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| Describe training that will be given after departure: |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| Prior training or experience that equips you for this project: |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| Prior Missions Projects |
| |
| |
| References: (Name, Address, relationship) |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| For Missions Council Use Only |
| Action: |
| |
| |
| |

**Fund-raising letter must be attached if you desire to solicit funds from Grace Community Church members.*