

RBCPC Missions Guidelines

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Our Foundation

Purpose/Mission Statement

A broad description of what we do, with/for whom we do it, our distinctive competence and why we do it.

To lead, empower, and challenge the congregation of RBCPC to respond individually and corporately to Jesus' commission to go into the world to witness, teach, preach and exemplify the Good News of Jesus Christ.

- At an individual level we will foster programs for the RBCPC family which result in a growing awareness of and participation in mission projects, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, in order to promote personal missionary experience and spiritual growth.
- At a corporate level we will be led by the passion and energy of members of our congregation to identify and provide support to mission projects which meet the criteria of the Missions Committee and whose goal is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Principles

Our actions and decisions are governed by these principles.

- We are guided by the Great Commission as directed in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, and Acts 1:7-8 (see Appendix 1)
- We humbly serve under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit and to the glory of God the Father
- We are Christ's hands, feet, and heart to those in the world who are in need, in accordance with Christ's teaching in Matthew 25:34-40 (see Appendix 1)
- We serve with integrity and openness as the stewards of RBCPC Missions' financial resources

Major Approaches and Methods

The major approaches or methods (the means) for attaining our broad goals and resolving specific issues.

- We will make better use of current RBCPC avenues of communication while being alert to new opportunities and forms.
- We seek to inform the congregation on a broader scale than currently exists, in order to engage them to achieve our long term goals.
- We will enter into intentional conversation with other missions-minded groups within RBCPC in order to inform our decisions, optimize our effectiveness, and contribute to superb missions experiences for the church as a whole.
- We will take advantage of the knowledge and vision of church staff in order to better understand the role that missions will play in the future of Christian faith.
- We highly value the opinion of each member of the Missions Committee and strive to acquire and incorporate his/her input into our work and decisions.

Planning

Long Range Goals

Broad statements of what we hope to achieve in the next 3-5 years. Goals focus on outcomes or results and are qualitative in nature.

1. Develop a missions-minded congregation at RBCPC.
 - 1.1. Increase congregational awareness of mission activities and opportunities.
 - 1.2. Provide ongoing opportunities, at a variety of commitment levels, for the congregation to engage in missions-related activities.
 - 1.3. Encourage and enable broad participation in missions-related activities.
2. Grow the abilities of the Missions Committee, as individuals and as a whole, to lead our church in the field of missions.
 - 2.1. Gain an understanding of the missions operations at other churches, locally and within the Presbytery, with the intention of further defining our own identity, exploring future opportunities for cooperation and collaboration, and identifying a reference group of best-practice churches.
 - 2.2. Be among the leaders (relative to the reference group) in the amount of funding spent on missions activities, as measured by the funding available to the Missions Committee.
3. Evolve the Missions Committee structure and practices as needed in order to enable us to successfully meet our goals and criteria.

Short Term Objectives

Specific, concrete, measurable statements of what will be completed in order to further our progress towards our long term goals.

Each long range goal (listed above) can be broken down into in a set of short term objectives. The strategies and tactics (short term objectives) that are being used to achieve each of the long range goals are described in a separate document. It will be the responsibility of working groups to clarify and quantify (make measurable) the specific short term objectives the working groups (sub-committees) will work on each year, subject to the approval of the Missions Committee.

Missions & Missionaries

Missions

Levels of Missions Committee Support for Missions

The Missions Committee provides four levels of support. An individual mission may move back and forth between these levels over time.

1. **Mission of the Church** – This is the minimum level and signifies that the mission has been reviewed by the committee and meets all of our criteria (see below). No Missions Committee funding is provided.
2. **Fund Raising Approved** – The advocate is granted approval to conduct fund raising activities on behalf of the mission. The RBCPC name may be used and the congregation may be approached. In order to facilitate congregational giving, a designated fund may be created or donations may be tracked by the Missions Committee Treasurer.
3. **One-time Support Provided** – The Missions Committee approves the disbursement of funds to the mission. The term “one-time” is not meant literally, but is used to differentiate from ongoing support (see below). Funds may be disbursed upon multiple instances, but each one requires approval of the Missions Committee.
4. **Ongoing Support Provided** – The mission is included in the Missions Committee annual budget and receives funding approval as part of the budget process. Funds may be disbursed throughout the year or in a single event, as designated in the budget.

Criteria for Becoming a Mission of the Church

When we consider requests from missionaries or ministries to become a Mission of the Church, we look for clear evidence of the following:

1. **Accessibility:** need to have “hands on” involvement in the ministry, and they should respond to the Missions Committee communication within a reasonable time frame.
2. **Fiscal Prudence:** meet our mutual financial goals.
3. **Commitment:** agree with planned mission and objective(s) in serving Jesus Christ and His Church.
4. **Competency:** have a track record in the ministry they propose that demonstrates their capability to do the work.
5. **Evangelism:** share or live out the Gospel leading people toward Jesus Christ.
6. **Equipped:** are prepared for this ministry through academic and/or practical experience.
7. **Sensitivity:** recognize cultural differences in the area(s) they serve, and handle them well.
8. **Reliability:** meet mutually-understood plan of action.
9. **Accountability:** have a defined plan of responsibility for carrying out each aspect of its ministry.

Value System for Missions Support

These values guide us in deciding on an annual basis which of the Missions of the Church we will choose to support with our time, talent, energy and treasure:

- We pray for God's guidance continually in our decisions.
- We target missions where we can make a significant difference, while helping them cultivate additional resources and become independent of our support.
- We select missions that intentionally share the good news, in addition to modeling the love of Christ. [see Appendix 2]
- Our aim is to develop a personal relationship with our mission partners.
- We favor missions with an advocate who is actively involved with both the mission itself and in representing the mission to our Mission Committee.

Missionaries

Introduction

Support for missionaries may be separated into the four stages shown below. The Missions Committee has determined practices for supporting each of these stages.

- Calling
 - Short-term volunteer missions (typically one or more weeks)
 - Mission conferences
- Equipping
 - Training
 - Conferences
 - Education
- Sending
 - Long-term volunteer missions (typically about one year)
 - Prayer support/counsel
 - Logistical support
 - Financial support
 - Supplies
 - At-home partnership
- Sustaining
 - Budgeted support of established missions
 - One-time, emergency support

Calling

Those who have formally joined the membership of RBCPC may come before the Missions Committee to request a \$500 stipend for short-term mission trips (typically 1-3 weeks) or conferences (up to 1 week). It is not necessary for RBCPC to sponsor or be affiliated with the trip, nor is it necessary that the mission

be an approved mission of our church, but the sponsoring group or organization should demonstrate general compliance with our criteria for missions.

Equipping

We define “Equipping” as those activities that personally prepare the individual to go into the mission field for longer-term mission work. These activities include counseling, training, language education, mission conferences, meetings with mission organizations, and related types of activities. Support could also include travel expenses related to these activities.

The subcommittee recommends that the approved applicant be supported in amounts up to \$1500 for the first year, \$750 for the second year, and \$500 for the third year. The assumption is that the applicant will be ready to go to the mission field, and so proceed to the Sending stage within three years. The supported applicant is expected to request a specific amount of funding, up to the maximum allowed, for well-defined activities. The applicant is also expected to give a full report on how the funding was used.

Primary consideration should be given to applicants who have a demonstrated commitment to RBCPC. Measures of commitment could include regular attendance of worship, employment by the church, service on church committees, participation in church-sponsored volunteer service activities, volunteering at the church resale shop, and other similar types of activities.

Applicants sponsored by a member of the church could also be considered for this type of support. An example of this type of applicant would be the child of a church member who is not able to participate directly in church activities because she/he is attending college out of the area. Others would generally not be considered for this type of support but should, instead, apply for funding through designation as a mission of the church or by a special grant.

In order to be considered for Equipping support, the mission agency with which the applicant will be serving (if any), or the mission work itself, must meet the criteria for becoming a Mission of the Church.

Sending

“Sending” activities are those which get a long-term mission applicant to the mission field and started on their mission work. Funding could be used for relocation-related expenses, personal financial support, travel, supplies, and similar types of expenses.

The subcommittee recommends that the approved applicant be supported up to \$6000 per year for no longer than four years. The assumption is that the applicant’s mission work will be established within this time period, after which time the applicant can apply to become a designated Mission of the Church (the Sustaining stage). The requirements for requesting funds and reporting of funded activities and for the mission agency or enterprise to qualify for support would be the same as those set out in “Equipping” (above).

Primary consideration should be given to those applicants who have been supported through the “equipping” stage by the Missions Committee. Consideration could also be given to other applicants

with demonstrated commitment to RBCPC, as defined above, or who are advocated by a member of the church.

In addition to direct financial support, the Missions Committee (MC) will also consider, on a case by case basis, providing the additional types of support listed below.

- Prayer support – The MC will support the missionary in prayer.
- Counseling – The MC will help to arrange counseling, as needed, before the missionary leaves for the mission field with the Missions Pastor, retired or returned missionaries, or others who can help to prepare the candidate for the mission field.
- Logistical support – The MC may help with the sales or storage of household goods or cars, the forwarding of mail, and other matters that must be addressed at home when and after, the missionary leaves for the mission field.
- Supplies – The MC will help obtain supplies necessary for mission work or for living abroad.
- An “at home” partner – The MC will help identify a person or group to maintain close contact with the one who is sent, and to report to the MC on their progress and needs.
- Re-entry support – When the mission service ends, the MC will provide resources to help the returning missionary reintegrate into American culture. This may include a stipend, for up to three months of funding, based on the length of mission service and the ongoing funding rate.

Sustaining

In this stage the missionary has made a life choice to pursue God’s calling. At this point, the missionary should apply to become a designated and funded Mission of the Church, in the same manner as other missions we support. Funding may take the form of regular payments approved as part of the annual Missions budget, or individual disbursements approved by vote of the Missions Committee. More information is found in the “Funding” section of this document.

Operations

Organization

Membership

The Missions Committee is composed of volunteer advocates for the Missions of the Church plus other members of the congregation and church family who are interested in Christ's Great Commission that we should spread the good news. It is not necessary to be a formal member of the church in order to participate in the committee. The Missions Committee is advised by the Missions Pastor, Ray Sparling, and led by a Chairperson, who is selected by the Missions Pastor. The mission advocates are listed later in this document and you are encouraged to approach them directly to learn more about the missions and the involvement of RBCPC.

Meetings

The Missions Committee generally meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the church Library. You may email the committee for more information or to confirm the schedule of upcoming meetings.

Contact Information

The Missions Committee may be reached at:

- Missions Committee Chairperson: missioncommittee@rbcp.org
- Missions Committee Treasurer: missions@rbcp.org
- Missions Pastor: rsparling@rbcp.org, 858-487-0811

You may also contact the committee or individual members of the committee by leaving a note in the Missions Committee mail slot in the administration building.

Current Members

- Beth Nidzieko, *Communications*
- Bev Whitman
- Bill Rickles
- Craig Murken
- Cyndi Nolan
- Dawn Neldon
- Dee Cimmel
- Gary Jackson
- Gayle Marrett, *Resale Shops*
- Jill Weller
- Jinny Straeter
- Kay Phillips

- Lois Sheldon
- Mary Senic
- Maureen Schwinn
- Mike Azeka
- Mirna Wasef
- Polly Purcifull
- Ray Sparling, *Missions pastor*
- Ron Phillips, *Treasurer*
- Sharon Ellis, *Recording Secretary*
- Stan Madsen
- Steve Barclay
- Terry Norwood

Work of the Missions Committee

Introduction

In the past, the Missions Committee has “done work” in several different ways: in the full Missions committee, by subcommittee, or through individuals. In addition to doing work, there are decisions to be made. In the future, it is likely there will be more to do, so we have given consideration to the best way to approach each activity.

Definitions:

- Full Committee – All members of the Missions Committee (MC). The full committee does the work and makes the decision. *Examples:* Receiving and voting on a request to become a Mission of the Church. Discussing and voting on a request to disburse funds.
- Empowered Subcommittee (or Individual) – A subset of the Missions Committee, possibly including contributors outside the MC. The committee (or individual) does the work and makes the decisions. They inform the full committee, but don’t request approval. *Examples of Empowered Subcommittees:* The Missions Feature Board sub-committee sets the display schedule, designs the boards and implements them. Ray, Dawn and Beth acted as an empowered sub-committee to plan and execute the retreat. *Examples of Empowered Individuals:* Beth, as chairperson, prepares the monthly meeting agenda. Dee, as leader of the Ireland trip, determines itinerary and activities. The webmaster updates the online version of the Missions calendar.
- Working Subcommittee (or Individual) – A subset of the Missions Committee, possibly including contributors outside the MC. The committee (or individual) does the work and then brings a proposal to the full committee. *Examples of Working Subcommittees:* The Strategy subcommittee and Long Term Missions subcommittee each drafted a document and then brought it to the full committee for discussion, revision and approval. *Examples of Working Individuals:* Ron, as treasurer, prepares the budget and then presents it to the MC for discussion

and approval. Sharon, as recording secretary, takes the minutes of the meeting which are then approved at the subsequent meeting.

Work of the Missions Committee - Table

	<u>Full Committee</u> (do the work and make the decision)	<u>Empowered Sub-committee</u> (do the work and make the decision; inform the full committee)	<u>Working Sub-committee</u> (do the work and make a recommendation; decisions made in full committee)	<u>Empowered Individual</u> (do the work and make the decision; inform the full committee)	<u>Working Individual</u> (do the work and make a recommendation; decisions made in full committee)
Existing Work					
Missions of the Church	Full	Emp Sub	Wrkg Sub	Emp Individ	Wkg Individ
Hear requests to become a Mission of the Church from new missions, evaluate the request against our criteria, and decide whether or not to approve them as a Mission of the Church	XX				
Work with advocates to schedule regular (annual?) reports from [all] the missions in our budget. Advise them on what we want to hear from them.				XX	
Receive annual reports from the missions in our budget	XX		XX (to create a guideline on what we'd like to hear)		
Receive post-trip reports from short term missionaries (all folks, regardless of trip org)	MC + Full Congregation (Mission Night)				
Financial	Full	Emp Sub	Wrkg Sub	Emp Individ	Wkg Individ
Approve disbursements from designated funds. (Needs to go into minutes of full MC. Email approval OK.)		XX			
Receive/approve "one-time" funding requests from advocates	XX				
Receive/approve funding requests from volunteer (short term) missions (\$500)		XX			
Receive/approve requests for support as a long term (one year) missionary	XX				
Review mission trip proposals to determine if criteria for tax-deductible status are met		XX			
Prepare annual Missions budget					XX

Financial (cont')	Full	Emp Sub	Wrkg Sub	Emp Indiv	Wkg Indiv
Receive/approve a request for the initiation of ongoing funding for a Mission of the Church (request comes from advocate and typically results in addition of line item to budget)	XX				
Communication	Full	Emp Sub	Wrkg Sub	Emp Indiv	Wkg Indiv
Write content for publicity (Lantern articles, Bulletin inserts, web stories)		XX (2-3 people)			
Publish the Missions booklet				XX	
Maintain Missions calendar				XX	
Update Web site				XX	
Attend New Members First Serve meeting				XX	
Missions Feature Board outside sanctuary		XX			
Manage the Missions mail slot in the workroom				XX	
Events	Full	Emp Sub	Wrkg Sub	Emp Indiv	Wkg Indiv
Special Offerings –Select recipient and create announcements	XX				
Missions Fair – Organize and conduct the spring Missions Fair		XX			
Mission Evenings – Support trip leaders in organizing and conducting post-trip presentations				XX	
Mission Evenings – ongoing missions (e.g. Tom's InterVarsity presentation)				XX (advocate working with the Missions evening Subcommittee)	
Missions Retreat(s)		XX			
All Church Mission Trip (e.g. DOFO this month, Mexico house building)		XX			
Community impact events (e.g. Faith in Action, RB Alive!)	We accept opportunities if the committee agrees we have the time and resources to effectively plan and execute.				
Worship	Full	Emp Sub	Wrkg Sub	Emp Indiv	Wkg Indiv
Commissioning of missionaries				XX	
Missions Fair (1-2x per yr)		XX			

Summary

Full Committee

- Receive annual reports from the missions in our budget
- Receive post-trip reports from short term missionaries (all folks, regardless of trip org)
- Receive/approve “one-time” funding requests from advocates
- Hear requests to become a Mission of the Church from new missions, evaluate the request against our criteria, and decide whether or not to approve them as a Mission of the Church
- Receive/approve a request for the initiation of ongoing funding for a Mission of the Church (request comes from advocate and typically results in addition of line item to budget)
- Special Offerings –Select recipient
- Receive/approve requests for support as a long term (one year) missionary

Empowered Sub-committees

- Budget Subcommittee - Approve disbursements from designated funds. (Needs to go into minutes of full MC. Email approval OK.)
- Budget Subcommittee - Review mission trip proposals to determine if criteria for tax-deductible status are met
- Mission Requests - Receive/approve funding requests from volunteer (short term) missions (\$500)
- Communications - Write content for publicity (Lantern articles, Bulletin inserts, web stories); publish the Missions booklet ; maintain Missions calendar; update Web site
- Feature Board - Missions Feature Board outside sanctuary
- Missions Fair – Organize and conduct the spring Missions Fair
- Missions Retreat(s)
- All Church Mission Trip (e.g. DOFO, Mexico house building)

Working Sub-committees

- Create guidelines on what we would like to hear when we receive annual reports from the missions in our budget

Empowered Individuals

- Work with advocates to schedule regular (annual?) reports from [all] the missions in our budget. Advise them on what we want to hear from them.
- Mission Evenings – Support trip leaders in organizing and conducting post-trip presentations; support presentations from ongoing missions (e.g. InterVarsity)
- Commissioning of missionaries
- Attend New Members First Serve meeting
- Manage the Missions mail slot in the workroom

Working Individuals

- Treasurer: budget preparation

- Recording secretary: meeting minutes

Finances

Missions Committee Funding

Funding Overview

The Missions Committee is accountable for funds received from three major sources:

- The RBCPC ministry budget
- Profit from the Resale Shops
 - budgeted profit
 - excess profit
- Congregational giving
 - to a designated mission fund
 - to the general missions fund

Funding from RBCPC Operating Budget

The Missions Committee receives 5.75% of the actual church income from Pledged, Unpledged, Loose, and Other Contributions (excluding initial, per capita and Easter loose offering which may be donated to a mission project in its entirety). At the beginning of the fiscal year, Missions income from the church ministry budget is set at 5.75% of the budgeted Administration Department's total for the above accounts. As the fiscal year comes to a close, this portion of Missions income is adjusted to reflect 5.75% of the actual income of the above mentioned accounts. If the church income has exceeded the budget, the YE Adjustment will be positive; if church income is under budget, then the YE Adjustment will be a decrease (negative).

On April 1 (beginning of the fourth fiscal quarter), the Missions Treasurer will request from Administration & Finance (A&F) an estimate of the adjusted income number, based on A&F's current understanding of the church's financial condition. Updated estimates will again be requested on May 1 and June 1.

These monies are held in the Missions operating fund (101-618).

Funding from Resale Shops

Profit from the Resale Shops first goes to repay any deficit in **[Need to get these details from Ray]**. The second obligation to be funded is the account for youth workers at the Resale Shops. This amount is jointly agreed to by the Resale Board and the Missions Committee and is in the range of \$10,000 - \$15,000. The Mission Committee receives 100% of the remaining net profit.

Incoming funds from the Resale Shops are shown as Income on the Missions Financial Statement (specifically: *Transfer From Resale Shop*) and are transferred into the Missions operating fund on a monthly basis. An estimate of this income is made by the Resale Shops for inclusion in the Missions Annual Budget (618), but the actual income may exceed the estimate, sometimes by a significant amount.

The accounting calendar and the approval practices of the Missions Committee result in a time lag between the receipt of funds and the disbursement of funds. Therefore, Resale Shop funds received during the last quarter of the fiscal year (April – June, inclusive) will be managed as follows. At Fiscal Year End, any unplanned, unspent income from the Resale Shops will be transferred to the Unrestricted Donations designated fund (302-634). It is expected that, in accordance with Missions' usual review and disbursement practices, these funds will be disbursed during the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

Funding from Congregational Giving

On occasion, gifts from members of the congregation are given directly for funding of missions. General gifts are credited to the Missions Unrestricted Donations fund (302-634). Designated gifts are credited to the appropriate named designated fund (e.g. Habitat for Humanity 302-633-87).

Missions Committee Disbursements

Missions Reserve

The Missions Committee desires to serve God by making funds available to our missions in order that they might continue the work of Our Lord. It is not our goal to accumulate funds, but knowing the future is uncertain and acknowledging some of our missions and missionaries are dependent upon our donations, we typically reserve 10- 15% of our expense budget in order to buffer our recipients from internal variations in income. The monies are held in the Unrestricted Donations designated fund (302-634).

Support of Missions – Tier 1 Budget

The Missions Committee has the responsibility and authority to determine and approve a Missions budget for each fiscal year. The income for this budget equals the 5.75% of the church operating budget (as described above) plus the budgeted amount of profit from the Resale Shops (as described above). Once the income amount is known, the Missions Committee creates a disbursement plan (expense budget) equal to this total. Any mission or missionary designated to receive funds must be an approved mission of RBCPC and have an active advocate on the Mission Committee. Within the Missions Committee, this budget is known as the Tier 1 Budget.

Approval of the budget constitutes approval for the planned disbursements, with the exception of funds budgeted to Special Needs (618-80871) and Volunteer Mission Service (618-80859 or 618-80707 (xfer)). Disbursements against these two accounts must be individually approved by the Missions Committee or its proxy.

It is the responsibility of the Missions Committee Treasurer, with the assistance of the Mission Budget Subcommittee, to prepare the budget, request checks, and track fund balances and spending. The Tier 1 Budget should meet the following goals with regard to distributing funds: [maybe should add a section here about the reasoning behind this?]

- 80% of funds distributed during the fiscal first half (July 1 – Dec 31) [is it 12/31 or 1/31 for the first target date? I have notes both ways]
- 90% of funds distributed by the end of fiscal third quarter (Mar 31) [again, is it 3/31 or 4/30?]

Recurring payments that are part of the Tier 1 Budget may be executed automatically by the church finance office. Other payments are initiated by means of a check request form signed by the Missions Committee Treasurer (or chairperson, in the absence of the treasurer) and the Missions pastor.

Support of Missions – Tier 2 Budget

The funds available for disbursement in support of missions usually exceed the amount included in the Tier 1 Budget. Past experience shows that profit from the Resale Shops often exceeds the original budgeted income. In addition, members of the congregation periodically donate unrestricted gifts in support of missions. Finally, the church occasionally receives estate gifts, a portion of which is allocated to missions. These sources combine to create a significant source of funding for missions, which has led to the creation of an internal supplementary budget (not submitted to Finance) known as the Tier 2 budget. The existence of this guiding budget helps the committee be intentional with its giving, instead of responding to requests with the feeling that these excess funds are “burning a hole in our pocket,” since new requests are measured against the plans laid out in the Tier 2 budget.

It is the responsibility of the Missions Committee Treasurer, with the assistance of the Mission Budget Subcommittee, to prepare the Tier 2 budget. The magnitude of the budget is determined by past history, tempered by current assessments. The Tier 2 budget is ratified by the Missions Committee, but is not binding and therefore any funds disbursed in accordance with the budget require the approval of the Missions Committee at the time of disbursement. When funds are disbursed, the source of the funds must be identified (i.e. operating budget (618) or designated fund (302-634)).

Believing that our donors want their gifts put to work in a timely manner, it is our intent that Tier 2 income should be reviewed and disbursed 3-4 times per year, in accordance with the Missions Committee’s recommendation.

The Missions Committee desires to finish the fiscal year in the following position:

$$\textit{Total Actual Transfer Income} + \textit{Original Budgeted Ministry Income} + \textit{YE Ministry Adjustment} = \textit{Total Actual Expenses} + \textit{Net Trip Activity}$$

Support of Missions – Other Disbursements

- Monthly Review
 - Direct giving: designated donations (302-633) – disbursed with approval of Missions Committee; timing of disbursements is based on the advocate’s recommendations
 - Special offerings (varies) – disbursed after donations have slowed
 - Fund raising – disbursed as needed for mission trips

Mission Trips

Tier 1 Budget

[need to write something about the new requirement to include mission trips in the budget]

Tax Deductibility of Mission Travel - General Rule & Background

Internal Revenue Tax Code Section 170(j) states, in part, “NO (emphasis added) deduction shall be allowed under this section for traveling expenses (including amounts expended for meals and lodging) while away from home, whether paid directly or by reimbursement, unless there is NO (emphasis added) significant element of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation in such travel.

The critical phrase is, “no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation”. The tax code or related regulations do not provide a definition of this term.

The fact that the taxpayer enjoys providing services to the charitable organization does not lead to denial of the tax deduction. For example a scout leader who enjoys hiking, camping and working with children will not be denied a tax deduction for the trip costs as long as the leader has genuine and substantial duties throughout the trip. A taxpayer who has only nominal duties related to the performance of services for the charity and who is not required to render significant services for a substantial part of the trip is not allowed a tax deduction for the trip costs.¹

The literature on this subject provides several examples:

Taxpayer goes on a one week mission trip to country x during which daily substantial services are provided. On the way home the taxpayer stops in country y for a 2 week vacation. Are some, all or none of the travel expenses tax deductible? Answer, the trip must be evaluated on the whole and most of the trip was recreation therefore none of the travel expenses are tax deductible.²

Taxpayer attends an all day church regional meeting and that evening attends the theater. The travel cost is tax deductible although the theater cost is not tax deductible.³

Taxpayer works hard a few hours each day in country x on a construction project and spends the rest of each day sightseeing or other leisure undertakings. The travel costs are not tax deductible.⁴

¹ Conference Committee Report, IRC Section 170 (j)

² 2008 Church and Clergy Tax Guide, Chapter 8, Section C, page 421

³ IRS Notice 87-23

⁴ IRS Notice 87-23

A married couple travel to country x for a church sponsored charitable activity. One spouse is involved all day each day on the activity while the other spouse does not participate in the activity. Rather this spouse provides moral support and companionship to the working spouse. The travel cost of the non-participating spouse is not tax deductible.⁵

Pastor J elects to go on a two week preaching mission in Europe. He is in Europe for 10 days and conducts one-hour services on two of those days. The travel expenses incurred do not qualify as a charitable contribution deduction. The same rule would apply to Pastor J's spouse and children who go along on the trip.⁶

RBCPC Policy for Tax-Deductible Mission Travel

RBCPC is responsible for acknowledging, in writing, any charitable contributions in excess of \$250. If a travel participant or another donor contributes funds to the Church in support of a mission trip, the Church must know whether or not the travel expenses, and therefore the contribution, are tax deductible. This decision is dependent upon the Church's assessment of the whether the circumstances of the mission trip meet the IRS standards for charitable travel. All mission trips, whether group or individual, which are sponsored by RBCPC (for example, by the Missions Committee, a youth group, etc.) are governed by an assessment process, which will be conducted by the Missions Committee in order to provide consistency within the church.

The Missions Committee has the responsibility to review the documented details of the trip, assure the criteria for charitable travel (which includes meals and lodging) are met, and inform the Business Administrator of the approved status of the trip. The Business Administrator will also be provided with a copy of the itinerary and budget for the trip. The Missions Committee may discuss any questions or concerns with the Business Administrator, the Church treasurer, or qualified outside experts. If warranted, the matter may be discussed at a meeting of Session. The charitable nature of the trip should be determined before fundraising begins for the trip. If the facts of the trip change or are not consistent with the facts initially presented, the tax treatment of contributions may change.

RBCPC Guidelines for Tax-Deductible Mission Travel

As stated above, the nature of the activity and the significance of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation determine the tax deductibility of travel costs incurred in carrying out the activity.

- The activity must be a Church approved mission or other religious activity.
- The travel schedule should be structured primarily to accomplish the purpose of the mission, with allowances as necessary for acclimation to time zone, altitude, etc.
- The amount of time spent on the religious purpose as compared to the time spent on vacation-type activities is a critical element in determining the tax treatment of the travel costs, so vacation-type activities (sightseeing, side trips etc.) should be minimized. Generally, activities

⁵ RBCPC interpretation of rules

⁶ 2008 Church and Clergy Tax Guide, Chapter 8, Section C, page 420

that support the religious purpose should occupy what would be considered a “working day” in that culture. Time spent on recreation activities after a full working day will, generally, not affect the charitable tax treatment.

- Generally, activities on mission trips such as learning about the history or culture of the country or the people, which are carried out to enhance the effectiveness of the mission trip, are not considered to be personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation.
- In the case of a family traveling as a group, if a family member does not participate or cannot participate in the religious purpose, that member’s travel costs may not be tax deductible.

Financial Procedures for Mission Travel

Prior to any implementation of trip preparation activity, the trip will be reviewed in accordance with the RBCPC Policy for Tax-Deductible Mission Travel (above). The financial aspects of the trip-planning will be coordinated between the leadership of the trip (or the individual), the person designated as the financial coordinator of the trip (who may or may not be a trip participant), and the Accounting Supervisor. The responsibilities of the financial coordinator include:

- Receiving, recording and tracking all donations, fees and transfers in a tracking spreadsheet. (Project codes may be assigned by the finance department to help with tracking.)
- Submitting and approving check requests for payment or reimbursement of expenses. (See section below on Expense Management.)
- Handling any communication with participants regarding their individual situation.

The trip leader, the financial coordinator, and the Accounting Supervisor will determine the process for managing finances during the trip itself, which will generally include one person approving, handling, and documenting payments as they occur.

Income and Fundraising:

- Each participant’s financial obligation may be covered by transfers, scholarship, fees or donations and must be paid in full prior to the beginning of the trip.
- Any communication for trips determined to be a charitable activity must contain the following statement: *“Contributions are solicited with the understanding that the Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.”*
- Contributions to the Church in support of the trip should not indicate the individual’s name on the check or other payment document. Rather the nature of the activity should be indicated (for example, Africa mission).
- To help identify donations, participants are encouraged to specify how and when funds may be received by including vouchers and designated envelopes.
- For individual travel, the appropriate governing body of the Church, generally the Missions Committee will continue to review and monitor the individual’s activities and programs, exercising control of donated funds through a budgetary process.

- Any unused donations are to be retained by RBCPC and will be utilized at the discretion of the appropriate body for related activity.

Expense Management

- To the extent possible, approved expenses will be paid by RBCPC prior to the trip.
- Expenses subject to reimbursement or direct payment include, but are not limited to:
 - Transportation expenses such as airline tickets, visas, and ground travel
 - Supplies needed for the missions activities (subject to approval of the trip leader)
 - Lodging and meals (see below)
 - Group activity expenses
- Expenses not eligible for reimbursement include:
 - Personal activity or recreation expenses
 - Any expenses outside the travel window of the trip
- Cash advances are discouraged and subject to advance approval by the Missions Committee.
- The leader of a group will be advised, prior to the trip, of any surplus of funds raised in excess of the anticipated trip costs. This surplus will be available to the group leader to use for payment of costs incurred during the trip. Expenses in excess of any surplus will not be reimbursed.
- The trip leader should determine how meal expenses will be managed and reimbursed, and be sure that all participants understand the process. Possible approaches may include:
 - Meal costs for the group are incorporated with other trip costs, so no individual accounting is required.
 - The cost of a meal for the group is paid for by one individual, who submits a single receipt for the expense and is subsequently reimbursed.
 - Each individual pays for his/her own cost of the meal and is subsequently reimbursed a pre-determined amount (per diem) regardless of the actual amount spent. No receipts are needed.
 - It is not an option for each individual to pay for his/her meal(s) individually and then submit individual receipts at the end of the trip, as this places an undue burden on the reimbursement process.

Appendix 1 – Scripture (NRSV)

The Great Commission - Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Mark 16:15-16

And He said to them,

‘Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.

Acts 1:7-8

He replied,

‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’

Matthew 25:34-40

Then the king will say to those at his right hand,

“Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Appendix 2 – Intent of Missions

As missionaries, we are called to:

- Share in word and deed the good news that Jesus Christ reconciles us to God and calls us to be reconciled to each other;
- Proclaim in word and deed that Jesus willingly died to set us free from the power of sin and death;
- Invite people in the community of faith to worship and serve the Triune God;
- Call people everywhere to believe in and follow Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior;

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Revision History

February 2009

- Updated Short-term Objectives for Long Range Goal 1.1, based on the work of the Missions Awareness Planning Committee (MAP)

May 11, 2009

- Updated list of committee members.
- Added to the Sending section for long term missionaries: "This may include a stipend, for up to three months of funding, based on the length of mission service and the ongoing funding rate."

July 5, 2009

- Added the word "challenge" to the Purpose/Mission Statement, based on feedback from the June retreat.
- Updated list of committee members.
- Added the section "How We Do Work" to the Operations chapter, after review and update at June retreat.
- Added section on "Missions Committee Funding," based on notes written by Kathy Marshall-Lund and Beth Nidzieko in June 2008.