

## 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.