

# Grace Evangelical Covenant Church

## Missions Policy

*Approved by Grace Council 4/26/05*

### I. Introductory Comments

- a. Purpose of Missions:
  - i. Missions is any outreach beyond our local congregation which seeks to fulfill the great commission of Christ.
  - ii. Our purpose and involvement in missions is based upon the need to share Christ's love for the world and to minister to the whole person.
- b. Purpose of a Missions Policy:
  - i. To strive for proper stewardship and fiscal responsibility.
  - ii. To maintain continuity and consistency as changes occur through the years at Grace.
  - iii. To help decisions related to missions be based in clearly thought through principles and values and in the appropriate channels.
  - iv. To provide guidance for initiating, maintaining and terminating support, induction to short-term missions service, and handling of designated gifts.
- c. Flexibility of Interpretation: Some flexibility of this policy is desirable. Any exceptions should be approved by the missions committee and then the church council.

### II. Requirements of Applicants

- a. Preference is given to those who have been active members at Grace for at least two years. Regular Attenders who are actively involved will also be considered. On rare occasions, those outside the Grace family will be considered. (Active participation at Grace is defined as having exhibited commitment to Grace by such things as: having been in a small group for at least a year; having given regular financial support to the church while attending; having functioned in some role of leadership, etc.)
- b. Applicants must exhibit a clear walk with Christ.
- c. Applicants must have clearly exhibited at Grace the gifts they believe God has given to them, including the gifts they feel called to use in missions. These gifts should also be confirmed by others in the body at Grace (through a committee, small group, ministry area, pastor, etc.)
- d. Any Grace member feeling called to go into mission work must first make application to and be accepted by an organized missions agency or sending body, and then apply to the Missions Committee if interested in being financially supported by the church.
- e. This application, which is the initial step in formally applying for support, shall consist minimally of the following information:
  - i. Section 1: name, contact information, summary of testimony, financial need and general overview of present financial support, summary of involvement at Grace
  - ii. Section 2: family description, educational and employment background, summary of call to missions, references and relationship history to references, intended missions focus and agency pursuing call with, and delineation of gifts and gifts for missions.
  - iii. For those applying for short term service of less than a month, only the items in e.i. Section 1 are required. (see attached forms)

### III. Financial Commitments

- a. Periods of Financial Support by the Church
  - i. If financially supported, the initial term will be for a maximum period of three years.
  - ii. Following completion of the initial term, the missionary may then apply for support for a period of up to five years, and may then reapply every five years thereafter. Each of these applications must consist of explanation of why the support of Grace is still important, what has been accomplished to date on the field, and an update on any of the information in the initial application that has changed.
- b. Budgeted Commitments by the Church: The Missions Committee at or about the November meeting shall make a recommendation to the council and congregational annual meeting for yearly support for:
  - i. Long-Term Missionary (more than 2 years) who is a member of Grace.
  - ii. Long-Term Missionary who is a non-member of Grace.
  - iii. Short-Term Missionary (less than 2 years) who is a member of Grace.
  - iv. Short-Term Missionary who is a non-member of Grace.
  - v. New Missionaries seeking first time support.
- c. Undesignated commitments
  - i. The Missions Committee shall determine the support amount of all other requests on an individual basis.
  - ii. And as funds are available, the Missions Committee will make additional recommendations to the church council.
- d. Handling of specially designated & personal gifts:
  - i. The congregation shall be encouraged to give sacrificially, systematically and prayerfully to meet Grace's budget and in doing that support our missionaries and missionary organizations.
  - ii. A one-time special offering may be taken for an individual or group when approved by the Senior Pastor, Church Council and Missions Committee. The individual or group must be affiliated under the administrative control of an IRS 501 (c) (3) recognized non-profit organization. In the event we cannot honor the gift, it will be returned within thirty days to the donor with a written explanation that we are unable to utilize the gift.
  - iii. There shall be no soliciting of the congregation at Grace without the above approval.
  - iv. Grace Evangelical Covenant Church is not allowed to act as a pass through agent for missionaries or organizations not delineated in the budget. For those within the budget, donors will generally be requested to make gifts to the sending missions agency directly.
  - v. If additional funds are available, Christmas Gifts may be provided directly to Long Term Missionaries only.
- e. Review of support:
  - i. If a missionary changes jobs, and/or status, location, agency, relationship with Grace or doctrinal positions, the Missions Committee will review the support given.
  - ii. Grace will budget a specific amount of money and commit to that specific amount for the period of one year only. Every effort will be made to follow through on longer term intentions. Fluctuations based on overall church income and expenses and the number of missionaries that Grace supports may, however, occur.

- iii. Support begins when the missionary is in their place of ministry. Grace will not normally contribute to time of deputation, start up costs, or the support of students preparing for missionary service.
- iv. Support may be terminated for reasons including but not limited to:
  - 1. Failure to re-apply at above mentioned intervals
  - 2. Lack of regular communication with the Missions Committee and Grace.
  - 3. For any of the reasons in e. i. above.
- v. All support funds will be sent to the sending missions agencies. These agencies must be willing to make their financial reports to Grace. Every effort will be made to support only those sending agencies which reflect theology compatible with Grace.
- vi. Upon retirement, support will generally be terminated as it is expected that the sending missions agency will provide an adequate retirement program for its missionaries, and that a portion of the missionary's monthly support is set aside for this purpose.
- vii. If the retiring missionaries have no retirement program, then they may apply for support, up to a maximum of ½ of their previous support amount. If this support is sought, a solid picture of their financial need and condition must be articulated.

#### IV. Mutual Commitments and Understandings

- a. Communication and Correspondence with Grace
  - i. Regular communication from missionary, at least quarterly, in the form of substantial correspondence such as personal letters, emails and newsletters. (Especially including items such as special needs, important decisions, personal situations, etc.)
  - ii. Periodic and intentional visits to Grace, frequency determined by committee and missionary.
  - iii. Annual report from missionary to congregation.
- b. Commitment from Grace
  - i. Faithful financial support.
  - ii. Faithful prayer support.
  - iii. Special support when missionaries are in town (such as hosting an open house, luncheon, etc. with Grace Attenders).
  - iv. Regular promotion of Grace supported missionaries to the congregation through the use of the bulletin board, special announcements, etc.
  - v. Regular correspondence from missions committee members.
- c. Short term opportunities
  - i. Short-term shall be taken to mean, non-permanent missionary commitment.
  - ii. The Missions Committee will encourage members of our congregation to be directly involved in missions by becoming short-term missionaries.
  - iii. Requests by non-members shall be reviewed on an individual basis.
  - iv. An application must be filled out in its entirety and turned in to the Missions Committee prior to a committee meeting, and at least 2 months prior to anticipated departure date or funding deadline.

**Section I: Grace Evangelical Covenant Church  
Missionary Application for Financial Support  
(For all applicants, regardless of term length)**

Name	
Contact Information	Address/phone/email...
Summary of Testimony	
Financial need	
General Overview of Present Financial Support	
Summary of Involvement at Grace	

**Section II: Grace Evangelical Covenant Church  
Missionary Application for Financial Support  
(For applicants seeking a term length greater than one month)**

Description of Family	
Educational and Employment Background	
Summary of Call to Missions	
References and Relationship to References	
Intended Missions Focus and Agency Pursuing Call with	
Delineation of Gifts and Gifts for Missions	