

Fellowship Bible Church Springdale, AR

Missions Policy

Introduction

Why do we need policies? Can't we just rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us? Policies are sometimes thought of as bureaucratic and as hindering the spontaneous working of the Holy Spirit. In practice, policies serve a number of practical and helpful purposes.

- They help us clarify our thinking with regards to missions.
- They help us communicate expectations to everyone involved including people seeking to go on a STM, receiving churches and missions and members and potential members of our local body.
- They serve as a record of past decisions.
- They help to keep us from doing the same work over each time a question arises.
- They serve as a basis of future changes.

Someone might also say, "Why do they need to be so formal?" Numbered documents sometimes are perceived as overly legalistic. The reason we number them is so that we can communicate easily by referring to the number of the paragraph under discussion.

1. Overview

- a. **The Great Commission.** At Fellowship Bible Church (hereafter FBC) we are wholeheartedly committed to Jesus' final words to his disciples found in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 and in Acts 1:8.
- b. **Mission Goals.** We believe the work of missions has as its goals evangelism, church planting and discipleship. This work is undertaken through planting of new churches, helping to strengthen already established churches and support types of ministries. We believe that a diversity of ministries helps to accomplish the goal of '...making disciples of all nations.'
- c. **Elders.** These policies are subject to the authority of the elders of FBC. The elders may revise them at any time, for any reason and in any manner deemed by them as appropriate
- d. **Abbreviations.**
 - i. FBC – Fellowship Bible Church located in Springdale, Arkansas.
 - ii. LTM – Long Term Missions
 - iii. STM – Short Term Missions

2. Long Term Missions

- a. **Expectations.** To assist FBC in focusing our missions program we believe that it is helpful for both the church and those who are committed to serving Jesus Christ in missions to have defined expectations.
- b. **Commitments of FBC.** FBC makes the following commitments to our missionaries:
 - i. **Prayer Support.** It is our practice to meet together weekly to pray. These prayer times include prayer for our mission family and their prayer requests. We also regularly encourage the congregation to uphold our mission family in prayer. In addition, we utilize email to share urgent prayer needs with the church body.
 - ii. **Financial Support.** We believe that our relationship with those of our mission family is that of a team. Our missionaries can expect regular financial support as the Lord provides. This support will continue for as long as mission service is maintained and the leadership of FBC deems that support is appropriate. We also believe that the support level of our missionaries should be annually evaluated by the missions committee in conjunction with the elder board.

- iii. **Special Needs.** If members of our mission family have special needs (i.e. furlough housing, transportation, furnishings, etc.) we will seek to assist with those needs as we are able.
 - iv. **Spiritual Care.** We are committed to helping our mission family in any way necessary for their spiritual care including providing messages of our services via the church web site, recorded cd's and tapes, sending needed helps, helping to provide counseling or consultation should the need arise.
 - v. **Home Assignments.** We will provide opportunities to meet with the mission committee and reports to the church during home assignments.
- c. **Commitments of Missionaries.** Missionaries make the following commitments to FBC.
- i. **Monthly Communication.** We expect regular *monthly* communication. We believe that for prayer support and personal interest to be maintained regular communication is critical. We do not expect all communication to be lengthy. Short emails and even cc'd correspondence are welcomed, especially as noted above, urgent prayer needs.
 - ii. **Visits.** We also expect that while each of our mission family is on home assignment we will receive a visit to our church for a service as well as communication as to when we can expect the visit. This will greatly aid in keeping our church family informed about you and your ministry.
 - iii. **Notification of Changes.** We expect to be kept abreast of any change in ministry status, area of service and support levels.

3. Short Term Missions

- a. **Purpose.** The purposes of short term missions at FBC include all of the following. A STM should be centered around at least one of the following.
- i. To further our overall mission goals as stated above.
 - ii. Assist in the preparation of church members for service in long term missions by: These will often apply to younger participants who are considering full-time missions service.
 - 1. Learning what missions is about.
 - 2. Developing a missions world view.
 - 3. Evaluating a personal fit for missions.
 - 4. Affirming a call to missions.
 - 5. Providing exposure to cross-cultural situations and places.
 - iii. Assist either our long term missionaries or others in long term missions in the following ways. These will often apply to older participants who are not likely to pursue full-time missions.

1. Providing a pool of temporary labor.
 2. Creating situations which open doors that would not be otherwise open to local missionaries.
 3. Providing opportunities for creating long lasting, mutually beneficial relationships.
- b. **Development and Approval of STM Venues.** The missions committee will establish a list of short term mission venues which it will use to accomplish the short term mission goals of FBC. A qualified short term mission will have the following characteristics.
- i. **Christ Centered.** A STM should be centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - ii. **Goal Alignment.** A STM should be aligned with the mission goals of FBC.
 - iii. **Partnerships.** A STM should be based on a partnership between FBC and an existing church or ministry.
 - iv. **Mutual Design.** The STM should be mutually designed by FBC and the receiving mission to ensure the mutual benefit of the program for both organizations.
 - v. **Leadership.** Leadership of a STM should be by qualified individuals who have been approved by the missions committee.
 - vi. **Administration.** A thorough administration process should be in place for each STM with emphasis on approval of the receiving partner, stewardship of funds, safety of participants and adequacy of reporting progress to the church.
 - vii. **Training.** Each person involved in a STM should receive adequate training in order to be able to accomplish the goals of the STM.
 - viii. **Exceptions.** From time-to-time, the elders may make exceptions to these criteria for various reasons as they see fit.
 - ix. **Source:** These characteristics were adapted from SOE's U.S. Standards of Excellence in Short Term Missions which can be found at <http://www.stmstandards.org/>.
- c. **Prayer.** STM's should have an active and effective prayer support base.
- d. **Application and Eligibility for Participation.** A person wishing to be a part of a STM program at FBC will apply in writing using the application attached to this document. That person should meet the following qualifications.
- i. **Believer.** The applicant should have an active and obvious commitment to Jesus Christ.
 - ii. **Active at FBC.** The applicant should have demonstrated active attendance and participation in the church body at FBC as appropriate to the individual's circumstances.

- iii. **Career Missions Minded.** The applicant should have a willingness to serve as a career cross-cultural disciple-maker, if God so leads.
- iv. **Culturally Flexible.** The applicant should be willing to forego the comforts and familiarity of home life for the purpose of participating in a STM. For instance, a STM might require walking long distances, riding a horse, sleeping in tents and/or eating strange and unfamiliar foods.
- v. **Ministry Experience.** The applicant should have proven ministry experience commensurate to the proposed short-term assignment as deemed appropriate by the missions committee.
- vi. **Maturity.** The applicant should have personal and spiritual maturity sufficient to the proposed assignment.
- vii. **Exceptions.** The missions committee and/or elders may make exceptions to these criteria if it so desires.
- viii. **Approvals.** Candidates for a STM must have the following approvals.
 - 1. A parent or guardian (if under the age of 18)
 - 2. The leadership of the proposed STM.
 - 3. The chair of the missions committee.
 - 4. A member of the Board of Elders

Appendix A. Application for Participation in Missions

Application Instructions: This application is for both long term and short term missions. Fill out this application and submit it to the missions committee at FBC prior to any deadlines for participation.

Mission _____

Mission dates: _____

Name of Applicant _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Emergency Contact _____

Emergency Contact Phone Number: _____

Are you 18 years old or older? Yes _____ No _____

1. Describe your personal testimony and how you became a believer in Christ.

2. Describe your involvement with the body of believers at FBC.

3. Describe your desire and/or calling to be a part of this mission.

4. Describe your experience that qualifies you to be a part of this mission team.

5. Describe your personal ongoing walk with the Lord.

6. Long Term Only. Describe your level of indebtedness. How will you handle this indebtedness if you are accepted?

7. Long Term Only. Describe the educational needs of your children. How will you handle these needs if you are accepted?

8. Long Term Only. Describe your experiences with other missions agencies and churches. Are you in good standing with these people? Are there any unresolved relational issues from your previous experience? Etc.

9. Long Term Only. Describe any family/relational needs (i.e. elderly parents, children with special needs) that will be affected by this assignment.

10. Long Term Only. Describe any counseling you are presently receiving or feel like you need.

11. Approvals.

Parent or Guardian (if under 18 years of age)

I hereby authorize this applicant to participate in the short term mission project or trip stated on the front of this application.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name _____

FOR MISSIONS COMMITTEE USE: -----

Missions Committee Chair

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name _____

Elder

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name _____