

West Congregational Church
— Missions Policy —

Revised December 2001

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Mission Statement

The Missions Team aims to love God by reaching outward through promoting missions awareness and participation at West Congregational Church. We are committed to mobilizing our people, gifts, talents and resources to bring others closer to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Our desire is to work in partnership with the leadership of existing churches or ministries in the United States and abroad. Our ministry of missions will increase our Christian worldview enabling us to better see the needs at home and abroad.

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I. PURPOSE

A. Scriptural Basis of Missions

1. To fulfill the Great Commission
“Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19,20
2. To minister to the totality of human need
“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.” Matthew 10:42
“I tell you the truth, anyone who gives a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.” Mark 9:41
3. To bring men and women to salvation and to be taught in the knowledge of God
“For, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” Romans 10:13-15
“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.” I Corinthians 9:19-23
“to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Ephesians 4:12
4. To obey Christ by confessing Him to the world
“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” Matthew 10:32-33
“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me

nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” Matthew 25:41-46

B. Definition of Missions

1. Any endeavor outside our local congregation to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ by proclaiming the gospel of Christ, making disciples and relating to the whole need of mankind—spiritual and physical.
2. Any ministry extending beyond the congregation, the church facilities, or the local sphere of influence of the church.
3. The cross-cultural ministry of our church.
4. Overseas ministry or ministry to a subculture within our own country.
5. Evangelizing, discipling, planting churches, and aiding in their growth and development both overseas and in various U.S. subcultures.

C. The Purpose of Our Missions Policy

1. To help achieve a clear sense of direction
2. To avoid making important decisions on an emotional or haphazard basis (for example, based on the charisma of the speaker, the “connections” of those seeking support, the mood or time a decision is made)
3. To help us be good stewards of each missions dollar
4. To bring new missions team members up to date, allowing them to quickly familiarize themselves with the issues to be faced in the general direction of our missions policy
5. To maintain consistency as leadership teams change membership
6. To develop a loving accountability in our missions ministry
7. To work in better harmony with the churchwide leadership

D. Flexibility of Interpretation

1. It is intended that the missions policies be generally followed.
2. Counsel should be sought when an issue comes up that would be contrary to policy.
3. Exceptions can be made at any time, but must be cleared with proper authority. Proper authority will be the majority agreement of the missions team and the pastoral staff.
4. Exceptions, along with accompanying rationale, should be carefully documented to avoid establishing irreversible precedents, and to accumulate a basis for policy revision.

E. Revision of Policy

1. The missions policy will be reviewed and revised as often as needed.

2. All modifications require the same approval as the original policy.
3. The missions team, along with pastoral approval has the sole responsibility of revising the missions policy and approving revisions.

II. STRUCTURE

A. Authority of the Missions Team

1. The missions team is authorized to act in accordance with the stipulations of the church missions policy.
2. To insure accountability, all meetings and actions of the missions team will be recorded in minutes and submitted to the pastoral staff, and made available to church members.
3. The missions team will have the authority to:
 - a. evaluate missionaries, agencies, and policies;
 - b. oversee all missions education in the church;
 - c. develop and administer the missions budget and make recommendations to finance team and leadership council;
 - d. approve all short term projects and teams;
 - e. oversee the preparation of candidates for long and short term service;
 - f. approve and/or establish missions ministry teams as needed according to church policy.

B. Selection of the Missions Team

1. Members of the missions team will be appointed by the missions team leader.
2. Members will be recruited on the basis of their potential contribution to the missions ministry.

C. Criteria for Selecting Members

1. An interest in missions.
2. A desire to learn more about missions.
3. Past experience or knowledge is preferred, but not required.
4. Demonstrated communication and leadership skills.
5. Those who are willing to undergo initial and continued training in missions.

D. Responsibilities of Individual Team Members

1. Team members are appointed for one year (renewable) terms.
2. Is a consistent witness for Christ. Prays regularly for church leadership, team members, the missionaries and ministries that WCC supports and the other WCC ministries and family members.
3. Attends all meetings of the missions team (usually monthly). Works to make all team members effective.
4. Meets periodically with the Missions Area Leader (at least once every 3 months).

5. Assists other team members with events and projects.
6. Works with other team members to identify a vision for missions at WCC, including setting missions policy, selecting ministries to support, developing the budget, etc.
7. Responsible for a specific area in the missions program.
8. Remains aware of the status and needs of assigned missionaries and ministries.
9. Be alert to pass on new information to the missions team.
10. Be a source of missions information to the congregation.

E. Function of Team Members

1. Missions Area Leader/Team Leader for all of Missions
 - a. Appointed by the Senior Pastor for one year (renewable) term, in accordance with church policy.
 - b. Coordinates the missions ministry of the church.
 - c. Appoints missions team members.
 - d. Serves as the chair of missions team meetings.
 - e. Adds wisdom, knowledge and maturity to the final decisions of the missions team.
 - f. Trains new team members on church missions policy and missions in general.
2. Possible functions/roles of team members;
 - a. World Focus (missions education)
 - b. Correspondence/clerical.
 - c. Short-term (oversees the short-term missions candidates and programs)
 - d. Finances
 - e. Other functions deemed necessary by the missions team and/or missions area leader.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MISSIONS LEADERSHIP TEAM

A. Responsibilities of the Missions Team

1. Assess the West Church missions strategy and progressively conform the shape of our support to the strategy.
2. Administer and evaluate the missions ministry.
3. Mobilize the resources of the congregation in the field of world missions.
4. Stimulate the intercessory prayer of the congregation for world evangelism and for our missionaries.
5. Educate and inspire the congregation in the field of world missions.
6. Stimulate, recruit and send out volunteers for missions service.
7. Develop and manage fund-raising programs for the missions budget.
8. Administer the funds allocated to missions.
9. Serve as liaison between the church and its related organizations, agencies, associations and missionaries.
10. Care for the missionaries on home assignment.

11. Update the missions policy.
12. Approve and oversee missions trips and projects.
13. Develop and oversee missions strategy for the church.

B. Training of Missions Team Members

1. We will encourage (and pay for) attendance at ACMC and other applicable missions conferences.
2. We will develop a suggested reading list to help bring new missions team members up to speed on the latest developments in missions.
3. We will devote a quarterly meeting to training alone and have an annual training weekend retreat.

C. Goal Setting/Strategy

1. The missions team shall set goals which are measurable but which involve a step of faith.
2. One day shall be set aside annually for team goal setting/missions strategy for the following year.
3. The missions team shall maintain the missions administration in accordance with the missions strategy.
4. In general, the missions strategy shall emphasize church planting activities, whether at home or abroad.
5. The missions strategy shall seek to maintain a flexible and creative balance between home and foreign missions, touching as far as possible the diverse populations of the world.

D. Developing Prayer Concerns

1. We will endeavor to develop among church members an increasing awareness of the necessity of intercessory prayer for world evangelism and for our missionaries.
2. We will present news and needs from the pulpit, in the weekly bulleting, in Sunday School classes, and through the prayer team.
3. Interaction will be encouraged between missionaries and the congregation through letters, email, cassette tapes (church services & sermons), by visits from missionaries on home assignment, and by assigning missionaries to stay in members' homes during home assignment.
4. Maintain an adoption program whereby other ministry teams and church families concern themselves with the spiritual and practical needs of one missionary family.

E. Missions Education in the Church

1. Hold an annual missions event.
2. Have a missions emphasis Sunday, once a month utilizing a Ministry Moment time, bulletin inserts and Power Point display.
3. Promote interaction with missionaries.
4. Devote an adequate amount of the budget to new and creative ways of educating the church body concerning missions and our missionaries.

F. Missionary Recruitment

1. Have church leadership pray for God to raise up people.
2. Specifically be on the lookout for young people with promise.
3. Encourage service projects and short term mission teams to identify individuals with missions talents.
4. Offer counsel and guidance through critical years of decision.
5. Encourage participation in and provide support for attendance at the Urbana and other missions conferences.
6. Continually challenge the church body with the dimensions of the unreached world and the unfinished task.
7. Provide ministry experience, mentoring, and thoughtful feedback and evaluation to those who respond with interest in missions service.
8. Encourage and provide opportunities for intercultural ministry in the local community.
9. Provide financial support (as possible) for church members who desire to learn and train for missions service.

G. Caring for Missionaries on the Field

1. We will send church printed materials—newsletters, church directories, etc.
2. We will maintain regular contact through letters and email.
3. We will encourage church members and ministry teams to meet practical needs.
4. We will establish an adopt-a-missionary program with other team ministries and church families.
5. We will encourage personal visits by missions leadership team and church staff.

H. Caring for Visiting Missionaries

1. We will maintain contact with missionaries to know when they are going to be visiting us.
2. We will host visiting missionaries with the opportunity to share on a Sunday morning during the ministry moment.
3. Visiting missionaries will be provided the opportunity to meet with the missions team, church staff and congregation during an informal time of fellowship. This time will provide us with opportunity to care for them as well as give them an opportunity to share their current ministry more in depth.
4. A financial gift will be given to visiting missionaries upon their visit to help defray travel costs.

I. The Ongoing Education of Missionaries

1. We will evaluate each case on its own merits in place of a standard policy on this issue.

2. We will continue support of a missionary for up to one full year, while they return from the field for advanced study, upon recommendation of the Missions Team.

J. Visiting Missionaries on the Field

1. We will encourage missions team members and the church leadership to visit our missionaries when possible.
2. The missions team will support these visits with financial resources if available.

K. Responsibilities of the Missionary to the Church

1. Each missionary is expected to communicate regularly (at least quarterly) with WCC and to provide updates and major changes in ministry as well as needs and assignments.
2. Each missionary is required to complete and return a Ministry Information Form annually, which will be sent by the Missions Team.
3. The missionary is expected to visit WCC at least once during a furlough at home.
4. Missionaries are expected to refrain from direct solicitation of funds from individuals at WCC.
5. Any requests for funds over the allotted amount must be submitted to the Missions Team for approval.

L. Short Term Programs

The missions team will supervise short term, summer, and project oriented mission work. The missions team will place a high priority on getting the church body actively involved in short-term programs and other missions' projects. The missions team will encourage young people to attend Urbana and other missions conferences.

1. Keeping with the principles practiced by Jesus, West Church will only send out short-termers in pairs. (Luke 10:1)
2. Short-term projects will be under the supervision and direction of National leadership, or in the case of local missions, under the direction of a leader from that community.
3. Short-term projects will not be viewed as vacations or retreats, but rather an opportunity to minister alongside, with and to the members of our host community.
4. 50% or more of short-term financial support will be raised by the candidate/worker. The balance of support will be provided by the church through group fundraising, special appeal and/or budget allocation.

M. Criteria for Selecting Candidates for Short Term Service

1. Short-term candidates will be approved by the missions team and by the pastoral staff, and, in the case of young people with the advise of youth leaders.

2. Short-term candidates will complete an application and be interviewed by the short-term project leaders.
3. Those desiring to serve on a short term mission project should:
 - a. have a sincere interest in considering the call of God to further missions service.
 - b. be an active participant in the life of West Church
 - c. complete any necessary study or assignment for consideration
 - d. possess sufficient spiritual maturity and proven responsibility
 - e. have adequate funding, including an appropriate contribution by the candidate
 - f. Evidence of faithfulness in ministry, cooperative spirit, submission to authority, and fruit of the spirit.

N. Approval Procedure Short Term Programs and Projects

1. The missions team will approve all short-term placements including ministry site, mission agency and short-term project leaders. Applications for short-term missions projects are available from the missions team or pastoral staff.
2. Criteria for placement selection must include a viable vision of ministry by the local leadership. Every effort must be made to work in partnership with local ministry leaders and not to create a sense of dependency. *(Would the ministry exist or continue without short-term projects)?*

O. Approval of New Mission Teams or Projects

1. All new mission teams or projects will be approved by the missions team with pastoral staff input.
2. Anyone desiring to form a new missions team/project must provide a written proposal to the missions team, which shall include:
 - a. The purpose/goal of the ministry team (Mission Statement)
 - b. What need(s) will this team provide
 - c. The leader(s) of the team
 - d. The projected cost of this ministry, along with where funds will come from to provide this ministry.
 - e. Research that demonstrates that no other WCC ministry or other evangelical ministry is already ministering to meet this need (otherwise, we should support the ministry already in place).
 - f. Adequate team members to meet this need.
3. Leaders of mission teams or projects must:
 - a. Possess a sincere interest in missions
 - b. Be an active participant in the life of West Church
 - c. Complete all necessary study or assignments for consideration
 - d. Possess sufficient spiritual maturity and proven responsibility
 - e. Evidence of faithfulness in ministry, cooperative spirit, submission to authority, and fruit of the spirit.
 - f. Talents and gifts necessary to provide leadership and the ability to provide this ministry.

4. New missions teams/project must demonstrate that this new ministry is required to meet a proven need.
5. The missions team will interview the member(s) wishing to start this ministry after their proposal has been reviewed.

P. Local Intercultural Involvement

1. We will expose church members to the opportunities available in our area.
2. We will encourage people to seek out cross-cultural ministries.

IV. FINANCIAL POLICIES

A. Financial Support for the Missions Ministry

1. The financial support of missionaries and ministries will be raised through the “faith promise” system. 100% of the “faith promise” giving will support our missionaries and ministries.
2. A percentage of the total church budget will be given to missions for administration.
3. We will strongly encourage giving to general missions budget. Exceptions for designated giving for a specific, one-time project may be approved by the missions team.
4. We will return designated gifts to the donor and encourage such gifts to be sent directly to the mission’s agency because of the complexity and legal aspects of designated giving.
5. Giving in excess of the missions budget will be handled as followed:
 - a. To keep support abreast of inflation in the missionaries place of service and other needs of presently supported missions before adding new missions works.
 - b. To increase support for missionaries more dependant on West Church
 - c. To reflect the mission’s policy of the church.
 - d. WCC members will receive priority over other missionaries. Priority may also be given to missionaries who are more dependent upon West Church for support.
6. Support will begin at a level determined by the missions team and be increased up to 100% for members and 25% for non-members.

B. Preparation and Approval of Missions Budget

The missions budget shall be set up according to the priorities which shall progressively reflect our missions policy. It shall be set up by the mission team. Our missions budget will be drawn up based on past budgets and future opportunities.

1. Periodical review of supported ministries. The missions team shall review periodically the ministries of those supported with a view to increase, decrease, or terminate support.

2. Lack of support. In the event of lack of adequate support for deserving ministries, the church body will be encouraged to increase its support. In the event of a funding shortage, priorities will be assigned to each item on the mission budget.
3. Surplus. In the event of a surplus, the balance shall be allocated by the missions team. It is recommended that a percentage of surplus be set aside as a hedge against future shortages.

C. Contingency Fund

A contingency fund of about \$1000 shall be maintained in the missions account. This fund shall be used only for unforeseen or emergency circumstances, both tragic and fortunate.

1. Monies from this fund may be used by the missions team. Immediate need of a missionary family (medical, evacuation, fund shortage) shall constitute an emergency.
2. The contingency fund may be used by the missions team to take advantage of special opportunities to enhance the missions program that might come up during the year for which their has not been money budgeted.

D. Strategy for Stewardship

1. Administrative costs and missions education will be paid for out of the percentage given from the church operating budget.
2. 100% of the “Faith Promise Giving” shall be used in direct or indirect support of missionaries.
3. Expenses of mission team members, church staff and appointed church members to attend regional, national, or international conferences dealing with missions shall be paid for by missions budget when funds are available.
4. Honoraria for mission speakers, etc. shall be paid for out of the percentage given from the church operating budget.
5. In order to insure that money supporting various missionary activities around the world is being used in an effective manner to fulfill the Great Commission, the missions team sets forth this strategy. All requests for support and one-time gifts will be measured against this strategy. Priorities will be given to all persons seeking missionary support from West Church. The priority given will determine the amount of consideration given to any request. The missions team will endeavor to have a well-rounded missionary program for world evangelism.
Priorities will be given for support to these major areas:
 - a. Evangelism and Church Planting (cross-cultural)
 - b. Support ministries for evangelism and church planting
 - c. Christian Education
 - d. Support Ministries for Christian Education
 - e. Other Ministries

6. WCC members will normally receive priority over other missionaries. Priority will be given to missionaries who are more dependent upon West Church for support.

E. Missionary Support

1. Each missionary will be supported according to the strategy set forth in section D (above). If a missionary decides to separate from a mission agency, or changes the work to which they have been sent, a re-evaluation will be made by the missions team and a decision made as to the continuation of support. The decision will be based upon the total strategy outlined in section D.
2. The support for a missionary will begin at an amount determined by the missions team and increased up to 100% for members and 25% for non-members. An annual evaluation will be made for adjustments. Criteria to determine amount allotted will include: alternate sources of support, years of WCC membership, active church service, amount needed, number of people in family, type of work done, fruitful ministry, location of work. Provision of general insurance for missionaries shall be the responsibility of the sending agency. Education of missionary children is not taken into consideration in our support. Retirement provisions shall be the responsibility of the sending agency.
3. Support will begin the first day of the month following the missions team approval of the candidate, unless an alternate date is designated by the missions team at the time of voting.

F. Selecting Missionaries and Mission Agencies

1. Missions and missionaries supported by West Congregational Church shall adhere to evangelical doctrine as given, for example, in the CCCC statement of faith, and shall not hold doctrines inconsistent with the statement of faith of West Church.
2. The missions team will investigate missionaries and mission agencies utilizing the following criteria for evaluating:
 - a. soundness of doctrine
 - b. strategy and style of ministry
 - c. financial policy and fiscal accountability
 - d. findings in these areas shall be kept on file
3. West Church seeks an active role with mission agencies in the recruiting, training and evaluating of missionaries it supports, especially for those who are members of this congregation.
4. The church shall support only those persons and agencies that have been screened/evaluated by the missions team and are either:
 - a. members of an approved (by West Church) mission agency, or
 - b. a member of the congregation whose calling and training are judged satisfactory by the mission team and pastoral staff.