

Missions Policy

RED CEDAR EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

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I. PURPOSE

- A. Desiring to follow God’s direction, the purpose of the Missions Policy is to assist Red Cedar Evangelical Free Church (RCC) in determining how to participate in missions. Key considerations include partnerships with missions organizations, wise use of RCC’s financial resources, and congregational involvement.
- B. A secondary purpose of the Missions Policy is to inform the congregation of RCC’s role in reaching the world for Christ through missions.

II. MISSIONS PHILOSOPHY

In accordance with the following scriptural truths, RCC’s vision for missions includes a calling to participate in God’s plan of redemption and grace to a fallen world, and to function as ambassadors in proclaiming Christ whenever and wherever He directs us. The overall goal of RCC missions is to glorify God in our outreach.

A. Scriptural Basis and Vision

- 1. God’s call to Abraham in Genesis 12 included His blessings to Abraham and to the world in future generations. God blessed Abraham so that in him “all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 12:3 (ESV). This began God’s plan and purpose on Earth to communicate His message of saving grace and redemption to the nations of the world, eventually realized in the coming of Jesus Christ. RCC’s vision for missions includes being a source of light and blessing to the peoples and nations of the world as God directs us in our missions outreach.

B. Gospel Directives

- 1. To make disciples of all nations: “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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28: 19-20 (ESV).
- 2. To be growing, faithful witnesses: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (ESV).

C. Apostolic Directive

- 1. To declare Him as believers: “But you are a chosen race, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” I Peter 2:9 (ESV).

D. Principles and Values

To assist in accomplishing RCC’s missions philosophy, the Missions Team will adhere to the following principles and values:

1. RCC will initiate and grow partnerships with missionaries as God directs us, including opportunities locally, domestically, cross culturally, and internationally in:
 - a. Training indigenous Christian believers;
 - b. Youth/college Christian ministries;
 - c. Ministries to unreached people groups (i.e., those people groups who lack enough followers of Christ and resources to evangelize their own people);
 - d. Christian church planting.
2. RCC views its relationships with missionaries as long-term partnerships that promote mutual ministry to and for each other.
3. An effective partnership between the missionary and RCC is facilitated by a high level of communication.
4. Effective missionaries must be properly prepared for the ministry they are called to, including cross-cultural orientation when appropriate, and competent to complete their job description as set by the mission organization they represent.
5. RCC will promote the RCC congregation’s spiritual maturity and partnership with missionaries through active participation in their mission field(s).
6. RCC will focus on longer-term missions to assist in building relationships, minimize travel costs, and more fully experience the culture of the area served.
7. RCC will foster passions for missions within the RCC congregation by engaging and sending our youth into the mission field, whether on a

short-term or long-term basis.

8. RCC will engage in stewardship that promotes and financially supports a fewer number of missionaries at a greater percentage of their mission organization's directed support, rather than many missionaries at smaller percentage.
9. RCC will support each long-term missionary up to 20% of their mission organization's directed support. (See Section IV for definition of "long-term mission.")
10. RCC will support missional objectives that focus on evangelism and discipleship over solely meeting the earthly needs of those served.
11. RCC will confirm that the missionary and his or her supporting organization hold beliefs consistent with those of RCC as stated by the RCC Constitution.

III. MISSIONS TEAM PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

The purpose of the Missions Team is to pursue the Great Commission through application and administration of the Missions Policy. See Matthew 28:19-20.

A. Missions Team Responsibilities

1. Missionary Recruitment
2. Direct prayer support for the development of missionaries from within the RCC congregation
3. Facilitation of short-term or summer programs that may identify people interested in missionary service
4. Challenge the congregation regarding the dimensions of the unreached world and the unfinished work of Christ
5. Provision of guidance for those interested in the missions field

B. Missions Team Communication

1. A goal of the Missions Team's administration of this Policy is to encourage communication between the missionaries and the RCC congregation through use of the following:
 - a. Routine presentation of updates and needs of the missionaries

- i. Explore the possibilities and potential of using electronic communication during the service (e.g., use of FaceTime; Skype; teleconferencing; etc.).
 - ii. Include written updates from the missionaries on a regular basis.
 - b. Encourage relationship between the congregation and the missionaries by emphasizing each long-term missionary at least every 2 years, with a visit from them if feasible.
 - i. During the visit, allow time during the worship service for an update and incorporate a potluck after the worship service to include a Question & Answer session.
 - c. Pair one Missions Team member/family with each long-term missionary family supported by RCC. The Missions Team member/family will encourage a member or family from the congregation to also connect with the missionary family.
 - d. Present prayer concerns for missions to the church body.
 - e. Explore and pursue opportunities to financially assist international Christian relief organizations.
 - f. Maintain and implement the Missions Policy.
 - i. The RCC Missions Policy must be reviewed every 3 years, or at the recommendation of the church elders. Recommendations for revision require a consensus of the Missions Team and subsequent approval of the elders. When substantive changes are proposed, they must also be approved by 75% of the current RCC members in accordance with Article 4 of the RCC Constitution.

C. Leadership Responsibilities of the Deacon of Missions

- 1. Initiate and coordinate Missions Team meetings
 - a. Meeting quarterly (or more frequently as necessary)
- 2. Function as the liaison between the Missions Team and RCC elders
- 3. Function as the primary liaison between the Missions Team and

missionaries supported by RCC

4. Guide the direction of the Missions Team
5. Train new Missions Team members, using the Missions Policy as a guide
6. Initiate review of the Missions Policy every 3 years (or as more frequently necessary)
7. Delegate responsibilities among Missions Team members

D. Individual Responsibilities of Missions Team Members

1. Attend and participate in Missions Team meetings
2. Maintain regular prayer life, Bible study, and other aspects of spiritual maturity
3. Pray for the missionaries
4. Be supportive of and able to communicate the Missions Policy to other members of the RCC congregation
5. Participate in partnership with a paired missionary family

E. Selection of Missions Team Members

1. Missions Team members are selected by the RCC elders
 - a. Present Missions Team members may make recommendations for future members to the RCC elders.

F. Selection Criteria Missions Team Members

1. Missions Team members must be members of RCC
2. Missions Team members must be willing to follow the Missions Policy
3. Missions Team members are expected to serve a minimum term of 3 years

G. Missions Team Composition:

1. The Missions Team must consist of a minimum of seven members of RCC.

IV. LONG-TERM MISSIONS

As used in this Policy, a “long-term mission” means full time mission service by an

individual or married couple, involving a length of time longer than two years without a finite end date.

A. Doctrinal Requirements/ Congregational Approval

Missionaries who are supported by RCC, and their affiliate missions organizations, must be in agreement with the RCC Statement of Faith.

Following recommendation of the Missions Team, each candidate must be approved by 75% of the current RCC members in accordance with Article 4 of the RCC Constitution.

B. Communication

1. At a minimum, RCC-supported missionaries are requested to correspond with the Missions Team at least four times a year and cooperate with any periodic review required by the church. Missionary correspondence includes prayer requests, updates on ministry, financial needs, future plans, etc.
2. The Missions Team is responsible for communicating with RCC-supported missionaries and providing each with a copy of the current RCC Missions Policy.

C. Review of Support

1. Continued missionary support will be reviewed under factors that include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Failure of the missionary to communicate on a regular basis as described in Section IV.B of this Policy
 - b. A missionary's expression of a significant change in doctrine or belief.
 - c. Any issue of moral or ethical misconduct involving the missionary
 - d. A missionary chooses to temporarily leave their mission to further his or her education
 - e. A significant change in the missionary's ministry circumstances
 - f. Any change in RCC's financial circumstances that may adversely affect the church's financial support of the missionary
 - g. Upon retirement of the missionary

The Missions Team will provide notification to the RCC-supported missionary of any review conducted under Section IV.C.1.

Following review, if the Missions Team determines that support of the missionary should be discontinued, they will make such a recommendation to the elder team.

D. RCC Visitation of Missionaries in the Field

1. RCC believes that the partnership between a supported missionary and the church is a mutual ministry. Therefore, whenever feasible, RCC will organize short-term mission experiences in partnership with the supported missionary.

V. SHORT-TERM MISSIONS/INTERNSHIPS

RCC opportunities for short-term mission trips is an important component in achieving the church's missional purpose. Specifically, it is a goal of the Missions Team to provide short-term mission opportunities for interested high school-aged students. As used in this Policy, "short-term mission" means missions service involving any length of time from one week to two years with a finite end date, or any length of time considered as short-term by an organized missions program. This includes, but is not limited to, summer projects, STINT, internships and RCC mission trips.

A. Candidate Requirements

1. The minimum grade level for short-term mission RRC funding is Grade 9.
2. Written parental approval is required for any student in Grades 9 through 12 (unless the student has reached the age of 18 years old).
3. One year of experience in actively serving the church or having fulfilled any preparation required by RCC or the mission project.
4. Completion of an application that will be reviewed by the Missions Team, which will, in turn, seek final approval from the RCC elders. The Missions Team will follow-up with all applicants.

B. Funding

1. The goal for funding short-term missionaries is 25% of the individual's required support, depending on available funds (i.e. missions budget and

special offerings). If necessary, funding priority will be given to first time participants in short term missions.

C. Post-Mission Reporting

1. Each short-term missionary is requested to report, preferably in person, to the congregation of RCC within a reasonable time frame, regarding their activities, and how the experience affected both those who were served and the missionary/intern personally.

VI. FINANCIAL

A. Budget

1. The Missions Deacon, in coordination with the Missions Team, will prepare an annual budget for missions funding to be presented to the elders and the Deacon of Finance in time to allow review prior to the RCC annual meeting.
2. The Missions Team budget will originate each year through evaluation of the current budget, projected needs, and consideration of the missional purpose of RCC.

B. Determination of Financial Support

1. In determining support levels for missionaries, RCC will be guided by the principle of supporting a fewer number of missionaries, but to a greater extent. In determining support for missionaries, a higher consideration will be given to a missionary that has or will be sent from within the RCC body. RCC membership is not a requirement; support will be based on an alignment of the mission project with the RCC Missions Philosophy as stated in this Policy. (See Section II.)
2. RCC recognizes that the ability of the missionary to carry out their work may be hindered when there are unmet material or financial needs. The mission organization takes into account all appropriate factors when determining a missionary household's required support amount. Therefore, RCC requires missionaries to present their monthly support shortfall or special needs, by the end of July each year. Our desire is to work with the missionary to be sure all financial needs are properly addressed and contribute toward those needs as appropriate.

This may result in missionaries being supported in differing amounts according to their annual shortfall (as determined by their mission

organization) and special needs.

3. Up to 15% of the total mission's budget may be allocated for short-term missions and internships. Other funding may be raised through special offerings and fundraising events.
4. An overall increase (ie, raise) in missionary funding may be considered annually based on available resources.

C. Initiation of Financial Support

1. Financial support is initiated for an approved missionary as needed.
 - a. As used in this subsection, "as needed" means when the affiliated mission organization of the missionary determines a need for support, when the missionary is engaged in support raising in such a way that regular employment is not possible, or when the missionary receives approval to raise money for outgoing expenses. The above activities or needs may not exceed the appropriate time limitation(s) of the affiliated mission organization.

D. Allotments for Summer Short-Term Missions

1. The Gib Mouser Missions Fund was established to financially assist young people in short-term ministry-related assignments that enhance spiritual growth and discipleship. The Fund is designed to pay upfront trip costs such as plane tickets for young people and their sponsors. The use of the fund for an adult would be an exception, subject to elder approval.
 - a. In consideration for receipt of funds, the individual is asked to secure 50% of needed finances outside of RCC support. Actual support from the fund will be determined based on individual needs and available resources
 - b. The Fund must be replenished by the user(s) of the fund through fundraising activities or individual gifts. The best practice is to replenish the funds prior to the trip. Otherwise, it must be replenished within the same calendar year or within 3 months of the trip, whichever is later. Failure of the user to replenish within this time period may result in not being considered for funding for

future trips.

E. Handling of Designated Giving

1. RCC structures its support of missions through giving to the general fund. In accordance with IRS regulations, money given through the church offering can only be applied to approved projects or the regular commitment of support for a missionary and channeled through an appropriate mission's board. A monetary gift for a particular missionary can be given directly to the missionary but is not tax deductible.

F. One-time Gifts

1. Occasionally, large one-time gifts are given to RCC and designated for missions. To conform with the overall spirit of the Missions Policy, RCC encourages discussion and pre-planning between donors and the church.

G. Funds Shortages

1. The Missions Team will report any shortage of RCC-budgeted funds to the congregation and appeal to the congregation for prayer and consideration of assisting in making up the shortfall.
2. If a shortage of funds remains, the criteria in Section VI.B will be used in the decision-making process.

H. Travel Expense Reimbursement for Visiting Missionaries

Reimbursement for expenses directly related to missionary travel to visit RCC may be recommended by the Missions Team in accordance with available budgeted funds.