

Fellowship of Christ EPC

Mission Policy

Part I: Introduction - *Defining Mission & the Council on Missions' Area of Responsibility*

Obedience to the Great Commission involves mission as an essential task

- our active response to faith in God's gift of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ -
encompassing all work of the entire church body.

Thus, all are called to be "missionaries" within the sphere of ministry to which God has uniquely assigned them.

Therefore, the Council on Missions will limit itself to overseeing only those endeavors that fall outside the normal outreach responsibilities of the local church. Recognizing where our God-given opportunities and ability to respond most closely coincide, we will focus on sending out -

sending out missionaries whether short term or long term, to be actively involved
- worldwide -
making disciples of all nations.

The Council on Missions further defines:

National Outreaches/Ministries are those within the bounds of the United States having a target area geographically outside that from which we draw our local congregation.

International Outreaches/Ministries are those having the ultimate goal to reach people groups/cultures outside the boundaries of the United States even if the outreach/ministry is local - i.e., Intersivity International Bible Study; International Friendship Program.

Short Term - time commitment of less than two years.

Long Term - time commitment of two years or more.

We will be guided in these endeavors by God's Word:

Luke 4:18-19 - Jesus shares in the synagogue His anointing by the Holy Spirit to heal, preach.

Matthew 28:19-20 - The Great Commission.

Mark 16:15-16 - Disciples sent-out to preach the Gospel with miraculous signs accompanying them.

Luke 10:2 - Harvest is plentiful but workers are few.

Matthew 25:31-46 - Nations gather before the Lord; peoples separated as sheep from goats.

Acts 1:8 - Power given through Holy Spirit anointing to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Romans 10:13-15 - Good News and motivation for going - "*How can they hear without someone preaching to them?*"

This mission policy has been developed to guide decisions of the Fellowship of Christ pertaining to missions. Exceptions may be made through a majority vote of the Council on Missions. The policy will be reviewed annually - each January - and revised as needed by the Council on Missions and the Session.

Part II: Council on Missions - Structure & Responsibility to the Fellowship

Council Structure

“...if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in My Name, there am I with them.” Matthew 18: 19-20

The Council on Missions is composed of a minimum of two (2) volunteers, active members of the Fellowship. (No maximum number set.) Council members commit to serve a minimum of one (1) year. New members may join the Council at any time. The chairperson is determined by the Council; and, in the event that person is a member of the Session, he/she does not vote. Council members commit to serve for eighteen (18) months. The Director of Missions, an appointee of the Session, is the liaison to the Session. As such, he/she is not a Council member, does not vote. Fifty percent (50%) of the voting members must be present for a meeting to be official. In addition, as possible, one or more youth representative(s) may be appointed for a one year term.

Overall Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities to the local body include:

1. Educate and inspire the congregation in the field of world missions, including home missions, via mission conferences, “Moments for Missions,” etc;
2. Help develop, send and support candidates to carry out Christ’s commission;
3. Motivate the congregation to prayer for world evangelism and for our missionaries;
4. Establish mission budget and allocate funds;
5. Serve as liaison between the Fellowship and its mission endeavors;
6. Facilitate care for our missionaries in the field as well as those on furlough; aid those returning from the field to a healthy transition spiritually, emotionally and physically;
7. Stimulate financial giving to missions.

Meetings

In an effort to accommodate the needs of individual Council members as well as the congregation, meeting times are flexible. However, generally the full Council meets once per month, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Subcommittees may be formed to fulfill specific needs and will meet as often as necessary in order to complete their designated task(s).

Responsibilities of Council Members

Each Council member’s commitment to missions includes the following responsibilities:

1. Be involved actively by regularly attending Council meetings and participating in the general mission program;
2. Pray for missionaries who are supported on a regular basis;
3. Maintain communications with supported missionaries;
4. Attend other churches/organizations’ mission conferences as possible (part of expenses may be paid for specially chosen delegates who attend regional or national events);
5. Be familiar with the *Mission Policy*; and
6. Provide written notice of resignation when he/she can no longer fulfill Council responsibilities.

Council Officers & Duties

CHAIRPERSON -conducts meetings; administers mission programs by delegating workload; oversees budget; motivates and evaluates Council members; encourages volunteers; updates members with current mail and/or events; keeps Director of Missions informed/updated; tries to be knowledgeable regarding the entire mission program at the Fellowship as well as missions in general; and is the key contact/liason for other Fellowship committees, missions agencies and other churches, unless otherwise designated. Notify the Vice-Chair if unable to attend a meeting.

VICE-CHAIR - substitutes for the Chairman whenever he/she is unable to attend a meeting.

OTHER - all other jobs are assigned on an as-needed basis.

Part III: Financial Accountability

The Council on Missions prepares an annual budget, subject to evaluation by the Session. Good balance of budgeted items between spiritual and physical need emphases will be sought. Mission giving is facilitated via the Fellowship's general budget, excepting special projects and/or appeals approved by the Council.

Part IV: Missionary Policies

Mission Outreach Determination

Whether Short or Long Term, the first priority for consideration of any Mission Outreach (see Part I, Introduction, for definition), is for the person(s) with the vision to come before the Council on Missions, share the vision and pray with the Council for the Holy Spirit's guidance. If the Council agrees that the Mission is a valid opportunity in which the Fellowship should consider being involved, recommendation for approval will be sent to the Session. (The Session may also ask to hear the proposal.) Once approved, the following procedures are set in motion.

Short Term Program

Short Term involvement is encouraged. Candidate selection for financial support is determined using the following criteria:

1. First time mission trip with FoC, general **mission application completed and assessed** by Team Leader(s) of the specific outreach (i.e. Team Leader(s) for proposed Dominican trip review(s) applicants for the DR trip, etc.), then share results and make recommendations to the Council.
 - 1-A. Second and **ALL** subsequent mission trips, even several in one year, proposed team member(s) will complete the "Missionary Application Update." It is the responsibility of the Team Leader(s) to see that Updates are completed and given to the Council on Missions in a timely fashion.
2. Membership in the Fellowship; or ongoing regular attendance at the Fellowship or, if from another church, a letter of recommendation from the pastor—in both instances, candidate(s) reviewed and approved by the Council then sent to Session for approval (adults).
3. Parental support/approval as well as recommendation from FoC Youth Pastor; **additionally**, if from another church, a letter of recommendation from the pastor (youth).
4. **TRIP REPORT, in writing, must** be given to the Council **no later than three (3) weeks after return**. **Please note:** This is a **mandate** for every team, not a maybe! Oral reports—sharing with the Council and congregation—do not replace the written form. Written reports encourage and provide accountability as well as resources for planning future trips and/or mentoring future missionaries. They can also be used by the Council as tools for educating the congregation regarding missions. The Council suggests that each team member journal—appreciate God at work, see prayer answered, remember details! One team member may facilitate the actual report but every team member should contribute.

Approval recommendations for specific Mission Teams are given to the Session along with the amount of financial support as determined by the Council on Missions. (All candidates participate in helping raise support for their specific outreach whether via support letters, special projects or other means.)

Long Term Procedures

Qualifications

The Council on Missions determines which missionaries the Fellowship approves for Long Term involvement and sends their recommendations to the Session. In evaluating candidates for support, the counsel of the Holy Spirit is sought with decisions prayerfully based on the following considerations:

1. Vision has been previously shared and prayed over; general mission application completed and given to the Council for review and prayer.
2. Complete *Isaiah 61* (inner healing) program approved by the Fellowship, marriage counseling for couples.
3. Proven responsibility in ministry and consistency in Christian walk.
4. Member of Fellowship of Christ or being sent as an EPC missionary.
5. Approval by Council through a majority vote - inform Session of recommendation.

Following approval for support, candidate(s) gives a presentation to the Fellowship as a body, explaining the call (vision), where he/she/they will be going and what they expect to do.

Non-members may present need for support to the Council on Missions, and may, upon approval of the Council and the Session, make a presentation to the Fellowship congregation to request support from individuals.

Agency Approval

Long term missionaries are sent to the field via the auspices and organization of an approved sending agency (including EPC) or directly from the Fellowship. Criteria for evaluating and approving sending agencies follow.

The Fellowship of Christ expects–

1. the sending agency to be capable of and responsible for the practical, spiritual and emotional needs of the missionary as well as all details for facilitating the specific mission outreach;
2. the sending agency to agree doctrinally–in essentials–with the Fellowship of Christ;
3. to receive status reports on all the missionaries we support as well as the specific mission agency on at least an annual basis, including financial status; and
4. to be involved in the evaluation process with our missionaries.

Prayer & Financial Support

Budgeted financial support will be prayerfully determined by the Council on Missions. The Council needs to know the total needs of the missionary as well as other possible support sources. Additional considerations:

1. Missionaries may present requests for financial support to individual Fellowship members regardless of the amount given by the Fellowship as a body.
2. Onset of financial support will be determined individually based on the need for pre-assignment training and travel as well as the actual date of departure for the field.
3. Reevaluation/revisions for continuing support and/or the amount of support will occur at natural interludes in the ministry (i.e. FoC yearly budget review/forecast; missionary furlough) and will be proportionate to the need as determined by recommendations from the missionary and the sending agency.
4. The Council encourages Fellowship missionaries, especially those headed for the foreign field, to have full support—including prayer—before departure.
5. Contributions to the out-going and/or home-coming expenses of the missionary will be considered as the need arises.
6. Provisions for insurance and retirement are the responsibility of the individual missionary and/or the sponsoring mission agency.
7. Support will be continued during furlough unless the reevaluation process determines otherwise.
8. At the discretion of the Council on Missions, when deemed appropriate, the Fellowship will support ongoing education for the missionary.
9. The Council will attempt to provide specific and/or specialized needs for missionaries through special offerings, bringing prayer needs before the body, sending encouragement visits into the field, etc.
10. The Council will provide recommendations to the individual missionary regarding methods for taking care of/paying taxes while in the field. A plan needs to be in place before the missionary departs.

Responsibilities of the Missionary to the Fellowship of Christ

Because the missionary experience is a shared commitment, personally involving the entire congregation, both the Council on Missions and the Session expect the missionary to be faithful in communication with the Fellowship. Correspondence on at least a quarterly basis is critical to an ongoing relationship.

The Council on Missions' primary concern for the missionary's furlough experience is that it be a time of renewal. However, regardless of the amount of support provided by the Fellowship, we expect the missionary to visit at least once during the furlough in order to report on the work and share his/her/their needs during a regular church service, Sunday School class, special evening service, etc. – a time mutually agreeable.

Responsibilities of the Fellowship of Christ to the Missionary

In response to the missionary's spiritual and physical needs while serving our Lord on the mission field, the Fellowship promises:

1. to be faithful in its prayer and financial support;
2. to correspond with each missionary on a regular basis;
3. to provide hospitality and minister to the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of visiting and returning missionaries;
4. to provide teaching tapes, other encouraging media, books and/or specifically tailored care packages to the missionary while in the field; and
5. to subsidize, as part of our budget, sending appropriate Fellowship members to visit and encourage the missionaries whom we support as possible—recommend once per year.

As needed, the Council will set up subcommittees and/or individuals to spearhead following through with the above commitments to our missionaries.