

Preface

This policy manual outlines those **PRINCIPLES** by which the Covenant Church Missions Committee (CCMC) operates. It is designed to **GUIDE** the committee in its deliberations, but it is not intended to dictate decisions. For good and sufficient reasons, the CCMC may find it advisable to make exceptions; however, the exceptions should be acknowledged as such as in the Minutes, and the CCMC should be prepared to defend its reasons. As a committee, the CCMC is under the authority of the Session and may “examine, consider and report” in order to make a recommendation to the Session, but it may not act on behalf of the Session (see PCA *BCO* 15-1). The Session will review all actions of the CCMC either to approve, to disapprove, to amend, or to clarify.

I. Purpose

- A. Missions at Covenant Church (CC) shall be defined as any ministry whose primary purpose is to fulfill the Great Commission by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism, discipleship, church planting, church revitalization, and/or the training/equipping of Christian leadership. In conjunction with the above, we also recognize the importance of meeting physical needs through gospel ministries of love, mercy, and justice, in accordance with Christ’s great commandment.
- B. Basis for Involvement in Missions
 1. Fulfilling the Great Commission of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20)
 2. Sharing Christ’s heart for the world (Matt. 9:36-38; 18:10-14)
 3. Seeing people brought to the knowledge of God and saved (John 3:16; Rom. 10:13-15)
 4. Building up the body of Christ through discipleship (Eph. 4:12-16)
 5. Ministering to the whole person (Matt. 22:37-39; 25:31-46)
 6. Translation (WCF 1.8; cf. 1 Cor 14:6, 9, 11-12, 24, 27-28)
 7. To all nations (WCF 7.6, 25.2; cf. Ps 2:8; Rom 15:9-12; 1 Cor 1:2; 1 Cor 12:12, 1Cor 12:13; Rev 7:9)
 8. Discipleship and evangelism, supporting the work of the Church wherever it gathers
- B. Missions at Covenant Church
 1. Covenant Church is a Reformed Presbyterian congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America. As such, we will evaluate prospective and existing partnerships against the following standards and prioritize accordingly:
 - a) Missionaries and ministry partners who are **covenantal** in theology, understanding the entire Bible in a unified framework in

which God works out his redemptive plan through the federal headship of Jesus Christ.

- b) Missionaries and ministry partners who are **Calvinistic** in soteriology, believe that all men are totally unable to save themselves, justly deserving God's condemnation and without hope except in God's sovereign mercy.
- c) Missionaries and ministry partners who are **confessional** in their understanding of the Christian faith, particularly those who subscribe to the Westminster Standards, that is, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and the Westminster Larger Catechism.
- d) Ministries and organizations that are **structured with oversight and accountability**, governing laborers with policies and regulations that help ensure ministry activities are conducted "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40), with transparency and accountability.
- e) Ministries and organizations that are **connectional**, working closely with local churches to commission, send, and provide accountability for missionaries and ministry partners, and vitally connected to the work of the church in the ministry field.

II. Covenant Church Missions Committee

- A. The purpose of the CCMC is to examine, consider, and report in making recommendations to the Session of Covenant Church regarding missions, primarily with respect to the stewardship of resources; evaluation of missionaries, mission works, and ministries; and conference planning, education, and training. In addition, it is to regularly pray for supported missionaries and draw attention to the missions works for the congregation, in order to stimulate prayer to and praise for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. The responsibilities of the CCMC include
 1. Setting short- and long-term goals, which are measurable, achievable, manageable, specific, and which involve a step of faith, including but not limited to Faith Promise giving and participation.
 2. Developing and communicating prayer concerns of ministry partners.
 3. Educating the members of Covenant Church regarding the biblical basis for missions, the history of missions, and the current state of missions.
 4. Stimulating giving for Covenant Church missions efforts.
 5. Identifying and developing members of Covenant Church who possess spiritual gifts related to missions and evangelism.
 6. Supporting ministries to foreign nationals and international students in northwest Arkansas.

7. Evaluating current and prospective ministry partners and missions agencies.
8. Making recommendations for support and removal.
9. Preparing and overseeing the Faith Promise budget.
10. Developing and updating the missions policy as necessary.
11. Planning and coordinating the annual missions conference.
12. Providing care and support for CCMC-supported furloughing and visiting international ministry partners.

C. CCMC membership:

1. CCMC membership is open to members in good standing at Covenant Church.
2. CCMC members are expected to demonstrate:
 - a) Spiritual maturity
 - b) Active church participation
 - c) A strong interest in missions
 - d) A willingness to make a time commitment to CCMC tasks
 - e) Dependability and responsibility in discharging assigned tasks
 - f) A willingness to learn the missions policy of the CCMC

D. The duties and responsibilities of CCMC members include:

1. Regular attendance to all CCMC meetings
2. Regularly pray for and communicate with Covenant Church ministry partners
3. Continue to study missions
4. Be familiar with missions policies and practices
5. Be alert to pass on new information
6. Serve as a source of missions information to the congregation
7. Disclose any conflict of interest

E. The Chairman of the CCMC will be a Ruling Elder of Covenant Church approved by the Session of Covenant Church. The duties and responsibilities of the Chairman include:

1. Call and schedule regular meetings of the CCMC
2. Set and approve the agenda for CCMC meetings
3. Serve as moderator of CCMC meetings
4. Work with Covenant Church Treasurer and Administrator to oversee CCMC finances
5. Report CCMC recommendations to the Session of Covenant Church
6. Cooperate with the Session of Covenant Church in developing, coordinating, and administering missions at Covenant Church
7. Represent the CCMC at regional meetings of Mission to the World (MTW)

8. Reviews missions policies and practices annually, and recommends revisions to the session

F. The CCMC shall ordinarily meet on a bimonthly basis, with special meetings called as necessary by the Chairman.

III. How CC supports missions financially

- A. Faith Promise is the giving approach by which we support our world missions efforts at Covenant Church. It is our way of trusting that God will enable us to offer our gifts and that he will be faithful in what he apportions. It is distinct from any designated gifts in that the Covenant missions team uses Faith Promise to budget our regular monthly support for our ministry partners. Faith Promise pledges are anonymous and can be made by visiting <https://covenantchurchpca.org/missions/> or filling out a card available in the sanctuary.
- B. The missions' budget cycle runs April 1 to March 31st. The annual missions conference is timed in February to stimulate the congregation to prayerfully consider whether and how much to contribute towards Faith Promise.
 1. The CCMC will meet and make a recommendation to the session no later than the end of March for the upcoming giving year. Ideally at the beginning of March so that missionaries can be sent word by the end of March.
 2. As a courtesy, any missionary for whom support is being ended, will receive 3 months support after communication about the end of support.

IV. Ministry partners that CC supports

- A. ministries will be evaluated with respect to our policy manual, giving priority to:
 1. Missionaries and ministry partners who are **covenantal, Calvinistic, and confessional**—Ministry partners subscribing to the Westminster Standards will be prioritized over those with serious differences with our doctrinal standards.
 - a) All supported ministry partners must be in agreement with the Westminster Standards, including the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms, or if not in agreement, must make their differences known.
 2. Ministries and organizations that are **structured with oversight and accountability**—Ministry partners working under an established mission agency will be prioritized over those working independently, lacking oversight and direction. Established mission agencies should demonstrate integrity and stability; employ sound financial policies and practices; operate under clearly defined and generally accepted principles and practices; demonstrate good management; provide medical insurance, retirement, contributions to home mission assignment or sabbatical leave,

and/or other benefits; provide support for the education of children, if applicable; and provide appropriate training, field direction, and active supervision.

3. Ministries and organizations that are **connectional**—Ministry partners commissioned and sent by a local church and working closely with organized churches in the field will be prioritized over those working independently or in a parachurch capacity.

B. The following ministry types and areas will be considered:

1. Ministries of the Word will be prioritized, but the following types of ministry will be considered for support:

- a) Evangelism/Discipleship
- b) Church Planting
- c) Church Revitalization
- d) Equipping, Teaching, Translating, Broadcasting
- e) Support or Technical
- f) Administration

2. Ministries to unreached people groups will be prioritized, but the following areas of ministry will be considered:

- a) Major Geographical Area of Focus
- b) Areas of Special Opportunity
- c) Newly-opened field, door closing to country
- d) Critical addition or replacement
- e) Routine addition or replacement
- f) Routine administration in the USA

C. We prioritize financial support to ministries of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), including Mission to the World (MTW), Mission to North America (MNA), and Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), but we will consider ministries in close alignment with our doctrinal standards, in part by consulting resources like Missio Nexus and the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

- D. We also give consideration to “fruits of Covenant church”; however, this consideration does not supercede doctrinal adherence.
- E. Ministry partners on home mission assignment or sabbatical leave are eligible to continue receiving support, provided they make clear their intentions to continue in their ministry for at least one year following HMA or sabbatical leave.
- F. Entry level of support will not be increased for a minimum of one year and until faithfulness in ministry has been demonstrated.
- G. No ministry partner will receive support in excess of 7.50% of their stated support levels.
- H. Procedure for Selecting Ministry Partners

1. An application will be completed, signed, and submitted to the CCMC by each candidate.
2. Each application will be reviewed by the chairman for eligibility, then distributed to the CCMC.
3. The CCMC will evaluate the application and determine if a personal interview should be granted. The chairman will appoint committee members to be responsible for conducting the interview. If the applicant is not with an already approved organization, the organization must also be evaluated.
4. The interview team will submit a recommendation to the CCMC, and the CCMC will submit a recommendation to the Covenant Church Session for support.

I. Requirements for Ministry Partners

1. The CCMC expects to receive correspondence at least quarterly, and will so inform the ministry partner when they are notified of support commitment.
2. The ministry partner is expected to visit Covenant Church during regular furlough when possible. During that visit, the ministry partner will meet with the CCMC and report to the congregation by participating in Sunday School classes, prayer meetings, Sunday services, and/or small group meetings.
3. The ministry partner is expected to participate in the annual missions conference at least once every six years.
4. The ministry partner is expected to complete the annual review; this will be in the form of an email from the Chairman to the missionary asking for: an update on full-time or part-time missions and/or employment status, current support sources and needs, how CC's giving contributes as a % to their overall giving needs, if any of their doctrinal positions have changed with regards to the Westminster standards, and their plans for attendance at the upcoming CC missions conference. If after significant attempts by the chair, no response is received, support will be placed on hold until a response is received.

J. When Support Begins

1. Support will begin upon Session approval. Generally, no financial support will begin prior to departure to the field. While language study can be ongoing, stateside language school is not considered departure to the field, nor is international language school where ministry is not the primary focus.
 - a) Considering the cycle of the CC Faith Promise budget year, it may be appropriate for the CCMC to recommend support for, and the

session to approve, a new partner in advance of departure for the field. Support will begin, however, once the missionary is on the field. Any exceptions must be approved by the Session.

K. When Support Ends

1. Support will be terminated three months, or sooner, after notice:
 - a) If a ministry partner is reassigned or dismissed; found to deviate in doctrine; becomes a member of a different mission agency; or for specific incompetence or moral failure.
 - b) If a mission agency is determined to be in conflict with our doctrinal statement.

L. One-Time Gifts

1. The CCMC may, in the review of a candidate for support, vote a one-time financial gift to assist with special needs such as medical, vehicle, or moving expenses. Such gifts will not exceed \$5,000 or 25% of the cost of the need, whichever is less. Gifts should not be used for the purchase of land, home mortgage payments, or personal debt, etc.

M. Death or Disability of Ministry Partners

1. If a ministry partner dies or becomes disabled, support to the surviving spouse and family may continue for up to 18 months. If the surviving spouse decides to continue in ministry, reapplication/explanation in writing will be necessary, with special and expeditious consideration given by the CCMC. However, support will not be guaranteed.

N. Reevaluation and Revision of Support

1. The CCMC may determine that there is just cause for increasing or decreasing support for a ministry partner, including increased cost of living, addition of spouse or child, loss of support for another source, effectiveness of ministry, over-support from all sources, change in assignment or location, and engaging in regular, part-time, or furlough employment outside the mission agency.

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