

Missions Policy Statement
Berachah Bible Church
Updated 2/3/2021

Definition and Purpose of World Missions

World Missions shall be defined as any ministry aimed outside the continental United States, or a cross-cultural ministry within the United States, the purpose of which is to fulfill the great commission by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and training/equipping of Christian leadership (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 10:2; Matthew 25:31-46; John 3:16).

I. THE POLICY

A. Purpose of Our Missions Policy

1. To provide a clear sense of direction.
2. To provide guidelines for being good stewards of the funds given to missions.
3. To maintain consistency as the World Missions Team (herein called the Team) members change.
4. To provide guidelines for making important decisions.

B. Flexibility of Interpretation

Exceptions to this policy can be made at any time by a 2/3 majority vote of the Team and approval by the Board of Elders (herein called the Elders). Exceptions are to be made only after careful consideration.

C. Revision of the Policy

The Missions Policy shall be reviewed by the Team as deemed appropriate. Significant revisions must be reported to the Elders.

II. THE MISSIONS TEAM

A. Manner and Selection of Members of the World Missions Team

The members of the Team were initially appointed by the Elders. The Missions Pastor will recommend team members to the Team for consensus.

B. Criteria for Selecting Members of the Team

Team members must be adult church members of Berachah Bible Church (herein called BBC) in good standing, of significant maturity as disciples, and vitally interested in missions with a willingness to make a substantial commitment to the missions program.

C. Size of the Team

There will be a minimum of five members on the Team.

D. Term of Office

Team members agree to serve a minimum of two years and may renew as often as desired. Each member's desire and effectiveness should be reviewed as deemed necessary by the Team Chairman.

E. Officers

1. Chairman – The Team Chairman is the Missions Pastor.
 - a. Prepare the agenda and preside at meetings.
 - b. Develop, coordinate, and administer the overall missions program.

- c. Correspond/coordinate with missionaries and agencies for the World Missions Conference.
 - d. Represent the Team before the Elders.
 - e. Maintain an updated master copy of the Missions Policy.
2. Vice-Chairman – Preside at meetings in the absence of the Chairman.
 3. Secretary – Record the minutes of the meetings.

F. Sub-Teams

1. Sub-Teams will be formed when the needs of the missions program so dictate. They may be formed on a permanent or ad-hoc basis.
2. The Sub-Team chairman will be a member of the Team and will be appointed by the Team Chairman.
3. Members of the Sub-Team will be appointed by the Team Chairman. Membership on a Sub-Team may be open to any member of the congregation if the Team deems it necessary.

G. Responsibilities of Team Members

1. Pray for BBC-supported missionaries on a regular basis and stay current on their news and service.
2. Attend Team meetings. Habitual absence from meetings without a valid reason will terminate membership from the Team. Any termination must have approval from the Elders.
3. Maintain communication with supported missionaries. Internet and email access is a must.
4. Be engaged in continuous self-education in missions.
5. Bear the burdens of other Team members in supportive fellowship.
6. Be familiar with the Missions Policy of the church.

H. Team Meetings

1. Regular meetings will be scheduled by the Team Chairman, normally on a monthly basis.
2. A portion of each meeting will be given to prayer.
3. Sub-teams will meet as needed.
4. There will be a planning meeting by the budget sub-team following the annual World Missions Conference as necessary.

III. MISSIONS STRATEGY

A strategy is a broad plan for reaching a lofty objective. For the church of Jesus Christ, the objective is to fulfill His Great Commission. The missions program of the local church should be the vehicle through which the church plans to participate in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

BBC's missions strategy is to

1. Direct prayer, personnel assignment, and material support towards church planting and leadership development, taking advantage of relationships that God has established over the course of BBC's history and giving special consideration to areas of greater need.
2. Recruit and prepare missionary prospects from our congregation.
3. Continually increase the involvement of the whole congregation in caring for our missionaries and in supporting them financially and in prayer.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEAM

The Missions Team is to assist the Team Chairman in each of the following areas.

A. Developing Prayer Concern

The Team is responsible for stimulating intercessory prayer by the congregation for world evangelization and for our missionaries by doing the following.

1. Present news and needs of the missionaries in Sunday School, small groups, and at carry in dinners.
2. Present news and needs through Berachah Communicates, Berachah Worldwide, and church displays.
3. Encourage interaction with the congregation
 - a. through exchanging correspondence.
 - b. by visits of the missionaries on furlough.
 - c. by Skype.
 - d. by the missionary displays and prayer cards.

B. Missions Education in the Church

The team is responsible for educating and inspiring the children, youth, and adults of the church in the field of world missions by doing the following.

1. Organizing and holding the World Missions Conference
2. Organizing missions emphasis times, including concerts of prayer
3. Creating bulletin inserts and the annual Missionary Prayer Guide
4. Presenting capsule biographies of present or past missionaries
5. Creating and updating missionary display boards for individual Sunday School classrooms
6. Disseminating opportunities to hear from missionary speakers and see missions-related films

C. Process for Aspiring Missionaries

The team is responsible for recruiting and developing members of the congregation for career missionary service by doing the following.

1. Pray and have church leadership pray for God to raise people up to serve in career mission work.
2. Specifically be on the lookout for young people with promise. Look to the discernment of mature church leadership to identify and confirm the calling and gifts of young people and others for mission service.
3. Have summer programs to identify young people with missions talents.
4. Make appropriate literature available from the organizations we support to help the young person to discern his call.
5. Offer counseling and guidance through the critical years of decision.
6. Encourage participation in the mission conference activities.
7. Continually challenge on the dimensions of the unreached world and unfinished task.
8. Keep on hand a list of Bible schools and seminaries that our church would recommend.

D. World Missions Conference

The Team is responsible for organizing and holding a World Missions Conference every year at approximately the same time and in combination with the collection of Grace Promise pledges for the following year.

E. Care of Visiting Missionaries

The Team is responsible for caring for visiting missionaries by doing the following.

1. Maintain an accurate record of when a missionary is going to visit us for the purpose of making the congregation aware of the opportunity to hear from and potentially house/feed missionaries.
2. During the Missions Conference and times of home assignment, help locate lodging, meals, transportation and other immediate needs required during the stay of the missionaries and their families.

F. Care of Missionaries on the Field

The Team is responsible for encouraging members of the church to be actively involved in the lives of the missionaries by doing the following.

1. Encourage correspondence (letters, cards, email, phone, Skype, etc.)
2. Facilitate corporate correspondence
3. Assist with the sending of care packages

G. Visits to Missionaries on the Field

Visits to missionaries on the field by the Elders or Team member(s) will be encouraged for the purpose of viewing their work first-hand, encouraging and counseling them, and evaluating the effectiveness of their ministry. Members of the congregation will also be encouraged to make such trips. An attempt will be made for visits with missionaries sent by BBC every two years, either on their field or by furlough near BBC.

H. Maintain and Update the Missions Policy

The Team will maintain familiarity with the Missions Policy and update it as necessary.

V. CATEGORIES OF 'GOERS'

There are three categories of 'goers,' or those who participate in mission work. These categories determine BBC and the Team's role and responsibility to each one. The categories are:

A. Missions Trip

A missions trip is a BBC-directed trip involving a volunteer team going to a specified location for a short-term period. The volunteers for this trip are approved by the Team and Elders, and are supported as specified in Section VI.

Staff, Elders, Team members and others are occasionally invited or requested to go on a specific missions trip (e.g. – Howard teaching in Romania). Such trips that are approved by the Team and Elders will be handled on a case by case basis. Any financial support given to such trips is to come from the 'Missions Opportunities' section of the Missions budget and/or love offerings.

B. Full-Time Career Assignment

Full-time career assignments are BBC-approved missionaries that are selected as specified in Section VIII and supported as specified in Section IX.

C. Vacations with a Purpose

Individuals or families looking for a meaningful vacation are encouraged to take trips to the mission field, whether within the U.S. or overseas, and visit our missionaries. There are also other opportunities for ministry that are organized by missions agencies. (e.g. – ELIC, YES Israel, etc.)

The Team wants to be made aware of such trips so that prayer and encouragement can be pursued church-wide. There is no financial support available for such trips, and the systematic solicitation of funds from the BBC congregation for such trips is discouraged. The itinerary and

length of time is up to the goers and the agency they are working with. The Team will gladly assist with communication, logistics, requirements, etc. as necessary.

VI. MISSIONS TRIPS

The purpose of a missions trip is to give each individual at BBC the unique opportunity and joy of participating fully in the high calling of the Great Commission.

A. Trips to the Field are Primarily to Serve Our Own Missionaries

1. To assist our missionaries in planting and building up the local church (e.g. evangelism, discipleship, building projects, etc.).
2. To help train national Christians in the Bible, pastorate, or lay ministry.
3. To return with a greater Christian worldview, and to seek and serve our Lord in some area of world missions.

B. Criteria for Applicants

1. The Team and the Elders must approve all applicants.
2. Age
 - a. 13 years old with an accompanying parent or guardian
 - b. 16 & 17 years old with parental or guardian approval
 - c. 18 years old and above (with approval)
3. Health
 - a. The applicant should be in good general health and able to endure the rigors of travel and service in a foreign land.
4. Christian Ministry
 - a. Give solid evidence of a Christian walk.
 - b. Have a sincere interest in world missions.
 - c. Must be a BBC member and regular attendee.
 - d. Must be active in a church ministry.

C. Application Process

1. The applicant must fill out an application.
2. The applicant must attend the team meetings.
3. Funding
 - a. All funds will come from group fundraising activities and personal deputation.
 - b. The applicant should be willing to raise at least 30% of the trip cost (amount to be determined for each trip).

VII. BUDGET AND FINANCES

A. Preparation and Approval of Missions Budget

The missions budget will follow a fiscal year that runs from the beginning of March to the end of February. The procedure for the preparation of the budget will be as follows:

1. Grace Promise pledges will be collected beginning during the Missions Conference through the end of November.
2. By November 1st, the Team Chairman will contact each sending agency to ascertain the support status of each BBC-supported missionary. This letter will be sent separately from the monthly support check. Failure to receive the information by a due date specified in the letter will be assumed to mean that the missionary has full support and this will be so stated in the letter to the agency.

3. Pledge data, prior year giving data, and support need data will be compiled by the Team Chairman and shared with the Team, or a budget sub-team if necessary, as soon as possible, but no later than the January Team meeting.
4. Projections of the needs of new candidates expected to leave for the field during the coming missions year will be made at this time.
5. A draft of the proposed budget will be submitted to the Elders for approval by the February Elders meeting.

B. Handling of Designated Giving

If contributions designated for support of any individual or organization already in the missions budget are received, they will be treated as regular giving to meet budget commitments. However, the financial office will seek to honor the desire of the giver when it is practical to do so.

Because of the extra book keeping involved, we do not desire designated gifts to non-BBC supported missionaries and organizations to be sent through the church. Rather, we desire that these gifts be sent directly to the mission agency or organization.

C. Funds Surplus Policy

The church may receive more in missions gifts than was budgeted. All surplus funds will be put into the missions funds, with the Team determining how to allocate the funds.

D. Missions Opportunity Budget

A portion of surplus funds will be designated for unique missions opportunities that arise during the year. The Team will vote on the use of funds for these opportunities.

E. Future Missionary Fund

A portion of surplus funds will be designated for the initial support of future missionaries. These funds are intended to support BBC members who pursue world missions but may also be used to supplement monthly needs of existing missionaries if necessary.

F. Honorarium for Visiting Missionary Speakers

We will pay invited speakers, whether our own or from outside the church, a suitable honorarium to be determined by the Team.

VIII. SELECTION OF MISSIONARIES

A. Criteria for Considering Support

1. Consideration for support will be made for BBC members, or for non-members engaging in a target ministry as defined in Section VIII.D.1.
2. In addition, these criteria are established for all candidates.
 - a. Evidence of past commitment and dedication to following God's will.
 - b. Written recommendations, one of which must be from his/her pastor.
 - c. Acceptance by an agency or organization that meets criteria listed in the next section.
 - i. Individuals who are not under an approved missions agency or church will not be supported.
 - ii. Nationals will receive support only through a mission agency or church that will supervise and take responsibility for the use of funds.
 - d. Agreement with the doctrinal position of the church.
 - e. Member in good standing of local church.
 - f. Training or education preferred:

- iii. College education or
 - iv. Seminary or Bible School
- 3. Any new missionary support opportunities will only be considered once existing missionary support levels as defined in Section IX have been satisfactorily met.
- B. Criteria for Missions Agencies
 - 1. It will be the practice of the BBC Missions program to work with missions agencies and organizations that meet the following criteria.
 - a. Are established, independent, evangelical, and non-denominational
 - b. Have clearly stated objectives
 - c. Have a doctrinal statement that is in agreement with the Statement of Faith of BBC.
 - d. Are sound, accountable and open in their financial policies and practices.
 - e. Demonstrate good management
 - f. Provide missionaries with proper training and adequate field direction and supervision.
 - 2. Under certain circumstances BBC will consider support of a missionary under dual circumstances, for example, dual sponsorship by a non-denominational agency and a denominational board.
- C. Procedure for Selecting New Candidates to Support

This relates to the specific individual missionary. Our procedure is:

 - 1. Conduct an interview
 - 2. Establish agreement with doctrinal position of the church
 - 3. Establish clear indication of conversion and gifts/training for his/her particular ministry.
 - 4. Obtain written recommendations for the candidate, one of which must be from his/her pastor.
- D. Nature of Work Eligible for Support
 - 1. Primary consideration for investing the resources entrusted to BBC will be given to the following ministries being done in an expatriate, or international, context among a people group in an area not considered significantly reached. These are referred to as target ministries.
 - a. Direct church planting
 - b. Direct pastoral training
 - c. Evangelism
 - d. Bible translation
 - 2. Consideration will also be given to ministries not defined as target ministries as funding allows, although at a lower support level per Section IX.A.
- E. Doctrinal Requirements

All missionaries supported by BBC and missionary agencies with whom BBC works must be in accord with BBC's Statement of Faith. Any doctrinal beliefs of the missionary or missionary agency at variance with those stated in BBC's statement of faith will be reviewed by the Team and the Elders for the purpose of determining support.
- F. Responsibilities of the Missionary to BBC
 - 1. The missionary may not actively solicit additional support from individuals or groups in the church. This does not preclude providing information on support needs that is circulated to the missionary's general mailing list.
 - 2. The Team expects to receive regular newsletters from the missionary, providing updates on their family and ministry.

3. The missionary should apprise the church of their furlough dates with as much advance notice as possible.
4. The missionary is expected to visit the church during his furlough and spend time at BBC during the World Missions Conference, if possible.
5. The missionary, during his visit to the church, will report to the congregation by participating in the worship service, Sunday School if requested, and a Care Group. He or she will be expected to meet with the Team as time and schedules allow.
6. The missionary should bring any specific needs, prayer or financial, to the Team, while on the field and during furlough.

IX. SUPPORT OF MISSIONARIES

A. Support Levels

1. Support levels are determined based on whether the missionary is a member of BBC (sent by BBC), and whether the missionary is engaging in a target ministry as defined in Section VIII.D.1.
 - Category 1: BBC members engaging in target ministries - \$2,500 per month
 - Category 2: Others (non BBC members) engaging in target ministries - \$1,500 per month
 - Category 3: BBC members engaging in non-target ministries - \$1,000 per month
 - Category 4: Others engaging in non-target ministries - \$300 per month
2. These support levels are to serve as a limit on the support of missionaries as well as a goal to be reached by BBC.

B. When Support Begins

1. The support for a missionary (member or non-member of BBC) will begin on the date recommended by the Team to the Elders for approval. The candidate must have been officially accepted by their sending agency. Support may include the time period covered by pre-field orientation and deputation. It may also include clothes, travel, supplies and other equipment as the need is evident and as funds permit.
2. Support will be for one year and reviewed as stated.

C. Support Renewal and Changes

1. Support is reviewed annually.
2. Increases in support for missionaries not supported at the level defined in Section IX.A.1 will be prioritized based on the category order listed in that section.
3. Decreases in support required by a decrease in pledges and/or giving will be made in reverse category order.
4. If a missionary transitions from a target ministry to a non-target ministry, or vice-versa, the Team will determine a plan for transitioning their support level to the new limit and notify the missionary as soon as possible of this plan. Any changes will take effect no earlier than the next fiscal year (March 1st).

D. Ongoing Education of Missionaries

A missionary is occasionally required by his/her agency to leave the field for further training or education that will enhance their effectiveness. In such cases, BBC may continue to support the missionary under the following conditions:

1. The period of training will not exceed one year. (Additional time will be considered by the Team)
2. Statements will be provided by the mission agency and the missionary that he/she will return to the field after the training is completed.

3. Amount of support provided will normally be the same as their support on the field, though this may be adjusted up or down depending on the circumstances.

E. When Support Ends

1. Support will be terminated at the effective date of a resignation or the beginning date of a leave of absence. The support of a retiring missionary will terminate at the end of an entitled furlough.
2. Support may be terminated if the missionary fails to meet the requirements set forth in Section VIII of this policy.
3. Support may be terminated for reasons such as change of agency affiliation or assignment, incompetence, or personal behavior not consistent with that of a missionary of Jesus Christ.
4. Specific recommendation of the Team and a decision of the Elders after consulting with the sending agency will determine continuation of support beyond a regular emergency furlough.