

# **EVANGELICAL COMMUNITY CHURCH MISSIONS PURPOSE STATEMENT**

From ECC's beginning, the church has believed that one of its primary responsibilities is to obey God's command to fulfill the "Great Commission." The church endeavors to accomplish this, in part, through ECC's missions program. ECC supports and prays for missionaries from many different sending agencies, but it especially encourages those from its own church family to consider whether or not God is calling them to mission service.

Becoming a sending church requires a commitment to prayer. Therefore, we "ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field." (Matt. 9:36-38)

## **I. Definition and Purpose**

A. Definition of Missions: “Missions” is defined by Evangelical Community Church as those ministries outside the local congregation for:

1. Evangelism: fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19,20)
2. Discipleship: nurturing and training the members of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:12-16)
3. Expressing Christ’s love through meeting human needs (Matt. 10:42)

B. Scriptural Purpose

1. To fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19,20)
2. To bring people to the knowledge of God and salvation (John 3:16, 17:3; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15)
3. To express Christ’s love for the world (Matt. 9:36-38; 18:10-14)
4. To build up the body of Christ around the world through discipling (Eph. 4:12-16)
5. To minister to the totality of human need (Matt. 10:42; Mark 9:41)

C. Missions Committee Purpose [from the Constitution of Evangelical Community Church, Section 6, 1), b)]:

The Missions Committee shall supervise the missions program of the church.  
The Missions Committee shall:

1. Develop an annual missions budget
2. Plan an annual missions conference
3. Maintain contact with missionaries and other Christian workers supported by the church
4. Foster missionary concern and involvement in the church.

## **II. Selection of a Missionary for Support**

A. Priority will be given to missionaries who:

1. Are, or are planning to be, career missionaries
2. Expect to work with unreached peoples, with an emphasis on countries outside the United States

B. Criteria for Support

1. Has a personal faith that Jesus Christ is Lord of his or her life
2. Agrees with the ECC Statement of Faith
3. Shows evidence of maturity and spiritual growth
4. Has been active in the ministries and body life of ECC or another evangelical church for at least the last three (3) years

5. Will be or is involved in one of the following:
  - a. Evangelism
  - b. Discipling and training
  - c. Church planting
  - d. Relief and health care programs with a Gospel emphasis
  - e. Bible translation and distribution
  - f. Overseas radio and television ministries
6. Is under the supervision of a mission agency or sending agency
  - a. A doctrinal statement from the agency must be on file and be in agreement with the ECC Statement of Faith.
  - b. The agency should be a member of Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) (<http://www.ECFA.org>) and should be sound and open in its financial policies and practices, should operate under clearly defined and generally accepted principles, and should demonstrate good management.
7. Has a written personal recommendation from ECC (an elder, a pastor, or a member of the Missions Committee) and from the candidate's sending agency.

C. Application and Approval Procedure for Long-Term Support

The procedure by which ECC approves career missionaries for support is:

1. A letter of application for support must be completed by July 1 to be considered for the upcoming calendar year.
2. The missionary candidate shall be interviewed by the Missions Committee.
3. The Missions Committee will present a letter to the Board of Elders listing the candidates' names, which have been approved for support.
4. The Board of Elders will submit approved candidate(s) to the congregation at the annual congregational budget meeting.
5. Copies of the letters of application and recommendations will be maintained by the Missions Committee.
6. Final approval of support for new missionaries is contingent upon adequate pledge support for the proposed missions budget.

D. Application and Approval Procedure for Short-term and Summer Missionaries

"Short-term" is defined as not more than one year.

1. Criteria for Short-term and Summer Missionaries
  - a. The same criteria will be used in selecting short-term missionaries as is used in Section II B (except for No. 4).

- b. The candidate should be active in ECC's ministry.
  - c. The candidate should obtain written parental consent, if under the age of 21.
2. Application and Approval Procedure for Short-Term and Summer Missionaries
- a. Application should be made to the Missions Committee not less than six (6) weeks, and preferably three (3) months in advance of the candidate's proposed departure.
  - b. Approval for short-term or summer missionaries will be made by the Missions Committee.
  - c. Priority will be given to candidates seeking a first-time missions experience.

### III. Yearly Evaluation of Missionaries

- A. The purpose of the evaluation is to review the:
  - 1. Ministry and the spiritual, physical, and financial needs of the missionary
  - 2. Progress and goals of the missionary and any anticipated changes
  - 3. Major changes in ministry or mission sending agency ( a change in sending agency requires a review by the ECC Missions Committee)
- B. Each missionary will be sent an evaluation form by July 1 of each year.
- C. The evaluation must be returned to ECC by September 1.
- D. Failure to return the evaluation by September 1 will prevent the Missions Committee from evaluating additional support for the upcoming year.
- E. Failure to return two consecutive evaluations will cause re-evaluation for support.
- F. Missionaries on furlough:
  - 1. Are to follow the same procedure for the evaluation
  - 2. Are encouraged to visit ECC and to give an oral report to the church

### IV. Financial Policies

- A. Income for Missions Budget
  - 1. The monies for missions will come primarily from the pledges made during the Fall ECC Missions Conference.
  - 2. The Missions Committee will be responsible to develop and coordinate the missions budget.
  - 3. The Missions Committee has an ongoing responsibility to clarify the methodology of giving to missions and to encourage missions giving throughout the congregation.

B. Distribution of the Missions Budget

The missions budget is to be allocated between international, national, and local ministries at the discretion of the Missions Committee with approval from the congregation.

C. Preparation and Approval of the Missions Budget

1. The Committee will review the needs of supported missionaries on an individual basis as can be determined from the yearly evaluations, newsletters, and personal letters.
2. The Committee will review all applications for ECC support.
3. The Committee will review the budget and will investigate new areas of need as part of the budget preparation.
4. The Missions Committee will prepare a proposed budget for the consideration of the Board of Elders before the December congregational meeting.
5. The mission budget will be presented to the congregation for approval at the annual congregational meeting called for such purpose.
6. Revisions to the budget may be proposed by the Missions Committee during the year if funds or needs warrant such revisions
7. Suggested changes to the missions budget amounts should be brought to the attention of the Missions Committee, for the Committee's consideration, at least one month before the congregational meeting. If new applicants are to be considered, this should be presented to the Committee by July 1 so that the Committee can determine if the applicant for support has met the criteria in the Missions Policy Statement.

D. Special Expenses of Missionaries

The church will consider assisting missionaries with special expenses by:

1. Alerting the congregation about the need
2. Accepting a special congregational offering
3. Encouraging a special group within the church such as a youth group or a Sunday School class to undertake these expenses as a special one-time project
4. Providing an extra one-time contribution from the missions budget or from other sources

E. Designated Giving

1. ECC does not accept designated gifts to individuals or organizations that are not included in the missions budget unless there is a special appeal approved by the Missions Committee and announced to the congregation on behalf of that individual or organization.

2. ECC does not accept personal (non-monetary) gifts for missionaries. Gifts must be sent by the donor directly to the mission agency or missionary.

F. Bequests or Large One-Time Gifts

Bequests or large one-time gifts consistent with the missions program will be accepted and disbursed by the Missions Committee based on present needs, unless otherwise specified by the donor.

G. Surplus Funds

Surplus funds are general missions funds on hand above the budgeted amount during or at the end of a calendar year. These funds will be disbursed by the Missions Committee based on present needs or placed in a savings account for special needs.

H. Funds Shortage Policy

Should a shortage of missions funds occur, the Missions Committee will discuss the situation with the Elders to determine whether other funds may be available and will inform the congregation as to the amount of the budget deficiency.

If funds are insufficient to meet monthly commitments, the following priorities will apply:

1. Reduce the cost of developing, coordinating, and administering the missions program where feasible
2. Do not approve any new projects
3. Reduce the support to local and U.S.-based missionaries
4. Reduce the support to non-U.S.-based missionaries

V. **Re-evaluation of Support**

- A. Support may be terminated for causes such as change of assignment or agency affiliation, deviation from ECC Statement of Faith, incompetence, moral problems, marriage to a non-Christian, or failure to fulfill responsibility to ECC.
- B. Support will be terminated as of the effective date of the resignation of the missionary or the beginning date of a leave of absence or in conjunction with the time element recommended by the sending agency.
- C. Support will be re-evaluated if the missionary's support is above his/her agency's support quota or if he/she begins employment.
- D. Continuation of support for an extended or emergency furlough or during retirement will be determined on an individual basis by the Missions Committee.

*[Purpose Statement revised, 2000; effective August 2000]*