

# PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS

## RIVER CITY GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

### 4/10/2006

The need for a Philosophy of Missions arises from our desire to better understand our task as a church and to make clear to others how we plan to fulfill the scriptural injunctions that have been committed to us. God has given us resources, both human and material, of which we are stewards. Without a clearly defined Philosophy of Missions, we run the risk of haphazardly carrying out God's work.

### Section 1: Purpose of Mission Support at River City Grace Community Church

#### A. Main Purpose:

The main purpose of the mission support at River City Grace Community Church is to glorify God by obeying His command to go to all nations and make disciples of Jesus Christ. Our mission activities fully support the overall purpose of our church which is: "To see God exalted as His grace and truth in Jesus Christ abounds in and overflows to more and more people."

Mission activity is God-centered, not man-centered. Our message is not to focus primarily on our "experience" or the "needs of people", but the excellency of God and the salvation that He offers to undeserving sinners.

#### B. Scriptural Basis:

Our missionary work and support at RCG is governed by the word of God as revealed exclusively and completely in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is our sole authority and it governs our decisions in carrying out the work of missions.

*(Note: All scriptures are from the New American Standard Bible - Updated Edition 1995.)*

The following scriptures are the basis for our mission activities:

- **Matthew 5:13-16** "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men."  
"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
- **Matthew 9:36-38** Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

- **Matthew 28:19-20** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- **Acts 1:8** "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
- **Romans 10:13-15** "For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."  
How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!"
- **Philippians 1:27** "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
- **1 Peter 2:9-10** "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."
- **3 John 5-8** "Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth."

It is clear from these scriptures, and many others in the Bible, that the Lord requires us, as believers, to reach out to the lost in every way possible. This means supporting the activities of those who have been "sent" by Him throughout the world and going ourselves, as the Lord directs.

### C. General Comments:

- We believe each believer must have a passion for missions, and that our passion must be the result of who God is, what He has done for us, and what He desires from each one of us. As God's love is manifest among us as believers, His excellencies are more loudly proclaimed through us! This is clear from the passage in 1 Peter cited above.
- We believe every believer can accomplish the Lord's command to reach out to others with the gospel by regularly **Praying** for those involved in missions, **Giving** of their talents and financial resources, and **Going** to the field themselves. This admonition is covered by the verses referred to in 3 John. Every believer should ask the following questions of themselves:
  - 1) Am I passionate for missions – for worshipping God?
  - 2) How is God calling me to support those who go?

### 3) How or where may God be calling me to go?

- We believe that mission activity is not limited to just supporting the work of others. We believe each one of us, as believers, has a responsibility to be on mission in our families, in our workplaces, in our neighborhoods, etc. Refer Philippians 1:27 and Matthew 5:13-16 noted above.
- We believe the work of support is a matter of faithfulness. It is multi-faceted; it involves intentional effort; it is far-reaching; it is motivated by love; it is a shared task; it is to reflect God's character; and it is a privileged obligation.
- We believe the Lord Jesus Christ has given the Church her marching orders. We are commanded to "make disciples" of all people groups (Matthew 28 noted above). We seek to carry out this task in accordance with the principles outlined in scripture by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

## **Section 2: Definition**

Missions involves "going" into the world to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and doing good works in the name of Christ for the principal purpose of leading unbelievers to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. "Going" involves the following:

- A. It is done for the sake of proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 16; Acts 4:12; Acts 5:41; Acts 9:16,21; Philippians 2:9,10; 1 John 3:23; 3 John 5-8)
- B. It implies being sent by God. (Matthew 10:5; Matthew 9:38 & 28:19,20; John 15:16; and Acts 13:2-4)
- C. It is facilitated by the local church. (3 John 5-8)
- D. It involves accountability on the part of the one going and the one sending (the Local Church).
- E. It usually involves the geographical relocation of the one being Sent.
- F. It is a matter of sacrificial faith. (3 John 5-8)
- G. It is to be financed by believers. (3 John 5-8)

## **Section 3: Goals and Priorities for the Mission Ministry**

Specific goals and priorities for the church's mission ministry include:

- A. To proclaim the Gospel for the purpose of seeing people trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- B. To cultivate within the church body an awareness of the necessity for intercessory prayer for our missionaries and church members who are engaged in mission activities (i.e., mission moments, mission prayer requests, mission conference, and newsletter features).
- C. To mobilize the members of our church for ministry, concerned with seeing them conscious of and fulfilling their spiritual responsibility to missions.

- D. To develop, send, and support members from our own congregation as the Lord calls and equips.
- E. To maintain reciprocal accountability between River City Grace Community Church and those missionaries and/or mission agencies the church supports.
- F. To focus our mission efforts and support primarily where the Lord directs, given the knowledge that we, as a body, can not meet all of the needs that exist in the world.
- G. To see new churches established throughout the world, and the leaders in those churches trained to disciple new believers.

#### **Section 4: Mission Commission Structure**

A Mission Commission has been created to promote the mission activities of River City Grace Community Church. The structure of this group is outlined below.

- A. Mission Commission Chairman: The Chairperson of the Mission Commission shall be an Elder or someone appointed by the Elders. This person must have a strong commitment to ensuring that all mission efforts adhere to the church's Philosophy of Missions as outlined in this document. The Chairperson must be a church member. The Chairperson may be replaced or removed at any time by the Elders.
- B. Mission Commission Members: The members of the Mission Commission shall be selected from the church by the Chairperson and the Elders. They must be church members or be in the process of pursuing church membership. They must be willing to serve a minimum commitment of two years. Members may be replaced or removed at any time by the Elders. If a member desires to resign from the Commission, one month notice is requested.
- C. Size and Composition of the Commission: The Commission shall consist of no less than five members.
- D. Mission Commission Meetings: The Mission Commission shall meet on a regular basis. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chairperson or Elders to address specific issues.
- E. Duties of the Mission Commission:

The duties of the Commission include the following:

- Carry out the Goals and Priorities outlined in Section 3.
- Recommend and implement mission related policies.
- Recommend the annual budget for mission related activities to the Elders by their April budget meeting.
- Work in cooperation with the Church Treasurer to monitor support and disbursements for mission efforts.
- Provide assurance to the Elders that all mission related activities the church supports are consistent with the Church's Purpose Statement.
- Administer the Seed Sower Program as outlined in Section 6B.

All functions, expenditures, and projects administered by or proposed by the Mission Commission are subject to review and approval by the Elders.

F. Duties of the Mission Commission Members:

The duties of the Mission Commission members include:

- Attend Mission Commission meetings and actively participate in discussions.
- Pray regularly for the missionary partner assigned to each member.
- Communicate monthly with each assigned missionary.
- Provide monthly input regarding each assigned missionary in the form of a written article for the Church Newsletter in order to share information with the congregation.

## **Section 5: Relationship of Church to Missionary and/or Mission Agency**

A. Criteria for Selecting a Missionary and/or Mission Agency to Support:

The criteria include the following:

- The ministry must be consistent with this Philosophy of Missions, ministry priorities, and be compatible with the doctrinal statement of River City Grace Community Church.
- Each missionary must have a clearly defined call from God on his/her life for vocational missionary service that is supported by the leadership of River City Grace Community Church.
- Each missionary must demonstrate godly character, giftedness, and competence to fulfill his/her mission.
- Any missionary or mission agency desiring our financial involvement in their ministry must meet with the Mission Commission and Elders before being considered.

While it is the desire of River City Grace Community Church to enter into and maintain a long-term relationship with the missionaries and mission agencies we support, any significant changes to the personal or ministry status and/or type of service for which River City Grace Community Church originally undertook support of a missionary and/or mission agency will require a reevaluation of that relationship.

B. Accountability – Between River City Grace Community Church and the Missionary and/or Mission Agency:

*Both*

- Pray regularly for each other.
- Conduct mutual communication on a monthly basis.

*River City Grace Community Church*

- Assist with any urgent needs as they are made known and to the extent possible.

- Encourage visits by church members, when possible.

*Missionary and/or Mission Agency*

- Meet with the Mission Commission and Elders when on home ministry or when schedule permits.
- Submit an annual financial and ministry update report to River City Grace Community Church.
- Advise the church immediately of any changes to their doctrinal position or philosophy of ministry.

C. Missionary Recruitment and Training:

- The Elders and Mission Commission of River City Grace Community Church are committed to challenging church members to a positive response to the Great Commission.
- The Elders and Mission Commission of River City Grace Community Church recognize the opportunity and responsibility to provide local church-based mission training as resources are available.
- The Elders may recommend people who show evidence of having been called out by God for missionary service.

D. Mission Conference/Special Missionary Events:

The Mission Commission will take advantage of various opportunities to hold events that promote mission awareness and outreach activities among church members. These efforts will primarily consist of an annual Mission Conference and visits by individual missionaries.

- *Annual Mission Conference:* Each year, the Mission Commission will schedule a Mission Conference for the church. The Commission will develop a specific theme for each conference that is in keeping with the church's Philosophy of Missions. When possible, one of the missionaries supported by the church will be invited to speak at the conference. This will give the congregation an opportunity to get to know the missionary better and to find out how they can encourage him/her in their ministry. Moreover it will give an opportunity to see how God is working in other parts of the world.

In preparing for the conference, the Mission Commission will develop an outline of the event for the Elders approval. This document will provide details regarding such things as the dates, theme, purpose, speaker(s), expected/desired outcomes, follow-up activities, and how it meets the church's Philosophy of Missions. This document is to be presented to the Elders at least six months prior to the conference in order to ensure there is sufficient time for review before finalizing the preparations.

- *Missionary Visits:* Periodically, opportunities arise for missionaries or representatives from mission agencies to visit the church. When this happens, the Mission Commission will work with the Elders to determine the best approach for taking advantage of the opportunity. This could take several different forms: 1) allowing the missionary a short period of time in a church service to share with the congregation; 2) allowing the missionary to provide the primary message during a

church service; and/or 3) having a meal with the missionary after the church service. In addition, special meeting times may be scheduled with the missionary.

Finally, whenever possible, the Mission Commission and the Elders will meet separately with the missionary to get better acquainted and to discuss issues and concerns facing the missionary.

E. River City Grace Community Church Sponsored Short-Term Service:

River City Grace Community Church strongly encourages the involvement of church members in short-term mission efforts. Short-term is defined as mission service of six months or less. Short-term activity is under the direction of a sponsoring mission ministry. Financial criteria and other logistical issues are to be worked out at the discretion of the sponsoring ministry. Anyone interested in pursuing a short-term mission opportunity should first communicate this to the Mission Commission. (Refer to Section 6. D for additional details.)

## **Section 6: Mission Financial Policy**

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this financial policy is to serve as a guideline for the distribution of funds and other resources entrusted to the River City Grace Community Church for use on the mission field and as a framework for spending and decision making in the area of missions. This policy must always be used in conjunction with direct input from the Mission Commission and the Elders.

B. General Provisions:

It is the desire of River City Grace Community Church to utilize its resources worldwide to support mission efforts. River City Grace Community Church supports each of these mission efforts locally, nationally, and internationally through either direct, active involvement of church members or through financial giving.

- Locally: Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center, Aegis Assisted Living Center, and Capitol Ministries.
- Nationally: The Betoneys serving Native Americans through Grace American Indian Ministries, the O'Dells serving Japan Returnee Ministry and Church Multiplication, the Churchills serving along the Mexican Border, the Shirks serving in Inner City Chicago, Illinois and the Ongs serving international students in San Francisco.
- Internationally: The Kinjos serving in Japan and the Rys serving in Cambodia.

The Mission Commission and the Elders will review the distribution of resources to these ministries on an annual basis to ensure they continue to warrant our support. In addition, new ministries may be proposed for consideration of support on an annual basis.

### C. Financial Giving:

The primary instrument for financial giving to mission activities supported by River City Grace Community Church is the Seed Sower Ministry. The Seed Sower Ministry operates on the premise that it is more beneficial to provide a significant level of financial support to a smaller number of missionaries and/or mission agencies than it is to provide a minimal level of support to a large number of missionaries. This is a primary consideration when the Mission Commission and Elders discuss any potential changes, deletions, or additions to the list of missionaries and/or mission agencies the church supports.

In the fall of each year, the Mission Commission will ask individuals and families to prayerfully consider making a financial commitment to mission activities for the coming calendar year through the Seed Sower Ministry. The ministry will operate in the following manner:

- Church members will be given facts regarding the ministry and asked to prayerfully consider their potential involvement.
- Church members will be told that the ministry is strictly voluntary and that it should not affect their regular giving to River City Grace Community Church.
- Church members desiring to participate will be encouraged to return an anonymous commitment form that indicates their proposed level of support for the next calendar year.
- Once the Mission Commission has collected all of the commitment forms and has totaled the proposed giving to the Seed Sower Ministry they will determine the distribution percentages to be proposed to the elders. This will include any addition or removal of supported missionaries.
- The Elders will review the Mission Commission recommendations and make final determinations regarding Seed Sower distributions. If there are changes the Elders want to make to the recommendations they will interact with the Mission Commission before making the final determination.
- The Mission Commission will present to the church body the total amount of funds committed and what the distribution percentages will be.
- The Mission Commission will notify the missionaries or mission agencies what financial support they can expect for the next calendar year.
- Individual giving will not be monitored to determine if the commitments made are being met.
- All of the money received will be distributed on a quarterly basis to the appropriate mission ministries supported by River City Grace Community Church.
- Funds received through the Seed Sower Ministry will be segregated from General Fund giving and will never be used to meet regular church needs.

D. Financial Support for Short-Term Mission Activities:

As noted in Section 5. E, River City Grace Community Church encourages active church members to take advantage of opportunities that might arise to participate in a short-term mission activity. These could include such things as Operation Barnabas, GO Teams (international), GO2 America Teams, Total Mobilization, etc. Financial support for these trips will usually come from three sources: the Loren Zook Memorial Account of the church’s general fund; funds from the solicitation of church members; and the individual’s own personal funds. All church funds and any solicitation of the church body for funds must be approved by the Mission Commission and Elders.

Specific requirements for requesting funds include:

- Any active church member desiring to receive money from the church must complete the church’s Short Term Mission Interest Form. (See Attachment 1)
- If the mission is not affiliated with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, a Statement of Faith will be required along with the interest form.
- The Mission Commission and the Elders must both approve the request.
- The funding can only be used to cover a portion of the money needed for the trip. The actual amount to be given will be determined by the Mission Commission and approved by the Elders.
- All additional costs of the trip will be the participant’s responsibility.
- At the completion of the mission trip, the participant must give a verbal report to the church body.

E. Giving for Missionary Visits:

When missionaries visit the church, the criteria outlined below will be applied in determining what financial support, if any, will be provided by River City Grace Community Church.

	Who and How				
	Seed Sower on Home Circuit	Seed Sower – Special Invite	Seed Sower – Special Invite & Speaking Major Service	Non-Seed Sower On Circuit	Non-Seed Sower – Special Invite & Speaking Major Service
Honorarium	X	X	X	Optional	X
Travel		X	X		X

**Section 7: Revisions to the Philosophy of Missions**

Any revisions to this document will be prepared by the Mission Commission and presented to the Elders of River City Grace Community Church for final approval.