



memorial road
CHURCH OF CHRIST



Missions Ministry Statement

MISSIONS MINISTRY STATEMENT

Purpose

The goal for the Missions Ministry is to mobilize our God-given resources to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus according to the specific opportunities given Memorial Road Church to make disciples for Jesus of all the nations. Our mission is to share God's love to transform people into fully devoted followers of Christ. For the mission field this means proclaiming the good news so that people are

- ◆ Saved from their sins
- ◆ Gathered into local churches
- ◆ Nurtured to full maturity through continuous teaching, and
- ◆ Prepared to live with God throughout all eternity

Our purpose in missions grows out of Jesus' own example in leaving heaven in order to die for our sins (Matt. 20:28 and Phil. 2:5-11) and out of the Great Commission which says, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt.28:19-20).

The Missions Ministry of Memorial Road Church of Christ recognizes that missions is the work of God Himself, and that humans are only servants through whom God works. Those who work in missions are God's fellow workers (1 Cor. 3:5-9)

Therefore, the MRCC Missions Ministry's purpose must always be to seek and implement the will of God for the Memorial Road church to determine the places, personnel, and methods for our mission efforts to fulfill the Great Commission. To accomplish this purpose, the missions ministry must be based on prayer for wisdom and guidance from God in all its undertakings. The outcome of such prayer should be the conviction that God has called us to each specific mission that we decide to accept.

This mission statement for the Missions Ministry reflects our human efforts to implement the will of God at Memorial Road. It is recognized that God may overrule our human judgment. Therefore, we must be flexible enough in policy and sensitive enough to His leading to allow the Holy Spirit to direct our mission efforts. We must never make human policy so rigid that it limits our response to the Holy Spirit. As God provides mission opportunities that we as humans are not able to anticipate, we should not have a policy that makes it impossible to respond to those opportunities.

Our Unique Mission at Memorial Road

One way of seeing God's will is to look at the opportunities that He has provided to MRCC. Because our Heavenly Father has blessed this church with such a large pool of talented and

committed Christians and has showered us with material blessings, we believe our response to the Great Commission should be in direct proportion to the uniqueness of our situation. In a word, the missions program of the Memorial Road church should be "out of the ordinary." We must not be content merely to carry on mission work "as usual" but should seek to harness the enormous human and financial resources of this church to the incredible opportunities of our age. "Business as usual" does not fit the character of this congregation, nor does it fit the demands of a third-millennium world.

The mission effort of the Memorial Road church should have the following characteristics:

- ◆ Our missions program should *be* capable of bearing fruit and giving a good return on the church's investment of spiritual, human and financial resources. Results will vary according to different field circumstances.
- ◆ Our missions program should establish churches that are self-sustaining, evangelistic, and committed to planting other churches.
- ◆ Our missions program should take advantage of local opportunities (i.e., a large talent pool at Oklahoma Christian University, the University of Central Oklahoma, the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center, Oklahoma City University, a growing international community and contacts with people in distant lands through summer missions or other relationships) and utilize these natural bridges to the outside world in order to bring about the saving of souls.
- ◆ Our missions program should be multi-faceted in order to enlist maximum moral and financial support from a well-traveled, knowledgeable and concerned membership.
- ◆ Our missions program should be communicated widely and effectively within the congregation.
 - (a) The missionaries on the field must have the ability, desire and commitment to provide information about their work to the Missions ministry.
 - (b) The Missions Ministry must take responsibility for disseminating that information to the entire congregation using the appropriate media.
 - (c) The Missions Ministry must communicate effectively to field personnel those happenings within the local congregation that are vital to the missionary's morale and sense of being a part of this congregation's life.
- ◆ Our missions program should welcome a leadership role in brotherhood missionary efforts that may require us to serve as a flagship church in world evangelism.

In summary, our missions program at the Memorial Road church should measure up to the blessings this church has received and be as unique as the church itself.

Our Approach

Churches have done mission work through the years in many different ways. They have sent doctors and nurses to alleviate human suffering. They have sent writers to prepare materials for use in evangelizing the lost as well as in teaching the saved. They have sent agronomists to assist nationals with farming and proper diet and schoolteachers to provide education for the young. They have sent money for the translation and printing of Bibles. They have sent missionaries who devoted their full-time effort to the use of mass media. We recognize the validity of all of these approaches to missions.

Our approach to missions must be to build the Kingdom of Christ. Kingdom building requires evangelism, development of local churches, and training local Christians for all areas of church ministry. Without all three basic elements a work can not endure. Our missions approach must be to produce fruit that not only remains but also reproduces. We expect our missionaries to develop partnership with local Christians as soon as a church has been planted to share planning and decision making so that the national brethren feel ownership of the work from the beginning. This philosophy is in contrast to the common idea that "missionaries should plan how to hand over the work to nationals," since nationals will be involved in "owning" and taking responsibility for the work from the beginning. Any church or work that remains dependent upon missionary initiative and presence cannot reproduce on its own. Such work will be unable to stand after the missionary leaves.

It is our belief that the mission program of the Memorial Road church should focus primarily on these three basic kingdom-building activities at our mission sites: evangelism, local church development, and ministry training. Other approaches may be supported through the Missions Ministry budget or through special contributions that come from the presentation of specific needs. Our primary focus, however, will receive priority in funding.

Short-term missions have specific purposes that might be narrower, but consistent, with the broad policies described in this statement.

The Personnel

We believe that selecting the right personnel is the most important step in a successful mission venture. While we will always attempt to blend the best possible field selection with the best possible choice of missionary personnel, we will place the selection of the right person above the selection of the field. Missionaries must be godly people who trust in God to work through them. We want missionaries with pleasing personalities who have the ability, through inspirational oral and written communication, to ignite this congregation's enthusiasm for world evangelism. Besides this quality of personality, we insist that our missionaries be doctrinally sound, zealous for the lost, properly motivated, able to dream, self-starters, submissive to leadership, wise, people of their word, properly prepared, compatible with the people at home and on the field, persistent, and of proven effectiveness as church workers.

In selecting personnel to send to the mission field, preference will be given to sending our own MRCC members provided that all other qualifications are met.

We want our missionaries and their families to develop close spiritual and emotional ties with the Memorial Road church. To this end, all missionary personnel sent to the field will be expected to live here and work within this local church for a period of time prior to moving to the field. Again, personnel selection depends upon prayer for God to provide the people He wants to do His work.

The Field

In selecting fields for missions outreach, the Missions Ministry must always seek the will of God to know the specific areas where He guides us to become involved. This process requires much prayer as we have the opportunity to expand our outreach to other parts of the world where God provides opportunities.

The goal of the Memorial Road church is to have a deep commitment to and involvement in mission work throughout the world. The full development of this dream will take time, but this is the direction we have charted. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

We will give priority in field selection to those parts of the world that appear to be ready to harvest rather than to those parts of the world that show strong resistance to the gospel. We will seek areas where missionaries and national Christians welcome our participation in preaching the gospel. Strategic areas for the spread of the Kingdom, even though not now showing receptivity, are also important and may be considered. Much prayer must take place before deciding on any new field, as we must remember that our task is to follow the leading of the Lord.

Missionary Preparation

Memorial Road expects all missionary personnel to have specific mission preparation before leaving for the mission field. In addition to training in Bible and ministry, missionary preparation should include study of mission principles, cultural anthropology (general and specific to the culture of the chosen field), history and demographics of the chosen field, and group dynamics (how to function successfully in a team relationship). Domestic missionaries may already possess the basic cultural understanding of the U.S.A., but they must also have adequate preparation to equip them for the specific differences to be encountered in the target population. Prospective missionaries should spend significant time on the field before making a final commitment. Psychological testing is required to assess the suitability of candidates for mission work before a final decision will be made. Where possible, language training for the target population is expected before going to the field.

Teamwork

We always want our missionary personnel to have a strong support group on the field. While making every effort to choose good personnel, **our goal is for** each of our missionaries to be a member of a mission team. We understand a team to be two or more family units who work cooperatively with a degree of mutual accountability who provide spiritual and social support to each other. **Team members are expected to meet regularly to plan and coordinate the work together.** Minutes of these meetings should be regularly provided to the MRCC site coordinator. National ministers are considered to be team members. Should these team objectives not be met, the church will re-evaluate its work and reserve the right to terminate the relationship with our missionary. MRCC will do its best to maintain their mission teams by replacing team members who leave the field prior to the mission church developing to the point that it can operate effectively.

Funding for Missions

Memorial Road will conduct a special missions contribution each year to provide funds for missions work beyond what is provided in the regular missions budget. The overall purpose of this contribution is so that missions work at MRCC will have the opportunity to grow at a faster rate than the general budget increases.

This contribution will be used to fund special one-time expenditures and/or ongoing mission works. As ongoing works are funded by the special contribution, they will be moved to the highest priority in following years so they will likely be continued by the special contribution. Should the special contribution not cover an ongoing work, the elders will then decide whether to continue the work out of other funding.

The regular missions budget will continue to fund works that were in the missions budget in 2003, when the special contributions began. This regular missions budget is expected to grow annually to cover some increases in the cost of these works. As programs funded by the regular missions budget in 2003 are phased out, these funds will continue to be available for other mission efforts. Each year a decision will be made through the normal process as to the amount of this annual growth in the missions budget. At such time as payments on the building and/or other significant changes occur in budget planning, the elders will decide what, if any, effect this should have on our regular missions funding, as well as on other funding.

Missionary Support

We **strongly** prefer to provide full salary for our workers. However, when extraordinary opportunities involving partial support present themselves, they will be considered on a case by case basis. In such a situation, we must have great confidence in the sponsoring church or we ourselves must have oversight of the missionary. MRCC missionaries may have outside support as approved by the elders. Before accepting sponsorship and/or support of a missionary where the entire team is not sponsored by MRCC, the Missions Ministry must be assured that the mission team will have the same philosophy and approach as MRCC.

In the past Memorial Road has focused its support on North American workers who are resident in mission areas. While this may continue to be the primary thrust of MRCC's mission outreach, we recognize that as churches in several other areas of the world mature there is an increasingly greater need to partner with those churches in missions outreach. Therefore, we will not arbitrarily refuse support of a worthy foreign national converted abroad or of an international converted in our own congregation. Such a person may need financial support for the evangelistic work he or she will do in his homeland or in some other country. Whenever possible, any foreign national supported by Memorial Road should be supported through and directly accountable to a local partner congregation or entity such as a ministry training institute that will report to MRCC.

We will expect our missionary to make every decision to the end that all local churches with whom he or she is working may become self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. Each

missionary, along with the Memorial Road elders, will work out goals and a timetable that are mutually acceptable for the development of this “three-self” approach to mission work.

We recognize that missionaries need tools for the accomplishment of their tasks; e.g. literature, church buildings and equipment. The Memorial Road church does not have predetermined views concerning providing these tools. Each need will be viewed on its own merit with due consideration of each local situation. Prior to considering the purchase of a building, plans should be submitted as to when and how the local congregation will be able to support the property or land, including taxes, utilities, maintenance, etc.

Missionary Supervision

The elders are ultimately responsible for oversight of all mission work. Hiring and dismissal of permanent missionary personnel are functions of the elders, and missionaries are always free to maintain direct communication with the eldership.

A sub-committee of elders will directly oversee the Missions Ministry. The Missions Ministry director(s) will meet regularly and frequently with the designated missions elders.

The Missions Ministry, by means of an advisory council, will be responsible for day-to-day supervision and management of the mission effort. Missionaries on the field will answer directly to the site coordinator who will report to the ministry directors and the advisory team. The Missions Ministry will appoint teams or committees for each specific area of its work as the needs arise so that the work can be done efficiently and effectively.



Each year an elder and his wife shall make a supervisory visit to each mission site sponsored by MRCC. In the event an elder cannot visit a location in a given year, the site coordinator from the Missions Ministry will make the supervisory visit.

It is vital that communications between the elders, the missionaries, the Missions Ministry and the congregation be open and complete. Missionaries on the field are expected to provide regular reports of their work, including a financial statement of the work fund expenses and the uses made of the contributions of the mission church.

Evaluation

The Missions Ministry will develop and implement a system for evaluating the effectiveness of each work sponsored by Memorial Road church. This will be an ongoing evaluation for the purposes of improving the effectiveness of each work. The evaluation process will involve the establishment of clear goals for each work with measurable "benchmarks" for their accomplishment. Assessment will also consider how each work is measuring up to the MRCC missions statement and policies. The evaluations will also be used to develop an exit strategy for each work, whether due to the maturity of the mission church or lack of progress in achieving the stated goals, or for other reasons.

Special Requests

The Missions Advisory Team will entertain requests for special missions assistance to be funded from the annual special missions contribution. Individual requests will be considered by a special requests subcommittee. This subcommittee is authorized to grant requests up to \$5,000.00 out of a fund authorized for this purpose. Assistance for special requests above this amount must be approved by the Missions Advisory Council. In order to release funds for special requests, a check request form signed by two members of the sub-committee shall be submitted to the church treasurer. The special requests sub-committee will keep minutes accurately reflecting their discussion and shall make a quarterly report to the Missions Advisory Team of all funds granted. The special requests sub-committee chairmanship shall be rotated at least every three years.

To be approved, requests must generally meet these guidelines:

- ◆ There is some connection between the proposed project and the Memorial Road church, such as involvement of current or past members, close relatives of members, or other MRCC connection.
- ◆ Special request funding is for one-time needs only.
- ◆ Special request funding is limited to items that do not fit into the regular missions program of MRCC.
- ◆ In emergency situations the Missions Ministry may respond to humanitarian or relief needs outside the United States.
- ◆ Funding may be given to significant brotherhood events that promote world missions in keeping with our goal of becoming a flagship church in world evangelization.

Missions Education

The Missions Ministry will work with the adult and children's education ministry to develop missions training in MRCC Bible classes for all ages. Children need to be educated to the world around them and the need for Jesus with the view that they can become missionaries in the future. Adults need to be educated on how they can be part of the MRCC mission outreach, both in terms of personal involvement and in supporting missions. They particularly need to be educated to encourage and support their maturing children to go to a mission field. Adults also need to be educated about opportunities to participate in short-term mission trips with campaigns or medical

missions or in long-term missions as resident or second career missionaries. In addition to working with the Bible classes, the Missions Ministry will work with the church staff to use every opportunity to educate the entire congregation in missions.

Approved by the elders of Memorial Road Church of Christ, September 4, 2004
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