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Long Term Missionary

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Summary of Changes

Section 3.0: Clarified RHCC intent to support overseas missions work

Section 6.0: Moved content from 6.0 and 7.0 into a new subsection regarding "Correspondence and Periodic Review"

Various sections: Typographical, grammatical, style and format changes

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Long Term Missionary Policy is to display the greatness of God among the peoples of the world.

2.0 MISSION

Our mission is to expand the declaration of the gospel of the Lord Jesus by utilizing the resources of River Hills Community Church (RHCC) to send laborers to the peoples of the world.

3.0 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

We believe that Missions is the mandate of our Lord Jesus in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18) to bring the gospel to all peoples of the world, making disciples of all the nations. Because God's plan is to save a people for Himself from every tribe, tongue and nation (Revelation 7:9), it is our desire to reach to those places where the gospel has not yet penetrated. Therefore, we intend to focus primarily on unreached people groups outside the United States and restricted access nations. Because faith comes through hearing (Romans 10:17) and God's primary means for preaching salvation through Jesus Christ is the local church, it is a priority for River Hills to be involved in church planting in the receiving country. Finally, it is our desire to significantly support a few missionaries rather than support many with small amounts. We desire for our church to be involved in the lives and work of those we support by friendship, prayer, finances, regular contact and on-site assistance as needed and as opportunities are available.

3.1 Definitions

1. Unreached peoples- Those places and/or peoples in the world where there has been little or no exposure to the gospel of the Lord Jesus and there is no viable indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize their own people without outside assistance.
2. Restricted access nations- Those states that limit or prevent Christian ministry by expatriates as missionaries. Also known as creative-access nations where expatriates must seek secular avenues of entry.

3. Church Planting- The establishing of churches that know the true God through faith in the Lord Jesus, and are made up of indigenous Christians who are growing in their knowledge of God through the Scriptures and are reaching out to others in their culture for evangelization.

Church planting may involve the following types of missionary outreach:

- A. The establishing of a local indigenous community of believers starting with evangelistic strategy, translation and a variety of ongoing Bible teaching efforts for the building up of the body of believers. All have the goal of establishing a new local church.
- B. Strengthening existing churches: Equipping and building up local indigenous churches that they may be able to evangelize and plant other churches. It may include training indigenous Christians for church leadership and helping in evangelistic strategies.

These types of work are meant as a guide for the International Ministries

Team to use in prioritizing and evaluating missions work for our prayer and financial support. We will consider those who qualify for support on an individual basis. Preference will be given to RHCC members who have been actively involved in ministry at RHCC.

4.0 QUALIFICATIONS

These qualifications are meant as a guideline to help the team decide from many good options who to support financially. It is also meant as a standard, which we hope the missionaries we are supporting will meet. It is a safeguard for RHCC and the missionary to send those who meet the following qualifications:

- A. Clear profession and evidence of salvation through Jesus Christ; spiritual maturity; Christian lifestyle; continued spiritual growth; able to perform ministry as witnessed by other people.
- B. Share similar (but not necessarily identical) ministry philosophy (see RHCC core values document) and doctrinal perspective with RHCC.
- C. Desire to maintain strong relationship with members of RHCC and willing to abide by any guidelines for correspondence and periodic review of ministry.
- D. Healthy marriage and family relationships or content in singleness. (1 Timothy 3:4&5, 1 Corinthians 7:8,9,17)
- E. Acceptance by an agency approved the IM Team. .
- F. Willing to meet with and be counseled by the International Ministries Team of RHCC when considering where they will be going to serve overseas.
- G. Adequate training and education for ministry they will be doing as determined by the sending agency. This may include Bible school, seminary, language

learning and/or specific training of work they will be doing in the receiving country.

- H. Complete International Ministries Team interview. This will include:
1. The missionary's testimony of how they came to faith in Christ and how they were called to overseas missions.
 2. What work will they be doing overseas and how will they do ministry.
 3. Explanation of their current and future needs.
 4. Resume containing their past ministry work, education, and references should be brought to the interview.

5.0 RIVER HILLS AND MISSION AGENCIES

- 5.1 It is the policy of the International Ministries Team to send out missionaries under the guidance and support of an established missions agency. We will not support missionaries who choose to go out independent of an agency.
- 5.2 The mission agency must be approved by the RHCC International Ministries team and should have a similar doctrinal perspective, as outlined in the Statement of Faith of the EFCA, as well as overall mission goals as that of River Hills Community Church.
- 5.3 The agency should work with the existing church as well as other like minded agencies in the country to which they are sending missionaries. There should be an attitude of mutual acceptance as well as cooperation in the spreading of the gospel and church planting.
- 5.4 If a missionary should decide to change agencies, River Hills must be given advance notification. Continuation of support will require approval of new mission agency.

6.0 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

It is a goal of River Hills Community Church to be able to give 25% of the total budget to International Ministries. It is also the desire of RHCC to significantly support a few missionaries rather than support many with small amounts. We desire for our church to be significantly involved in the lives and work of those we support by friendship, prayer, regular contact and on-site assistance as needed and available. We believe this is best done by having fewer missionaries that we support but are more deeply involved with. Eighty percent of the total Mission's budget will be used for missionary support.

After approval of candidacy and sending mission agency it will be determined how much monthly support we will provide for the missionary. All approvals of both candidacy and amount of support are subject to Elder Board approval. The following criteria will also help determine the amount.

- A. The total finances needed by the missionary.
- B. Amount of monies available in the missions' budget.
- C. Ideally range of support would be from 5% up to 20%

Although monthly support may begin before the missionary leaves for the field the money will be held in a fund at RHCC. The money will then be given to the missionary at the time he (she) leaves for the field as part of his (her) start up costs. In some cases it may become necessary to help the missionary financially before they are ready to leave and these funds may be used for that as well and will be the decision of the International Ministries Team.

In addition, the International Ministries Team may want to financially help a missionary whom we cannot support monthly because of money constraints, or because a particular missionary does not fit well into our scope and limitations. We may consider such a missionary for a one-time gift. The amount would be determined by the need of the missionary and our ability to meet the need. The missionary would have to meet the above qualifications for missionaries with the exception of items C and G in Section 4.0.

6.1 Missionaries are free to approach individuals within River Hills with whom they already have a personal relationship and ask for their consideration in supporting them financially. They will not be able to make an appeal through a church wide mailing. They will be able to make the work that God is calling them to known among the congregation at large. They will be able to do this through a worship service Mission Moment or a special mission event to which the congregation is invited.

Correspondence & Periodic Review of Ministry

A. All missionary support may be reviewed annually and support may be adjusted; again determined by the need of the missionary and monies available to us to help with that need. Review will also take place with any of the following changes in the life of a missionary:

1. Change in the nature or location of ministry.
2. Change of mission agency.
3. Retirement
4. Extended home assignment.
5. Any problem that would interfere with the missionary's ability to perform normal missionary responsibilities.
6. Change in marital or family status

B. Missionaries who we financially support are expected to submit an annual report to the River Hills International Ministry team. This report should include ministry highlights, both the accomplishments and difficulties in their ministry, plans for spiritual and professional development, travel plans for the year, pertinent personal information and their financial status. It may also include the political situation in the country where they serve if this seems it may be

helpful. Reports that the missionaries send to their agency may be sent in whole or part depending on the extent of the report.

7.0 OTHER KINDS OF MISSIONARY SUPPORTS

River Hills would like to help full time overseas workers in other ways that will be both effective in furthering the work they are involved in and will encourage spiritually and emotionally the mission worker. In most cases, this will be in addition to financial support. In some cases, if a missionary is involved with RHCC but we are unable to provide continued support to them financially, we would like to provide for them other kinds of support. These may include:

- A. Prayer Support- This would include providing ways for our church family to pray specifically for missionary families.
- B. Communication- We will attempt to not only keep up to date on the life and work of the missionary but also keep them up to date on the life and work of River Hills.
- C. Practical Assistance- For a missionary who is on home assignment we will make an effort to help meet their needs of housing, transportation, furniture, and other ways that we can practically meet their material needs.
- D. Team Relationship- We desire for our missionaries to feel that we are part of their team, concerned about the work they are doing in the particular part of the world where they are serving. This can be accomplished through a continued relationship with the missionary so that they feel that we know them and they know us.
- E. Meetings with International Ministries Team- Our missionaries are encouraged to meet with the team to express concerns, relate needs and report progress when they are on home assignment.
- F. Events with Church- The missionary can expect the International Ministries Team to help and assist in setting up events within the church to report on their ministry when they are on home assignment.
- G. Fund Raising within River Hills- Qualified missionaries will be provided means to help them raise support from individuals within the congregation. This could include display of prayer requests and newsletters in mission area of the foyer.
- H. Short Term Missions- RHCC desires to participate in short term opportunities that are driven by the missionaries in the field. Therefore, when RHCC makes its request for an annual report, we will remind our missionaries of our short term mission policy.

8.0 SUPPORT OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

We may, as we have means, help support a special project of a qualified missionary. These could be one-time gifts in which case the monies will be taken from the Missions Fund. This could also be an ongoing project that we will support monthly with the money being taken from our missionary budget. Examples include tuition of related schooling for missionary, help with seminary type schools overseas in which the missionary is involved, or spiritual training centers of indigenous Christians. The

support of such projects will be presented at an International Ministries Team monthly meeting and will be discussed and voted on there. When voting on said project the team will keep in mind our scope and limitations. All approvals are subject to Elder Board approval.

9.0 EDUCATION/CONFERENCE PORTION OF BUDGET

As a means to promote and encourage mission education in RHCC, 10% of the International Ministry budget will be used for education and conferences. This is intended for anyone within the congregation to use in their pursuit of learning more about the work God is doing in other nations of the world. The money is intended for the tuition of mission conferences approved by the team, costs of mission events within RHCC, and other opportunities with similar objectives. Application for the use of this money should be brought to the International Missions Team and is subject to the approval of the team upon request from individuals or groups within RHCC.

10.0 INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES TEAM MEETINGS

The International Team will hold a monthly meeting led by the International Ministry Team leader. Members of the team are expected to attend the meetings consistently to help think, plan and pray for the ministry. It is also hoped that team members will have a commitment to further mission work of RHCC through helping with planning of events and attending missions conferences, as they are able. The monthly meetings will include:

- A. Prayer for the missionaries that are supported by RHCC.
- B. Planning of missions events in the church as they arise.
- C. Regular review of missionary support/new support as needs arise.
- D. Budget review will occur in accordance with the International Ministries annual calendar.
- E. Annual review of Mission Policies will be in accordance with the International Ministries annual calendar. All changes are subject to Elder Board approval.
- F. Continuing education of International Team in mission related issues through books or articles read and discussed at meetings.

11.0 EXTENDED HOME ASSIGNMENT

Missionaries who are in the U.S. for an extended assignment may need extra help from River Hills to get them back to their ministry overseas. Extended home assignment would be more than 9 months. The International Ministry Team will determine if there is a concern regarding the extended home assignment that should be addressed. If so, the following steps will be applied as necessary:

- A. Two people from the International Ministry Team will meet with missionary to discuss the team's concerns.
- B. One person from the team will talk with the sending agency regarding the team's concerns.

Based on these discussions, the team and the missionary will determine the steps necessary to address these concerns and, hopefully, return the missionary to the field.