



PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS

Missions is important to Grace Bible Church (GBC) because it is important to God. He saved us “for His own possession”, so that we “may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 P. 2:9) to those who need the Savior. Because God has loved us, has forgiven our sins and has satisfied our souls, we want to reach out to those who are lost in their sin, so that God can transform them into worshippers:

Missions exists because worship doesn't... the goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. ‘The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!’ (Ps. 97:1). ‘Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy (Ps. 67:3-4).¹

GBC is committed to upholding and proclaiming the glory of God among the nations through the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:28), which is the power of God to save and transform lives (Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). To this end, GBC must be active in and supportive of making disciples of all the nations, both locally and globally (Ps. 67, 96; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

The Biblical Basis for a Theology of Missions

In the Great Commission, the Lord commanded His disciples to take the gospel to every nation (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). We recognize that God saves sinners through His gospel, and His gospel establishes a universal church gathered from every tribe, tongue, people and nation (Acts 2; Col. 3:9-11; Eph. 2:11; Rev. 5:9-10; 7:9). At GBC, we cherish and regard this opportunity as one of the greatest privileges of our lives (Rom. 10:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Eph. 3:8-13).

The Primacy of the Local Church in Conducting Missionary Endeavors

A primary responsibility and privilege of local churches is to raise up, send, and support missionaries, for the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. 1:3-5; Rom. 10:14-17). At GBC, we are committed to conducting missionary endeavors primarily through the local church. We believe that the local church is where God's glory is put on display in the present age (Eph. 3:21). Over the last 150 years, much missions' work has been delegated to missionary agencies or other para-church institutions. While we believe that many of these organizations are good, helpful, and well-

¹ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, third edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), p. 35.

intentioned, we strongly affirm that missions is most effective when it is initiated and conducted through the local church (Acts 13:1-4).

The following sections will articulate how GBC intends to faithfully function as a missions-minded church both locally and globally.

LOCAL MISSIONS

Local Missions: Theological Convictions

We believe that GBC must:

1. Actively preach the gospel to our local community, regardless of cultural differences, language barriers or potential difficulties (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 4:19-20).
2. Make disciples of those around us, baptizing them, and training them to observe all that God has commanded (Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:28-29).
3. Follow the example of our Lord, by preaching the good news and showing gospel kindness and compassion to image-bearers from all ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 18:18-27; John 4:1-42).
4. Resolve that sinful partiality and segregation shall not be present in any form in our body (Gal. 2:11-14; Eph. 2:11-12; Jms. 2:1-13).

Local Missions: Practical Implementation

To help GBC carry out our theological convictions, the shepherds of GBC plan to:

1. Communicate, call, equip, and model this local missions' vision.
2. Pray together regularly for our city and for opportunities for gospel outreach.
3. Actively assist the planting of local churches in strategic regional locations.
4. Strategically evangelize, corporately and individually, all areas of our community, but especially those that currently have little or no gospel influence (Tit. 3:8; Rom. 15:19-21).

Local Missions: Support Priority—How will GBC determine whom to support?

GBC will strategically partner with the following categories of missionaries:

- **Partners:** Members of GBC who are sent out under the care and guidance of the GBC shepherds as a new GBC missionary, or in partnership with an existing GBC missionary. GBC is committed to support missionary partners relationally, spiritually and financially.
- **Friends:** Those with whom GBC has a significant relationship and are pursuing local missions under the leadership of an approved missionary or missionary agency/ministry/church. GBC individuals are welcome to and encouraged to support missionary friends relationally, spiritually and financially.

GLOBAL MISSIONS

Global Missions: Theological Convictions

We believe that GBC must:

1. Resolutely commit to co-labor in global missionary endeavors (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).
2. Partner relationally, spiritually, and financially with those who share our doctrinal and missional convictions, as defined in this document and our doctrinal statement (Acts 13:1-4; 14:24-28).

Global Missions: Practical Implementation

To help GBC carry out our theological convictions, the shepherds of GBC plan to:

1. Commit to relationally, spiritually and financially supporting like-minded global missionaries (Acts 13:1-4; 14:24-28).
2. Support fewer missionaries with more support per missionary, as opposed to an abundance of missionaries with less support per missionary.
3. Support fewer missionaries with the purpose of maintaining deeper connection with the missionaries, providing familial care on furlough, and shepherding and encouraging its missionaries while they are on the field.

Global Missions: Support Priority—How will GBC determine whom to support?

GBC will strategically partner with the following categories of missionaries:

- **Partners:** Members of GBC who are sent out under the care and guidance of the GBC shepherds as a new GBC missionary, or in partnership with an existing GBC missionary. GBC is committed to support missionary partners relationally, spiritually and financially.
- **Friends:** Those with whom GBC has a significant relationship and are pursuing global missions under the leadership of an approved missionary or missionary agency/ministry. GBC individuals are welcome to and encouraged to support missionary friends relationally, spiritually and financially.

SUPPORT PRIORITIES & REQUIREMENTS

Support Priorities: What types of missionary endeavors receive priority focus?

GBC will specifically focus on the following types of missionary activity giving priority in the following order:

1. **Church Planting:** An active ministry of church planting, with a priority to unreached peoples (Mark 1:35-39; Rom. 15:18-22).
2. **Pastoral Training:** Those who are working to train the next generation of pastors (2 Tim. 2:1-4).
3. **Mercy Ministry:** A gospel and local church-based involvement in mercy ministry (Matt. 4:23).

4. **Short-term Missions:** GBC's involvement with short-term missions.

Note: In every category above, it is foundational that there is alignment with GBC's doctrinal statement and philosophy of ministry.

Support Requirements: What will GBC require of its missionaries?

*GBC will require its **missionary partners** to conform to the following requirements:*

1. **Active Work:** All *missionary partners* must be faithful to the Great Commission. This means that they must actively be involved in evangelism and discipleship. Faithfulness will be assessed based on proclamation, not number of conversions (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).
2. **Spiritual Accountability:** All *missionary partners* must be deacon qualified; failure to maintain these qualifications may lead to disqualification/discontinuation of support (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). There must be regular accountability and communication with GBC's shepherds.
3. **Encouragement of the Saints:** All *missionary partners* will send monthly support updates that will be sent through our church's mailing system by GBC and/or shared on Sunday services during ministry updates time. This will allow the church to be familiar and reminded of their missionaries, as well as encouraging the church to support the work of its missionaries (Acts 20:2; Rom. 1:11-12).

*GBC will require its **missionary friends** to conform to the following requirements:*

1. **Active Work:** All *missionary friends* must be faithful to the Great Commission. This means that they must actively be involved in evangelism and discipleship. Faithfulness will be assessed based on proclamation, not number of conversions (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).
2. **Spiritual Accountability:** All *missionary friends* must be deacon qualified; failure to maintain these qualifications may lead to disqualification/discontinuation of support (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). Missionary friends should be actively serving in their local church and being discipled/trained. Annual meeting with GBC's shepherds is expected for follow-up and accountability purposes.
3. **Encouragement of the Saints:** All *missionary friends* will send biannual support updates that will be sent through our church's mailing system by GBC. This will allow the church to be familiar and reminded of their missionary friends, as well as encouraging the church to support the work of its missionaries (Acts 20:2; Rom. 1:11-12). It is also recommended that missionary friends visit GBC once a year to provide a brief update in our GraceLife meetings on Sunday and setting up an information table in the foyer that Sunday.