

Guidelines Concerning Short-Term Missions Trips – Revision 2
The Elders
November 29, 2006

The elders have been delighted to see the current level of interest of missions following the recent success of the mission trip to Bay St. Louis and the level of involvement in Operation Christmas Child and the Zimbabwe Children's Project. We do recognize however there are some areas where our missions program can build upon what has already been accomplished:

1. We must look for ways to better involve the entire church in each mission trip that Pacific Union sends out.
2. We must find ways to lessen the burden on the individuals that participate in the missions trips. We would like to see the barriers lowered to allow for others to be involved in going on a mission trip.
3. Provide clarity for the financial support raising process.

Therefore the elders are proposing that the following distinction be made for all future mission trips. Each mission trip that is offered to the congregation will either be a church sponsored mission trip or an individual mission trip opportunity.

1. Church Sponsored Mission Trips will be mission trips that have been agreed upon by the missions committee and the elders and presented and discussed with the entire church body at a special church meeting. For church sponsored mission trips, the responsibility for all planning, recruiting and fund raising will be the responsibility of the church body.¹

2. Individual Mission Trip Opportunities will be mission trips where the individual is responsible for raising the funds necessary to go on the trip. This does not preclude financial or logistical support from the church, but simply places the responsibility in the hands of the team member. Each team member will be free to contact individuals within the church for financial and prayer support and to hold fund raising events at the church.

¹ The elders are proposing this as an improvement to the old system for missions funding that was popularized by the "faith missions" organizations of the 19th and 20th centuries. Under the "faith mission" model, each individual missionary was required to raise their own salary and travel expenses. While there are some good things about this approach, the result has been that missions is much more of a individualistic thing, than a church thing. We have seen this with the last mission trip. The bulk of the finances was provided by the team members, not to mention the vacation time and lost wages that was sacrificed. The result is that much of the church was left on the sidelines where more could have been involved. With church sponsored mission trips, the elders are proposing that the money not be raised individually, but instead the money be placed into a common pot. If 5000 dollars is needed to send a team of four to the Ukraine, the church, not the individual will be responsible to raise the necessary funds.

The following is a suggestion for how a *church sponsored mission trip* might be organized at Pacific Union Congregational Church in order to accomplish the two goals stated above:

1. Missions committee approves inquiry into a possible mission trip.
2. Missions committee researches the opportunity and presents it to the elders for tentative approval.
3. A special meeting of the membership is called, where the trip is presented to the congregation for discussion and clarity. The presentation will cover the following areas: The need the trip will address. The reason why PUCC is called to address this need. The skills necessary to complete the mission. A projection of the cost of the trip.
4. The missions committee will recruit people to do the following tasks (this is a partial list):
 - a. Trip leader / coordinator
 - b. Travel arrangements organizer.
 - c. Fundraising coordinator
 - d. Prayer team
 - e. Care team for the families of the team members who are left behind.
 - f. the Mission team²
5. Lay hands on the work team and pray for the project on the Sunday before the team departs.
6. Hold a dinner to report to the congregation what was accomplished on the trip.
7. Have the team leader report to the missions committee was accomplished on the trip and whether a followup trip will be necessary.

We the elders believe that the problems of better fundraising and higher church ownership of mission trips go hand in hand. We believe that there will be greater ease funding our short-term mission trips if the process is opened up leading to greater ownership by the entire church body. We also believe that such an approach will help us get closer to the model given to us in Acts 13.

May God continue to bless us as we are a blessing to the nations.

Sincerely,

The Elders

Larry Palmer, Mark Gelinas, Nathan Hall

² While the elders recognize that short term mission trips provide great benefits for those who go, the elders would like to see a greater emphasis on recruiting people with the skills necessary to make the trip a success. If it is a building project like Bay St. Louis, it is in the church's interest to have as many skilled carpenters as possible go on the trip for the sake of the people of Bay St. Louis. The mission committee and the church would be given the opportunity to decide if subsidizing someone's income is a wise course if that person has skills that will greatly benefit the team. We would like participation to be linked to skills that can be offered, rather than just financial freedom.