

**MISSION POLICY
of the
AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

PREAMBLE

With faith in God, and unquestioning acceptance of the Bible as His Word and our rule of faith and practice, recognizing the Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ as the Head of His churches, and believing that the churches are the only authorized agents to do mission work by sending and supervising missionaries, we recommend to all New Testament churches the following Mission Policy with earnest prayer that the churches of the American Baptist Association might offer prayerful and financial assistance to each other as such help is sought in fulfilling the Great Commission.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Mission Policy is to offer in an associational capacity, procedural recommendations from the messengers to the churches to assist in the Great Commission of worldwide evangelism and the establishment of New Testament churches. This is not a mandate of laws to the churches; however, a church that requests financial assistance will be expected to follow these guidelines.

NATURE

The Mission Policy complies with the principles set forth in the Articles of Agreement and the Doctrinal Statement of the American Baptist Association through the following procedure.

Let it be clearly understood that this Mission Policy is in no way a part of the Articles of Agreement of the American Baptist Association; that the statements of this Mission Policy shall always be looked upon as guidelines and shall never be interpreted as binding laws upon the churches and/or missionaries; and, that it shall never be allowed to impede nor restrict in any way the work of any messenger assembly in fulfilling its functions as authorized by the churches of the American Baptist Association.

DEFINITION OF TITLES

- A. **MISSIONARY:** a God-called, church-ordained preacher sent by the church of his membership to do mission work.
- B. **INTERSTATE MISSIONARY:** a missionary who is a United States citizen and is living and doing mission work in the United States of America.
- C. **FOREIGN MISSIONARY:** a missionary who is living and doing mission work in a country not of his citizenship.
- D. **NATIONAL MISSIONARY:** a missionary who is living and doing mission work in the country of his citizenship, other than the United States of America.
- E. **MISSIONARY HELPER:** an individual sent by the church of his/her membership, who lives on a mission field assisting churches, missions, and/or missionaries in their mission work. A missionary helper will only be recommended to receive designated funds.
- F. **MISSION MINISTRIES:** an individual and/or group of individuals who are members of and sent by a church represented in the American Baptist Association, who practice a ministry assisting churches, missions and/or missionaries in their mission work. Such a ministry will only be recommended to receive designated funds.

SECTION I

POLICIES FOR THE MISSIONARIES, MISSIONARY HELPERS, AND MISSION MINISTRIES

1. Each missionary must have a recommendation from his sending church. The sending church of salaried missionaries cannot be the church that the missionary pastors except in the cases of a National Missionary as provided for in Section III, Article 3. In the event a sending church withdraws its endorsement between sessions, the missionary's recommendation stops at that point and if recommended, he must be recommended as a new missionary by his new church at a future annual session.
2. Each missionary may be recommended to receive a salary or designated funds. Missionaries must be recommended as requested by the sending church or not recommended.
3. Each missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry, salaried or on designated funds, must submit an itemized monthly financial and statistical report to his sending church, which shall in turn send a report to the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions using forms supplied by the office of the Secretary-Treasurer.
4. Each missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry must subscribe to the Doctrinal Statement and the Articles of Agreement of the churches composing the American Baptist Association. (No missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry shall be recommended by the Missionary Committee or the Messenger Assembly, if same believes in the universal church concept, ecumenism, or the charismatic movement; or practices alien immersion, open communion, or pulpit affiliation.)
5. Any messenger may call for a separate vote on any recommended missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry. It would be advisable to consult first with the sending church.

SECTION II

POLICIES FOR THE RECOMMENDING CHURCH

1. A church recommending a missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry for the first time or for renewed recommendation shall submit a fully completed Missionary Recommendation Form supplied by the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions at least 60 days prior to the annual messenger meeting.
2. A sending church withdrawing its recommendation or whose missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry moves membership to another church, shall inform the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions of such actions immediately.
3. A sending church recommending a missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry shall be responsible for promoting and reporting on said work. This shall include the raising of funds for travel expense, housing, health insurance, etc.

SECTION III

POLICIES FOR CHURCHES AND THEIR MISSIONARIES, MISSIONARY HELPERS, AND MISSION MINISTRIES

1. The right of churches to endorse and support missionaries other than those who are citizens of the United States and to provide financial assistance to churches and missions in special projects on foreign fields shall be recognized.
2. It is understood that difficulties and problems may arise as churches in the United States seek to provide financial help to mission work outside the United States. These difficulties are made more acute by the differences in culture, economy, language, and government requirements; therefore, the churches of this Association shall respect the right of any sending church to make legal agreements with other governments for the development of its missionary work.
3. Churches of this Association expect all applicable parts of this Mission Policy to be followed when seeking the endorsement of the Messenger Assembly for a missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry even though agreements may have been made between the sending church and the missionary, missionary helper, or mission ministry. Any National Missionary endorsed by the church he pastors must have an endorsement from a local church located in the United States.

SECTION IV

SECRETARY-TREASURER OF MISSIONS

1. The Secretary-Treasurer of Missions shall be the officer elected Treasurer by the messenger body as provided for in the Articles of Agreement of the American Baptist Association.
2. The salary of the Secretary-Treasurer shall be set annually by the messenger body. His salary, travel expenses, out-of-pocket expenses, and expenses incidental to the office shall be paid from the undesignated mission fund as funds are available. All undesignated funds collected when representing the missionaries and mission work shall be placed in the undesignated mission fund.
3. The Secretary-Treasurer of Missions should attend all Missionary Committee meetings and give a general report of the mission work.
4. The Secretary-Treasurer of Missions shall report any serious problem concerning any recommended missionary to his sending church, and the chairman of the Missionary Committee who may call a special standing committee meeting if deemed necessary.
5. The Secretary-Treasurer of Missions shall receive and disburse mission funds to the sending church for the missionaries recommended annually by the Messenger Assembly of the American Baptist Association, unless otherwise authorized by this Mission Policy and/or the Articles of Agreement. All designated funds shall be distributed by the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions as designated.
6. The Secretary-Treasurer of Missions shall solicit, receive, and disburse funds as necessary to defray the expenses associated with the annual pre-associational meeting of the Standing Missionary Committee. A three-man (3) committee shall be appointed annually by the moderator of the American Baptist Association to assist with this.

SECTION V

SALARIES

1. Each full-salaried missionary is considered a full-time missionary devoting full-time to his mission work. He shall not at any time engage in full or part-time secular employment. This is not to impede the raising of funds for travel expenses, housing, health insurance, etc. as provided for in Section II #3.
2. Salaries for endorsed salaried missionaries.
 - a. Salaries shall be recommended by the Missionary Committee annually and approved by the messengers when meeting in regular annual session.
 - b. Salaries shall be paid July 1 through June 30.
 - c. Salaries and designated funds shall be dispersed between the 20th and 25th of each month. Reports from salaried missionaries must be received before salary checks are issued.
 - d. Each salaried missionary may receive up to eighty percent (80%) of his salary from the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions as funds are available. The sending church of a salaried missionary is therefore strongly urged to send at least twenty percent (20%) of his salary to the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions.
 - e. Upon notification by a sending church of a withdrawn recommendation of its missionary, the Secretary-Treasurer shall, in agreement with the sending church, stop payment of salary up to 30 days after the withdrawal of the recommendation.
 - f. Any salaried missionary whose endorsement is discontinued or, who is recommended and does not receive a re-endorsement from the assembly for the following year, shall receive one additional month's salary from the time of his endorsement's being discontinued.
 - g. In the event of the death of a missionary on salary, his salary shall be given to his widow/or dependent children for the ensuing six-month period.
 - h. In the event a salaried missionary is incapacitated either by illness or accident and has to resign the mission field, his salary may be continued up to six months upon request of the sending church. The sending church must make the request monthly and the salary check of up to 80% of the set salary will continue to be sent to the sending church.
 - i. The maximum percentage of full salary that a salaried Missionary may receive shall be reduced from 80% by five percent each year subsequent to the completion of his fifth year serving at the same mission location.
3. Time on mission field for Salaried Missionaries.
 - a. Interstate Missionaries shall be given a three-week leave of absence annually with pay. Money received for services rendered during this time need not be reported towards salary.
 - b. Foreign Missionaries shall be given a two-week leave of absence annually with pay. Money received for services rendered during this time need not be reported towards salary. In addition, Foreign Missionaries shall be permitted six months of furlough, with pay, every four years. Missionaries are encouraged to use this time traveling among the churches informing them of their work. All money collected during this time shall be reported towards salary less an automobile mileage allowance and out-of-pocket expense for lodging and meals.
 - c. National Missionaries shall be given a three-week leave of absence annually with pay. Money received for services rendered during this time need not be reported towards salary.
4. Newly recommended Missionaries shall not begin receiving salary until beginning their labor at their recommended field.

SECTION VI

AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to this Mission Policy must be offered in writing on the first day of a regular session of the American Baptist Association and laid on the table until some subsequent day of the session and then adopted by a majority vote of the messengers.
2. Any section of this Mission Policy may be suspended during any session provided the change is presented in writing on the first day of a regular session and permitted to lie on the table until some subsequent day of the session and then adopted by a majority vote of the messengers.