

Trinity Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
Missions Policy

Section I: The Heart of Missions and Church Planting

The Call to Glorify God

At Trinity, our supreme goal and objective is the glory of God. If our triune God is to be glorified, recognized, and worshiped for who he is and what he has done, he must be made known. Therefore, we must be engaged in missionary and church planting activity, both at home and in other parts of the world.

The Biblical Vision: Salvation to the Ends of the Earth

The Apostle Paul declared, “*For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “ ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”*” (Acts 13:47). The apostles were a light to the Gentiles and brought salvation to the nations by preaching the gospel of Christ. As Paul and others preached the gospel, they realized that the prophecy of Isaiah was being fulfilled, for God had said,

And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him-- for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength-- he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:5-6 ESV).

The global impact of the gospel was proclaimed when God promised Abraham that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). Likewise in God's promise to Isaac, Jacob, and David (Genesis 26:1-5; 35:9-14; 2 Samuel 7) the global impact of the gospel is repeated. God's people will be gathered from all the nations of the world. Christ himself prophesied that the “*gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations*” (Matt 24:14 ESV). John the apostle affirms God's people to be “*a great multitude, which no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages*” (Rev 7:9 ESV).

We have been given the challenge and the opportunity to participate in fulfilling God's purpose in missions. God entrusts the church with the responsibility of announcing the salvation and kingship of Christ to the peoples of the world. He has established his kingdom and will bring it to completion; it is the work of the triune God alone. He calls us at Trinity to preach the gospel, to fulfill diaconal responsibilities, to establish fellowship, to serve the causes of faith, hope and love, and to support, send, and help train missionaries and church planters.

The Great Commission

Our challenge to bring the gospel of Jesus to the ends of the earth is encapsulated in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:19-23), which commands the church to make disciples, baptize them in the name of the triune God, and teach them the word of God.

The biblical pattern for fulfilling this mandate is an active involvement in both “home” and “foreign” missions. Jesus commissioned his disciples to be his witnesses “*in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*” (Acts 1:8 ESV). The Book of Acts provides a chronological and geographical paradigm for the expansion of the church at home and abroad. The qualifiers “home” and “foreign” give a helpful distinction regarding involvement in different geographical regions. This distinction, however, must never obscure the unity of God's program which is “both/and”. Home and foreign missions are a corresponding and complementary endeavor. We glorify God as we go forth in obedience to the Great Commission and make disciples of all nations, including our own.

Section II: Our Participation in Missions and Church Planting

The Sending Church

Although mission boards and agencies may facilitate the process, God's primary agent in world evangelization, the sending agent for world missions, is the church. Therefore, Trinity must be involved in the sending

process. Trinity will work with two agencies *within our denomination*. On the Synod level, we will seek to support and pray for those foreign missionaries commissioned by ARP presbyteries; on the presbytery level, we will seek to support, pray for, and encourage church planters under the oversight of Outreach Canada and/or other ARP outreach committees. Trinity will also work with other denominations and agencies that are reformed in doctrine and polity for the advancement of the kingdom.

Our Missions Focus

In order to be good stewards of our responsibility in the Great Commission, and to further the Presbyterian Reformed testimony worldwide, Trinity has established guidelines directing which ministries we will support. At this juncture, Trinity will support two types of ministry:

1. **Education Work:** Men or seminaries involved in training foreigners (pastors, elders, and deacons) in theology, church polity, and evangelism
2. **Church Planting Missionaries:** Men who are ordained and commissioned by the presbytery to establish organized churches by teaching, baptizing, and discipling converts

Our Financial Support

It is our goal to fund these mission and church planting endeavors along the guidelines listed below. In our budget, we dedicate to missions 10% of our annual offerings and 20% of our surplus offerings.

Monthly support will commence when the missionary or church planter departs for his target area or begins language school.

Our Prayer Support

God's church is moving forward, but as she does, she is fighting a war. In Matthew 6:10 our Lord taught us to pray, "*Your kingdom come.*" First, the church must pray for the preaching and teaching work of the missionaries and church planters. They are on the front lines, and as they serve, teach, and preach, we must pray that God by His Spirit through the Scriptures would unleash the power of the gospel. Second, we must pray for their protection. Many will face dangers from the enemies of God while proclaiming and living the lordship of Christ. Third, we must pray for their spiritual and physical well-being as they labor. Missions and church planting are arduous tasks, and many have returned due to exhaustion. We must ask our Father to uphold his servants.

As a church, we commit ourselves to praying for our missionaries every week. We will highlight one ministry, missionary, or church planter every week on a rotating basis, encouraging our families to pray for them. Also, we will pray for each ministry at our midweek prayer meeting.

Termination of Support

Support may be terminated if:

- The missionary does not fulfill his/her communication responsibilities as outlined below
- The affiliation of the missionary with his/her board or agency is altered or severed, or the job description of the missionary changes considerably without prior approval of the overseeing presbytery
- A moral problem arises
- There is evidence of doctrinal error
- After evaluation of the missionary's annual reviews, there is a determination of unsatisfactory performance
- The missionary or church planter chooses to leave the field permanently for other employment
- The education agency ceases to be Reformed in doctrine
- The education agency has misappropriated funds or is involved in any type of scandal

Support will not be terminated when the foreign missionary is on furlough.

Section III: Responsibilities of Missionary Church Planters and Missionary Educators

1. Regular Communication

While on the field, all missionary church planters and educators are asked to write a letter to Trinity (via mail, email, or fax) at least quarterly. These regular communiques will allow them to share personal and ministry prayer items, reflections, and needs as they come up. We will share these with the congregation as we receive them.

2. Regular Visits

Each missionary church planter and educator will be contacted and asked to make at least one presentation at Trinity every four years, insofar as it is financially possible. If they cannot come physically, they will be asked to send a report by video or some other media.

3. Notification of Changes

Missionary church planters or educators are expected to keep Trinity's session apprised of any significant changes in ministry direction.