

CCMSB Short-Term Missions (STM) Policy

1. The purpose of the STM policy

The missions committee of CCMSB offers these guidelines to increase the likelihood of success and promote transparency of STMs.

This policy applies to all STMs under church jurisdiction or sponsorship, and typically, to any other trip or individuals seeking the endorsement of – and/or support from – the church.

2. The definition of STM

The primary defining characteristic of STM is not geographical distance crossed by the senders, but the cultural distance of the recipients from the gospel. STM policy prioritizes evangelism among peoples without a viable, reproducing church within their culture and vicinity. As a secondary priority, policy makes provision for pre-evangelistic, social-service, or support trips, as well as for ministry among more reached peoples.

STM should be . . .

- an opportunity for service
- an exercise in dependence on the Lord in unfamiliar circumstances
- a small part of a lifelong involvement in missions
- a stimulus to missions vision and prayer
- an opportunity to encourage and support partner missionaries
- a brief exposure to another culture, and to other expressions of Christianity
- an impetus to differentiate Chinese/American cultural values from biblical values
- a limited but useful first-hand experience of missions
- a reminder to the entire church of its responsibility for the spread of the gospel

STM is not primarily intended to be . . .

- an exciting, stretching experience of personal discovery
- an item on a checklist of Christian spirituality
- a means of boosting your spiritual growth
- an effective method of cross-cultural missions

3. The process of STM

(a) Those considering leading a STM should first seek and receive the endorsement of the mission committee prior to promotion among potential team members. The application process includes completion of an application form and an interview with the mission committee. In case the applicant is away at college, a designee appointed by the mission committee, or CCMSB ministry staff can conduct the interview.

(b) To be cost effective, all teams seeking endorsement or support shall provide a detailed budget with their application, and a detailed accounting of funds spent, upon return. CCMSB

sponsored teams and individuals shall not donate funds or goods to host organizations or individuals, without prior approval from the mission committee.

(c) Prior to public or private solicitation for funds, teams and participants must first receive endorsement from the missions committee. Appeals shall be restricted to family and friends. Church and fellowship directories are not to be used in solicitation. Any proposed fund-raising events must seek approval from the Board of Elders or Church Council.

(d) Trips shall include pre-field training, connect with long-term ministry efforts in the target area, and provide post-field debriefing, including a brief written report by the team leader to mission committee describing lessons learned and character developed and on-going involvement in missions.

Policy prioritizes trips sponsored, designed, and led by CCMSB ministries, while making secondary provision for trips organized by other organizations of like theology and missiology. CCMSB does not support independent, individual mission trips.

The duration of STM trips may vary from one week to two years. Professional ministry trips (e.g., medical, dental, consulting) may by necessity last only one or two weeks; these may receive endorsement, but typically receive no financial support. Trans-oceanic trips which rely on unskilled or semi-skilled ministry (e.g., ESL in Asia) should typically last a minimum of five weeks to receive endorsement and/or financial support.

4. Qualifications and expectations for STM participants

All participants in CCMSB-sponsored STMs, and all seeking support from CCMSB for STMs sponsored by other organizations, shall meet the following qualifications:

- (a) Age: high-school students are restricted to trips sponsored by CCMSB
- (b) Christian experience: conversion and baptism
- (c) CCMSB involvement: active participation in CCMSB ministry (either presently or, in the case of current college students, just prior to going off to college), support of CCMSB general and missions funds. CCMSB members qualify for higher levels of support.
- (d) Ministry training: evangelism, relevant local or domestic ministry experience, missions training (e.g., Perspectives course, CCMSB missions training, or equivalent)
- (e) Past experience: applicants who failed to follow the STM process may not be qualified for leading or participating future STM.

5. CCMSB's commitment to STM participants

Where at all feasible, CCMSB will undertake to provide the following for all STM participants:

- (a) Training: E.g., Perspectives class, or in-house missions training
- (b) Commissioning: In a worship service, if possible
- (c) Funding:
 - If the STM trip is a pastor's mission trip or led by a pastor, the pastor's expense is expected to be fully covered up to a maximum of \$1500, subject to funds permitting.

- For participants other than pastors (including pastors' family members), the expense is covered up to a maximum of 1/3 of total cost (or a maximum of \$1,000) – subject to a total STM cap of 10% of missions budget, and funds permitting – channeled through the sponsoring organization.