## The Moody Church Short Term Adult Missions Program (S.T.A.M.P.) Policy (4/18)

**I. THEOLOGY OF MISSION**

Mission is “committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The people of God are redeemed for the Lord’s glory (Isaiah 48:11), and participate in the grand re-gathering of the people of God who are scattered abroad (John 10:16; cf. Ephesians 1; Revelation 5:9). Mission, therefore, is an active response of worship to the creator God.

**II. MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY**

It is the goal of the Global Outreach Committee (GOC) to see an increased involvement on the part of The Moody Church (TMC) congregation with respect to missions—both stateside and abroad. We believe that the men and women who participate in STAMP—both in going and in sending—develop a deeper realization of the gospel’s bearing upon their life and vocation. In short, STAMP strengthens the local gathering by encouraging their use of particular giftedness for the purpose of missional work.

**III. The Seven Standards of Excellence for STAMP**

Each STAMP trip should be characterized by the *7 Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Missions*.

* + - 1. God-Centeredness: There is no room for personal agendas or selfishness. STAMP exists for the furtherance of God’s glory and His kingdom.
      2. Empowering Partnerships: That is, there should be healthy, interdependent, on-going relationships between STAMP Teams and STAMP Sponsors.
      3. Mutual Design: There should be a collaborative planning of each specific outreach for the benefit of all participants.
      4. Comprehensive Administration: Before, during, and after, there should be integrity and due diligence done to ensure a reliable set-up and thorough administration of travel details for all participants.
      5. Qualified Leadership: Proper screening, training, and developing of capable leaders for STAMP is vital. These leaders will in turn train others.
      6. Appropriate Training: Through various team meetings and pre-trip readings, STAMP seeks to equip all participants for the mutually designed outreach.
      7. Thorough Follow-Up: Adequate debriefing and appropriate follow-up will be conducted by the Team Leader and the Director of Global Outreach

**IV. PURPOSE**

The purpose of TMC STAMP is fourfold[[2]](#footnote-2):

1. **Service**.To serve our missionaries and national partners—to help move their ministry forward through a concentrated infusion of assistance.
2. **Exposure**. To help team members learn about the team’s host culture and language, the state of the national church, and the nature of cross-cultural work. To foster closer relationships between members of The Moody Church and our colleagues serving cross-culturally.
3. **Discipleship**. To help team members become more mature in their relationship with Christ, to become more confident sharing the Gospel, and to become more aware of how God is establishing and strengthening his church worldwide.
4. **Recruitment**. To encourage team members to return home with a deeper commitment to pray, to give, and to go cross-culturally with the gospel.

**V.**  **GOALS**

1. To help individuals from the congregation who participate in a STAMP trip gain a broader understanding of global Christianity.
2. To spread a passion among individuals from the congregation who participate in a STAMP trip to think about and commit holistically to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.
3. To educate and bring awareness to team members about what missionary life actually looks like, and, hopefully, inspire team members to mobilize support structures—both prayer and financial—for respective missionaries stateside.
4. To perform profitable, effective, and partnering work on the field.
5. To inform, encourage, and gently rebuke TMC congregation toward a deeper involvement with God’s mission of spreading a passion for His glory for the joy of all peoples.

**VI. POLICY**

1. **STAMP Teams Defined**
2. STAMP Teams are short-term mission trips that are organically formed out of TMC Communities, approved by the Global Outreach Committee, and sent out by the congregation.
3. STAMP Teams must be approved by the GO Committee a **minimum** of three months (four to six months is preferred) before departure. Any trip proposed less than three months before departure will be automatically denied unless special permission is granted by the GO Committee.
   1. The Team Leader must create a trip proposal of activities, site sponsor, estimated budget, and potential team members to present to the GO Committee for approval.
   2. Once the trip is approved, the team may begin raising support and meeting together to prepare.

c. All individual applications, waivers, and forms must be collected by one week

prior to departure.

1. Each team (or, if a team is primarily returning STAMP participants, then anyone on the team who is new to STAMP) is strongly recommended to go through the short devotional book *Before You Pack Your Bag, Prepare Your Heart* by Cindy Judge. These are provided as needed by the Director of Global Outreach.
2. **STAMP Team Leaders**

(1) An approved STAMP Team Leader is potentially any TMC member or regular attendee, preferably experienced with respect to overseas ministry, who is a mature believer capable of leading a team.

a. Approval by a pastoral staff member and support of their TMC Community leadership team (where applicable) is also required.

b. The Team Leader must contact the Director of Global Outreach in order to make a proposal to the GO Committee.

(2) STAMP Team Leader Responsibilities

* 1. Create a project proposal to present to the GO Committee. This includes activities, site sponsor/host, estimated budget, and potential team members to be approved.
  2. Work with the site host concerning the purpose and goals of the STAMP ministry of The Moody Church. Team Leaders will work with the site host to determine the nature of the project, size of team, duration of STAMP trip, and so on.
  3. The Team Leader will be the primary recruiter and trainer of team participants. The Team Leader will submit a list of recommended candidates to the GO Committee as part of their trip proposal. If approved, the Team Leader is responsible for interviewing and collecting the paperwork from each participant. If the Team Leader requests help in this process, the GO Committee will provide it.
  4. Facilitate a series of meetings with the team to prepare, pray, and discuss the trip details. If you’d like to arrange meetings at church, contact the Ministry Assistant for Global Outreach to arrange a reservation.
  5. Each leader must read *Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006) by David Livermore. Copies can be borrowed from the Director of Global Outreach.
  6. Oversee the fund-raising efforts and support-letter writing of the team, providing guidance as needed and tracking the support levels of the team.
  7. Work with the site host to put team safety measures in place—including providing supplemental emergency insurance where not covered by TMC insurance plan.
  8. Keep all receipts and submit a final expense report to the Directors of Global Outreach and Finance and Administration within 30 days of trip return.
  9. Upon completion of the trip, distribute debrief forms to each team member. Collect these within 30 days of return. Arrange a debrief meeting with the Director of Global Outreach within 60 days of return. Send any trip photos to his assistant to keep on file along with a summary of what took place.

1. **STAMP Team Members** 
   * + 1. STAMP team members will be TMC members or regular attendees. All exceptions must be approved by the Team Leader and the Director of Global Outreach.
       2. Each candidate will submit an application and the appropriate medical and waiver forms to the Team Leader prior to the designated deadline (as determined by the Team Leader). These forms are found on the church website. For teams working with children, the application process will include a background check.
       3. In most cases, candidates who have not participated in a previous STAMP trip will be given priority in selection if the number of participants for the trip is limited.
       4. Each team member shall recruit a small team of prayer partners to pray over the preparation and trip.
       5. Team members will participate in the pre-trip meetings conducted by the Team Leader. If a team member misses an excessive number of meetings (as determined by the Team Leader and/or GO Committee) they may be excused from the STAMP team.
       6. Each team member will raise their own support. Support letters can be sent to anyone outside the TMC family but can only be sent to those in the TMC family with whom the team member has a *personal* relationship. Owing to IRS tax regulations for 501(c)(3) institutions, raising support is a team effort. In other words, the team works toward making the budget. Nevertheless, each team member is expected to meet the individual cost either through personal funds or through raising funds.
       7. Each candidate is responsible to obtain passport and immunizations on trips which require them. Reimbursement for immunizations *may* be possible if funds are available in the team’s account. Reimbursement for visas (if originally purchased by team members) are eligible for reimbursement as well.
       8. Each team member agrees to submit to the authority of the Team Leader(s). Divisiveness and insubordination may be grounds for removal from team, including being sent home before the trip concludes for the team.
       9. Each member of the trip will be required to complete the STAMP Debrief Form within 30 days of return and submit to the Team Leader.
2. **Family-Oriented STAMP Guidelines**
3. A trip will only be considered for a family-oriented trip if the site host is able to accommodate adults and children. This includes having age-appropriate work, housing, and transportation to meet the needs of families.
4. Families will be required to pay for any child under the age of 5, as opposed to older children who can raise support through The Moody Church (due to their greater level of contribution to the trip).
5. Families will be approved or not approved as a whole. The Team Leader will interview and assess each family member, and then assess the family together.
6. **Types of Projects**
   * + 1. Outreach (e.g., evangelism, drama, music ministry / choir tour)
       2. Discipleship and training
       3. Construction Project (e.g., building a church, orphanage, or various civil work)
       4. Teaching (e.g., Vacation Bible School, teaching English, Bible Conferences, Microfinance)
       5. Humanitarian (e.g., medical, dental, orphan care)
       6. Another approved project from the GO Committee
7. **Frequency**
   * + 1. There shall be no limitation on the number of projects fielded during a given year.
       2. There shall be at least one project each year.
8. **Sponsorship**

Each project shall have an on-site host—preferably a TMC missionary or an organization with which TMC has a standing, positive relationship—who can help in the planning and logistics of each project. The Team Leader and site host should work together to develop a STAMP trip that best meets the needs of the site and utilizes the giftedness of the STAMP team.

1. **Funding**
   * + 1. STAMP Budget Line—a line item in the GOC Budget. This fund may be allocated for the following expenses:
          1. If needed, teams meeting the above requirements may be given up to 20% of their total funds from the STAMP General Fund, only with GO Committee approval.
          2. The remainder of needed funds must be raised by the team member by either raising the support or from personal funds.
       2. With the rarest exception, unless a team has raised seventy percent (70%) of its budget before the departure they will not be permitted to leave.
       3. STAMP Team participants **must** include a line in their support letters making clear that any excess financial support given toward the individual will be distributed toward the rest of the team, and if there is excess giving towards the team, then it will go into the general STAMP fund.
       4. Material and equipment funds should be agreed upon with the site host before the trip begins to know what is needed and who is fiscally responsible for their use. If funds for material and equipment are to be raised by team members in addition to travel and daily expenses, the amount needs to be clearly stated in the proposed budget to the GO Committee. The cost of equipment and supplies brought or purchased on site should not exceed $500 per STAMP participant unless specifically approved by the GO Committee.
       5. Funding provided for the STAMP teams does not include monies for the purchase of souvenirs or other personal items or excursions.
       6. Residual Funds
2. Funds remaining after all the expenses of a STAMP project have been paid shall remain in the team’s account or, if no follow-up trip will be taken or this is a one-time trip, be placed in the General STAMP account.
3. The Team Leader may recommend an appropriate distribution of residual funds to the GO Committee.
4. **Cancellation Procedure for Individuals and Teams**
5. An individual or an entire team seeking to cancel their participation must submit a letter in writing to the Director of Global Outreach and STAMP Team Leader stating the reason s/he/they will not be participating in the trip.
6. Individuals must send a letter to supporters informing of his/her not going on the trip and that support will go toward supporting others on the trip. In the case of a team cancelling their trip, the Team Leader is responsible for composing a letter to be distributed among individual supporters by the rest of the team. Any funds already raised will go toward the General STAMP Fund or remain in the team’s account if they plan another future trip.
7. If airline tickets have already been purchased, the individual is personally responsible for any costs associated with the cancellation, up to and including the entire cost of the ticket, if it is a nonrefundable ticket. Exceptions to this policy may be considered by the GO Committee and STAMP Team Leader on a case-by-case basis, especially if an entire trip is cancelled due to international safety reasons.
8. Other expenses incurred in preparing for the trip (for example, immunizations, passports, and so on) will not be reimbursed.
9. Gifts to The Moody Church become the sole property of The Moody Church. A gift to The Moody Church is a charitable contribution for federal income tax purposes to the extent permitted by law. Tax-deductible gifts cannot be refunded. In the event an applicant does not participate in the trip, gifts to The Moody Church will go to support other members of the trip.
10. **Consideration of Applicants who are not Members or Regular Attendees of The Moody Church** 
    * + 1. STAMP teams are intended for members or regular attendees of The Moody Church.In deciding if an exception should be made to this policy, the GO Committee will consider each applicant on a case-by-case basis.
        2. No more than *two* non-Moody Church members or regular attendees will be considered as applicants for any *one* STAMP trip.
        3. The STAMP Team Leader will bring the name of each non-Moody Church member or regular attendee to the attention of the Director of Global Outreach or in a timely manner. Ideally, the person(s) should *not* begin the application process until approved to do so by the GO Committee.
        4. The GO Committee will consider the following factors for a non-member or regular attender to participate:

a. The person possesses special skill(s) or other unique qualifications (e.g. musical or other artistic talent, medical training, writing skills, etc.). These skills are of a high degree of value for the specific STAMP trip in which they are applying for team membership.

b. The person is a member or regular attendee of one of the Missions Consortium churches (Wheaton Bible Church, College Church in Wheaton, and Christ Church of Oakbrook). If approved for a trip by the STAMP Committee, the person will solicit some of his/her support from within the membership of his/her home church.

c. The person has been specifically requested by the missionary and/or the missions agency with whom the STAMP team will be partnering.

d. The STAMP Team Leader is supportive of this person joining their STAMP team.

e. The person agrees to actively participate in all pre-trip preparation with the team and fulfill all team member responsibilities.

1. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . We acknowledge our gratitude and debt to the Missions Committee at College Church in Wheaton for their input on this and other sections of this policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)