

## **Home Missions Fund**

**The Home Missions Fund supplements local income for the support of ministers, licentiates and students who are laboring in the churches of the Presbytery.**

**While it is most desirable that a minister have full financial support from his own congregation, the reality of the situation is that for several years to come it will be difficult for most churches in the Presbytery to provide full financial support to their minister. In the immediate future, the situation may well become worse before it becomes better, because the development of new churches will occur through ministers taking up their work in places where there are only a few households, and where the minister's primary financial support will come from other employment. The Presbytery in 2004 adopted a statement which was sent to the Home and Foreign Missions Committee and reported to the General Assembly, espousing a policy that the Presbytery's development will be without resort to funds from Scotland, but by ministers and congregations accepting financial difficulty in order to secure the benefit of worship services. The denominational sustentation fund does not operate within this Presbytery. There should be, within the bounds of Christian principles, a maximum flexibility and liberty for ministers in acquiring income for themselves, as well as for churches in providing income to ministers, licentiates and students. This is necessitated by constrained financial situations in the Presbytery and its churches.**

**The Home Missions Fund shall be administered by the Presbytery's Missions Committee. The Committee shall consider funding for ministers, licentiates or students who labor within the bounds of Presbytery, but who are without full financial support from their congregation or preaching station. The Committee should give priority of attention to those situations in which a minister or licentiate is under the greatest financial constraint, regardless of whether the situation is a fully-sanctioned charge or a preaching station.**

**Disbursements from the Home Missions Fund will normally be in the form of a monthly stipend supplement. There may also be disbursements in the form of a single payment or occasional payments, or in the form of compensation for each worship service which is conducted. The work which may be compensated from the Home Missions Fund shall be pulpit supply, as well as the entire range of responsibilities discharged by a minister of the gospel, or the responsibilities of a licentiate or student in either occasional or stated supply. This will include pastoral care, and administrative tasks in the local situation or for the operation of Presbytery. There may also be disbursements for reimbursement of expenses. These may comprehend all the expenses for which a minister might be**

compensated by a Deacons' Court, including mileage, but for which adequate funding is not available locally.

Because there is an enormous range in the cost of living from one community to another in the United States, with housing costs much greater in some places than others, fixed rates of compensation are out of place. When the Committee administering the fund makes a determination about the level of need, the Committee may take into account as best they can the relative cost of living in the place where the minister, licentiate or student is serving. Comparisons with Scotland should not be considered in determining the amount of payment, because there is such a disparity from the circumstances in the United States.

While the Committee administering the Home Missions Fund shall have the function of funding financial support, the Ministerial Stipend Committee shall be responsible to meet regularly with ministers and licentiates and with the Deacons' Courts in order to monitor the adequacy of financial support for all ministers and licentiates laboring within the bounds of Presbytery. The Ministerial Stipend Committee should report circumstances of need to the Deacons' Court, but may also choose to make a recommendation to the Missions Committee administering the Home Missions Fund.

Ministers, licentiates or students giving pulpit supply may make a direct application to the Missions Committee, requesting support. Deacons' Courts may apply to the committee, with a request that support be given to a minister, licentiate or student laboring in a situation for which that Deacons' Court has responsibility. The Committee itself may take an initiative in the provision of support. In all cases, the Deacons' Court for a congregation or preaching station should be consulted by the Committee respecting the proposed commencement of funding, and at least annually in regard to ongoing financial support, and all funding decisions and amounts should be promptly reported by the Committee to the relevant Deacons' Court.

Adopted by Presbytery on June 12, 2009.