

# **Servants of Christ International, Inc.**



## **Ministry Operating Handbook**

**June 1, 2019  
Version 1.5**

# Servants of Christ International, Inc. Ministry Operating Handbook

## Document Revisions

Version	Date	Editor	Comments
0.1	January 15, 2016	Jim Walters	Initial Draft
0.2	January 24, 2016	Bob Cabbage	Document Formatting and minor editing
0.3	February 26, 2016	Ron Huston	Updates from review with Jim Walters
1.0	April 18, 2016	Ron Huston	Updates from Board meeting
1.1	April 28, 2016	Ron Huston	Updates for Web links
1.2	November 20, 2018	Ron Huston	Updates from Spring Board Meeting
1.3	November 25, 2018	Jim Walters & Connie	Financial and Misc. updates
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## Contents

Document Revisions .....	2
1 Introduction and Overview .....	3
1.1 Document Purpose Statement .....	3
1.2 PURPOSE STATEMENT .....	3
1.3 CORE VALUES .....	3
1.4 PURPOSE OF OUR "MISSIONARIES" AND THEIR PROGRAMS .....	3
1.5 WE ARE NOT: .....	4
1.6 HISTORY .....	4
1.7 PURPOSE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS .....	4
2 APPLICANTS – FOR SHORT OR LONG-TERM: .....	5
2.1 The qualifications for any successful applicant would be these: .....	5
2.2 Steps for a Missionary to Apply to SOCI .....	5
3 Financial Procedures .....	6
4 Accountability .....	9
5 The SOCI Statement of Faith .....	10
6 Charter Documents .....	11

# Servants of Christ International, Inc. Ministry Operating Handbook

## 1 Introduction and Overview

### 1.1 Document Purpose Statement

The Ministry Operating Handbook was created to support missionaries in understanding and executing their specific responsibilities. In the event there is a conflict with the information provided herein, the Letter of Agreement signed by the Servant, followed by the Associations By-laws takes precedence.

### 1.2 PURPOSE STATEMENT

Servants of Christ International (SOCl) exists to empower volunteers and faith-supported missionaries by providing administrative assistance for those who are called by God and sent by their supporters.

Our motto is .... ***“Serving People, Sending Hope.”***

### 1.3 CORE VALUES

#### 1. Respect for Biblical Truth

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17*

#### 2. Financially Responsible

*Taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 2 Cor 8:20-21*

### 1.4 PURPOSE OF OUR “MISSIONARIES” AND THEIR PROGRAMS

- 1) Each of our missionaries operates a **program** of ministry that seeks to reach, teach, win, or develop people as disciples of Jesus Christ. This may be full-time, part-time or occasional.
- 2) Some of these programs involve meeting human needs, such as medical care, water ministry, micro-enterprise, children’s ministry, or orphan care, to name a few.

Other programs are purely religious in nature: evangelism, church construction funding, pastoral and leadership training, children’s ministry.

- 3) **We have no employees** – all of our missionaries work as “independent contractors.” Some are volunteers and all of their contributions are used exclusively for ministry expense reimbursement. Others receive a “personal

# Servants of Christ International, Inc.

## Ministry Operating Handbook

living expense” stipend (like a salary), which is considered “self-employed income” for tax purposes (and we issue an IRS form 1099 to them at year’s end).

- 4) Missionaries who are US citizens normally reside here and work domestically or travel overseas but keep a home base. Those who live overseas do maintain a residency in the state, a health care plan, and generally return to the state every year to make contact with donors and the SOCI board.

*note: Missionaries who wish to be “full time residents” overseas and only return to the states every few years are normally referred to other agencies who are “full service” missionary sending groups.*

- 5) Citizens of other nations may reside in their home state where they work in partnership with one of the SOCI personnel living in the USA.

### 1.5 WE ARE NOT:

- 1) A "missions sending agency" per se, such as one that would hold responsibility for financial support of its personnel. Our volunteers and missionaries are sent by their supporters and by their home church, who give financially and pray for them. At its core, SOCI is simply an administrative servicing agency to these missionaries.
- 2) A source of funds for your mission. We have no endowment funds; each of our missionaries are responsible to raise their own support. We do provide coaching in various aspects of support raising, and we can connect missionaries to additional training sources. We also provide business cards, letterhead, envelopes, and a website that contains a page for each program. Many supporters are giving on-line through the website.
- 3) A church or denomination. We are a "missionary society" type of para-church ministry ("para-church" means “alongside the church helping it”). All of our missionaries have reviewed and agreed with our statement of faith, which is contained in section 5 The SOCI Statement of Faith. Historically, we are “Baptistic” in nature, but people of many other denominations are serving with us.

### 1.6 HISTORY

See our website under the tab “about” and “history.”

### 1.7 PURPOSE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 1) To see that the organization operates in accord with its by-laws and conducts affairs in accordance with civil statutes and biblical ethics.
- 2) To provide administrative assistance to the SOCI office staff as able.
- 3) To support the process of reviewing, interviewing and voting on new program applications.

# Servants of Christ International, Inc.

## Ministry Operating Handbook

## 2 APPLICANTS – FOR SHORT OR LONG-TERM:

### 2.1 The qualifications for any successful applicant would be these:

- a) a clear vision for operating a ministry program in keeping with our purpose.
- b) a clear testimony of salvation and calling to ministry (not necessarily vocational ministry in the sense of licensing or ordination.) Many of our missionaries are not licensed nor ordained, nor have been to seminary.
- c) references that can be contacted for verification of competency in ministry and Christian character. (We do run background checks on applicants).
- d) a compatibility with our Statement of Faith (see Section 5).
- e) a compatibility with our operating policies (this document) and a willingness to communicate with us and be accountable to us even when in the field.
- f) evidence of adequate financial support for the proposed ministry. In some cases, approval may be given but if travel overseas is involved, it is only available after adequate support is raised. Successful applicants usually have some experience in missions and can show a proven track record of raising adequate support and exercising appropriate donor care.
- g) evidence that the applicant has obtained some form of health insurance that is appropriate to their living situation. Medical sharing plans such as Samaritan Medical Sharing are deemed appropriate in most cases. In the case of applicants who are neither US citizens nor residents in the USA, the requirement for health insurance is not applicable in cases where national governments provide care.
- h) If residing outside the USA, having available a place to return and reside (either a home owned by the missionary or a relative's home who has made a standing offer for providing housing).

### 2.2 Steps for a Missionary to Apply to SOCI

- 1) Speak with our Executive Director or another member of the board to determine if your vision and plans are in alignment with SOCI purposes and procedures. Perhaps review our documents and website to better understand our vision and practices.
- 2) Submit a written request using our Application Form outlining your vision and plan. Attach any materials you have prepared to give additional explanation. We have an affinity for missionaries whose plans are well thought-out and who can communicate their plans through written or video media.

# Servants of Christ International, Inc.

## Ministry Operating Handbook

- 3) Receive and read the “Ministry Operating Handbook” and if in agreement, sign the “Letter of Agreement” outlining the terms of service and limitations. This letter has been signed and filed by all missionaries including our board members.
- 4) Interview with at least two members of our board, in person if practical, or by video conference if we cannot meet in person. Please give us time to get to know you and to check with your references.
- 5) Provide evidence of a capability to raise needed financial support. Be prepared to provide names and emails of donors for verification purposes.
- 6) Receive the full approval of our board following reference checks by our staff, and (the final step) return the Acceptance and Contact form to SOCI. This will provide your Social Security number, bank and bank account information in order that we can transfer funds to you electronically. (If you email the Contact Form, please do not include your Social Security Number as email is not secure. Send the number to us by phone or text).

### 3 Financial Procedures

- 1) All funds coming into any program of the Servants of Christ must be processed through the SOCI bank account, currently at Chase Bank. In order for SOCI to issue a receipt of contribution for tax purposes, the funds must pass through the corporate account that is under the control of the board of directors of the ministry.

Your donors can contribute funds directly to your program two ways. They can mail a check to SOCI or they can make an online donation through the SOCI website.

All checks sent directly to SOCI must be payable to SOCI and not to the name of your program. The IRS also prefers that no personal names be written on the “memo” lines. Writing a “program name” is allowed; but writing on the envelope is preferred. Donations sent directly to SOCI receive both an immediate written “thank you” note, with a courtesy (pre-addressed envelope) and at year’s end, a receipt for income tax purposes from SOCI.

Your supporter can also make a donation online through the SOCI website at [servantsintl.org](http://servantsintl.org). Your donor can give a one-time donation without setting up a profile, or they can set up a profile to give on a regular basis. SOCI’s Financial Manager is very limited to the online giving information. This is deliberate as we want to protect the donors personal information. By clicking on the donate now button on the website, your donor follows the steps for setting up their profile.

Through the website, a donor can make an online donation using a credit card **or** ACH (Automated deduction) from their bank account. There are different online convenience fees associated with both of these options. These convenience fees are not assessed by SOCI. If a donor gives directly from their bank account, our online company (EpicPay) takes a 2.7% convenience fee plus \$ .20 for those credit card donations. If a donor gives directly from their bank account, EpicPay takes out

# Servants of Christ International, Inc.

## Ministry Operating Handbook

a .5% convenience fee plus \$ .20 for each ACH donation. These convenience fees are removed BEFORE the funds are sent to our bank account. For example, if a donor makes a \$50 credit card donation, the net amount to our bank account is \$48.45. If the donor makes a \$50 ACH donation, the net amount sent to our bank account is \$49.55.

If a donor gives using their credit card, it is usually 2 – 3 business days (Monday through Friday) before their donation is deposited into our bank account. For ACH donations, there is usually 3 – 5 business days (Monday through Friday) before their donation is deposited into our bank account. You will have to factor extra days if a holiday falls during that time period, or if the donor gives over the weekend.

If your donor is using a credit card and you notice that their donation is not in your account, it is quite possible that the donor has changed credit cards and they did not update their profile. The SOCI Financial Manager does not always get a notice when a donation has failed so please check your monthly report and contact your donor if their donation is missing. Likewise, if the donor is using their checking account and they enter the wrong account number, their donation will be rejected and SOCI's Financial Manager receives no information for safety and security reasons protecting the donor.

When a donor has had a change that impacts their profile, they have to make the change themselves on their profile. SOCI does not have their password, or information for updating the profile. If you send out newsletters or thank you's to your donors this is something you can remind them to be aware of.

When a donation is made online, the donor receives an emailed receipt from EpicPay. Online donations do not receive receipts from SOCI.

SOCI is not able to setup monthly donations for donors because they need to setup their profile with their personal information such as email and a password. Donors should never share their credit card/checking account information with SOCI for security purposes.

We encourage you to try out our online donation through our website. Just go to [servantsintl.org](http://servantsintl.org) and click on the “donate now” button. You can make a donation for as little as \$1.00. This will better help you understand how the system works which will help you better explain to your donor. Getting your donors to use the online system by setting up automatic donations monthly will better help you in receiving consistent donations and it makes it easier for all of your supporters regardless of the frequency they donate.

- 2) Sometimes a missionary may choose to open a “clearing account” on their own, to keep ministry funds coming from SOCI to their program separate from their own personal funds. This account is opened under their own Social Security number, as the funds coming out of SOCI corporate account to them are “theirs” once in their clearing account or in their personal account.

# Servants of Christ International, Inc.

## Ministry Operating Handbook

The key point with a 'clearing' account is that no deposit should ever be made into that account except for funds coming out of the corporate account. Do not let donors write checks to you and place them into your account – with two exceptions:

- a) if the donor does not wish to receive a receipt for tax purposes – e.g., for small cash donations (or if they wish to simply remain anonymous from our records)
  - b) if the funds coming are from some proceeds of a sale of material or services – some kind of fund-raiser perhaps. In this case, SOCI isn't going to issue a receipt anyway, so it is fine for them to pass funds directly to you (by check in your name, or via cash).
- 3) A written report of all contributions and disbursements for each program is produced and sent (via email) to each missionary each month. A summary report is reviewed by the board members each quarter. Each missionary will be informed of every transaction that involves a contribution to their program, who contributed, what was charged against their account, and all funds sent to them.
  - 4) Normally, all funds received during a month are transferred electronically to the missionary's bank account on the last day of the month. If the need arises, funds can be transferred earlier. Or, a balance may be left in the account upon request.
  - 5) The majority of funds coming through SOCI corporate account to the missionaries is categorized as "ministry expense." This means that funds were donated by a donor to SOCI, these funds were assigned to a program, and that missionary expensed the money "for the purpose of that ministry." Ministry expenses would include:
    - a) travel to and from a ministry location
    - b) cost of lodging and meals and transfers while at the ministry location
    - c) supplies used for the ministry, cell phone, computer, internet, etc.
    - d) fees paid to people for services at the ministry site

For "ministry expense" reimbursements, receipts must be submitted to the financial office. Some expenses are easy to receipt – air tickets purchased on a credit card, for instance. Others are often made without a clear receipt or with receipts in foreign currency. For these expenses, the solution is to make a detailed voucher (i.e., a homemade receipt) and post or email this to the SOCI office.

- 6) Be certain you understand that all funds distributed to you will be taxable income and reported to the IRS on a form 1098 at the end of the year – unless there are receipts (or vouchers) turned in to the SOCI financial office. It is not the responsibility of the financial office to remind or badger you to turn in those receipts.

As an independent contractor, the income reported on a form 1098 is subject to Federal, State, and Self-Employment taxes (this is for Social Security). There is no "matching portion" paid by SOCI on your behalf.



# Servants of Christ International, Inc.

## Ministry Operating Handbook

- 7) SOCI has a core value of attempting to keep all administrative costs to a minimum in order to maximize the amount of contributions that can be forwarded to your program. As of July 2018 our administrative fee is 5%, charged to all contributions regardless of program, purpose or size. Furthermore, any “convenience fee” charged by on-line giving services is made in addition to this fee.
- 8) Missionaries are responsible to maintain good relationships with their donors, using email, postcards, phone calls, and personal visits where appropriate. When a missionary grasps the concept of “ministering to the donors” – that by enlisting their partnership, you are elevating their stewardship (which is a part of discipleship) and thus you are helping them advance in Christian maturity. Missionaries who grasp this find that donor relations is simply part of their ministry – and these missionaries tend to maintain a more adequate level of support than those “who dread dealing with donors” and who do only sporadic communication to them.

A vital part of SOCI ministry is our faithfulness in sending acknowledgements to all donors with specifics as to their gift and its program application, plus we include a courtesy envelope to all who donate by mail. E-givers receive an email receipt from the electronic giving provider system .

At present, SOCI does NOT communicate in “newsletter” form to your donors, nor do we keep a master mailing list. We do produce a website for your program, and we have a paper tri-fold that introduces the ministry. You are welcome to produce whatever additional written information you find helpful, and may use the SOCI logo, letterhead, envelopes and courtesy envelopes that we provide to you.

- 9) SOCI also produces business cards to each missionary at no cost.
- 10) Funds for a missionary's program cannot be sub-divided by the office into various purposes. The monthly report shows donor's name, address, amount, but not any "sub-division." Missionaries can divide that out on their own.
  - a) As a policy, SOCI does not permit missionaries to offer "child sponsorships" to donors, for two reasons. One, we do not have the capability to account for which sponsors are giving to which children and which ones have missed a month, and Two, we have no way of verifying that funds designated for a particular child are in fact utilized for that child. Our answer to this situation is if a missionary desires to do sponsorships, it's time for them to obtain their own 501c3 so that they have a single entity both in the USA and overseas.

## 4 Accountability

- 1) Each missionary relates to SOCI through the Executive Director or through any member of the board. We also require each missionary to provide our board, their own personal contact information both in the field and back in their home country, the names and contact information of their personal accountability partners, and also a local ministry partner contact in the field in which they serve. We also need a “next

# Servants of Christ International, Inc.

## Ministry Operating Handbook

of kin” contact for all of those who travel.

It is required that all missionaries be diligent to maintain a healthy spiritual walk and be in authentic relationships where transparency and prayer support are provided. Every missionary must realize the value of this “team” and not be misled to think that the SOCI board can provide all that they need in terms of accountability.

- 2) SOCI typically holds an annual meeting in the fall. One of the actions the Board takes is to review the status of all Missionaries.
  - a) All Missionaries are instructed to submit an annual report either on paper, email, video, or on video conference. On occasion there is a mid-year report also.

These are minimal requests and should not be taken lightly by missionaries. Although we are all “independent contractors,” we are in fact a coalition of Christian workers and our mutual submission to these operating procedures is vital to the unity and effectiveness of the ministry.

Missionaries should see themselves as partners within the coalition and never as “customers” who are paying a fee for services. Further, recent changes in policy and “best practices” for 501c3 non-profit tax-exempt ministries, especially those who transfer significant funds outside the USA, require us to maintain more evidence that the funds we transfer (other than taxable income) are in fact used for charitable purposes.

- 3) Our hope and experience has been to maintain long-term relationships between the board and the missionaries. However, missionaries must be diligent to communicate with the board, to respond to emails or phone calls from the board members or the Executive Director or Financial Manager.

Failure to comply with instructions from the board, or to respond to communications from the board, will be grounds for termination of the Letter of Agreement.

- 4) Missionaries may voluntarily resign from SOCI and the board may also terminate a missionary’s relationship to SOCI by a simple majority vote of the board at any regular or called meeting including video conference or email conversation.  
(See the Letter of Agreement for details)

## 5 The SOCI Statement of Faith

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit.

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily

# **Servants of Christ International, Inc.**

## **Ministry Operating Handbook**

resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential. This salvation comes by the grace of God through faith placed in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life, using one's gifts, talents and skills for ministry to meet spiritual and human needs.

We hold that marriage is designed by God to be a union between one man and one woman and that sexual relations and co-habitations are limited to within marriage.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, who may have differing opinions in non-essential doctrines but are unified around this statement.

## **6 Charter Documents**

Once approved as a missionary, you are entitled to receive the following (at no cost to you):

1. Business Cards with your name, program, phone, email and SOCI mailing address and website (SOCI phone and email are on the website).
2. SOCI letterhead, business envelopes, courtesy envelopes.
3. General Brochure for SOCI (a few copies)
4. Articles of Incorporation and corporate by laws of SOCI.
5. IRS letter of determination of our 501c3 status
6. Colorado Sales Tax exemption permit
7. SOCI Contacts (all missionaries and board members)
8. Ministry Operating Handbook
9. Receipt for donation of items (non-cash donations)
10. SOCI's IRS Form 990 for previous year

# **Servants of Christ International, Inc. Ministry Operating Handbook**

11. Jim's document on 'Raising Support as an SOCI Missionary
12. A page on the SOCI website for your program

End of Document