

Missions Philosophy

A Position Paper of the CVCC Elders

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What constitutes “missions”? What should we support as missions? How do we do so? The conclusions in this paper may seem simple and even obvious, yet they are actually quite controversial in conversations about missions.

Definition

Missions is making disciples of all nations through planting churches by preaching the gospel (Matthew 28:18–20). Throughout the book of Acts we see people planting churches as the gospel is preached in each city. Missions is not simply making “converts” and recording decisions. Missions is not mercy ministry or social work. Missions is not administration (like teaching at a missionary kid’s school). These latter works can *support* church-planting work, but should not replace it.

Who should we support?

1. Church planting efforts. The main work of missions is to plant churches. As a church, one of our core values is to be “church-based”, and part of our church vision is to make disciples through church planting. Supporting missionaries more directly working in church planting most aligns with our church vision.
2. Those who reflect the character qualifications of an overseer (1 Timothy 3:1–8; Titus 1:5–9). If a man is a missionary planting a church, he should be qualified to be a pastor in the USA. We should not support someone overseas who we wouldn’t recognize as a pastor in America. If a woman is a missionary helping in a church-planting effort, as a female Christian leader, she should generally demonstrate the similar character qualities of an elder and demonstrate godly biblical womanhood.
3. Those who align with our church theologically. We are a Christian, Protestant, gospel-teaching, Reformed, Baptist church. Missionaries we support should believe the same gospel we do. “Reformed” means we believe that all things exist for the glory of God and that God is sovereign over salvation. We most align also with those who are planting Baptist churches, defined as holding to baptism of believers by immersion and congregational, elder-led government.
4. Those sent by a local church. Missionaries are sent not by mission boards but by churches. Even Paul was sent by a church (Acts 13:1–2)! Workers should be disciplined and held accountable by local churches. Those we support should be held accountable by churches that are similar to ours theologically and in ministry philosophy.

How do we support missionaries?

1. Generously. 3 John 5–8 encourages us to support missionaries very generously, since they go out for the sake of Christ’s name. This means we should work to support fewer missionaries more. While we can derive personal satisfaction by supporting 15 missionaries in 15 countries, it is probably not helpful to the missionaries. Spreading out our resources keeps us from being generous to *any* of the workers we support. If we support only 3 missionaries, we can use those funds from the other 12 to support those three heavily. This kind of generosity allows the missionaries to not have to worry about finances.
2. Strategically. We think it best to focus on a few places rather than many. This allows us to have more of a regular, long-term partnership with the missionaries. There is no direct biblical reference to this, but we think this strategy better helps us to pray for, give to, and send people to the places we do support. Supporting many places distracts our focus so that nobody really gets the support they deserve.