

GUIDE FOR LOCAL CHURCHES ON



Setting a Mission Budget



THE BIG IDEA

A church member confessed: “I find it difficult to pray for mission – my heart isn’t in it.” The mission strategist advised: “Make a large donation to any mission that catches your attention. Then you’ll begin to pray – because Jesus said: ‘Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also!’”

Cross-cultural and global mission should be an integral part of church life, including its finances. Churches need a policy on giving to missionaries¹ and mission projects to inspire their members to develop a principled approach to supporting cross-cultural and global mission.



TIPS & EXAMPLES

1. Although in Acts 11:27-30 specifically with gathering a collection for famine relief, this passage gives important pointers on missionary giving (compare Philippians 4:10-19).

Principles for giving:

- **Personal** – “each” person has a responsibility.
- **Proportionate** – “according to his/her own ability.” Give proportionately to the opportunity and the availability of funds. This implies that we should make sure part of our income is not tied to everyday needs. The incident of the widow in the Temple giving her last two coins (Luke 21:1-4) shows that there is also a place for abandonment in giving.
- **Planned** – “decided to provide help.” It wasn’t just an emotional response, it was a considered act of the will, and was based on policy. Paul advocated systematic giving (1 Corinthians 16:2).
- **Project-specific** – “to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea.” The famine was widespread, but they gave to the church in Judea, possibly because it had been persecuted and scattered and so was less able to fend for itself.
- **Prophetic** – the need was made known to the church at Antioch by prophetic revelation. The act of giving was also a prophetic statement – not just emotional,

but theological, stating something about God and about the church. Although the response was personal, the gift was sent through the church leaders, showing that it was a corporate matter.

- **Informed by Christ's Poverty** – Since Christ became poor to make believers rich, so Christians in plenty should provide for the needs of others (2 Corinthians 8:9, 13).

Bearing in mind these principles, local churches may **establish a financial [mission policy](#)** that takes into account the nature of their congregation, denomination and context.

2. Ways of handling mission income:

- **Total integration** – in this model the mission budget is a set proportion of the total church budget. It may be deducted at source and kept in a separate account or it may be kept in the general account.
- **Separate funding** – the mission budget is kept totally separate from the rest of the church finances and a separate budget is set.
- **Individual responses** – the church publicises mission needs and act as a channel for gifts, but has no specific budgetary programme.
- **Corporate responses** - this is a bigger version of the individual response model, where the church holds a special mission event or collection.
- **A mixed model** – a combination of all of the above; on top of a proportion of the full church budget, individuals can give extra designated gifts, and special offerings are occasionally collected.

3. Areas of world mission expenditure:

- **Mission personnel** – church members whom the church has chosen and sent; other missionaries and **mission agency** staff whom the church has chosen to support; those sent for training; church members who have gone out on their own initiative, but for whom the church feel some responsibility; and national believers in other countries where finance is a challenge and in “closed countries” where foreign missionaries are not permitted.
- **Mission agencies/projects** – through denominational agencies, where more can be done together rather than alone; specific interdenominational agencies the church supports specific “one off” projects.
- **Mission education and administration** – teaching materials on mission for all ages; visits to missionaries; **short-term mission trips**; special events; workshops/trainings; books/magazines for the church library; publicity; strategic planning.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

1. **“The Generosity Movement: Can it really benefit world missions?”** Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 9, Iss. 4, 2014. <http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Generosity-Movement.pdf>
2. Ellen Livingood. **“Supporting Home Staff: Should churches fund headquarters personnel?”** Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 9, Iss. 2, 2014. <http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Supporting-Home-Staff.pdf>
3. Ellen Livingood. **“Money Talk: A Church/Agency Discussion about Missions Financial Issues.”** Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 6, Iss. 5, 2011. <http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Money-Talk2.pdf>
4. Shelley Cochrane. **“Abundance and the Relationship between Scarcity and Choice.”** Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 5, Iss. 6, 2010. <http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Abundance.pdf>
5. Ellen Livingood. **“Financing the Task: Revisiting the Western Church’s Role in Funding Missions.”** Catalyst Services Postings, Vol. 2, Iss. 4, 2007. <http://catalystservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Finance.pdf>

ⁱ **Missionary/missionaries** - a person/family who has been commissioned by their sending church(es) and/or mission agency to be explicitly dedicated to the work of cross-cultural ministry. It indicates someone who is gifted, set apart and trained/prepared for cross-cultural service, and so serves a particular role in the global Body of Christ. While every follower of Jesus is called to be His witness wherever they are, some are specifically lead to cross cultural and geographical boundaries to share the gospel with those who could otherwise not comprehend its message.