

Funding Strategy Factors

Missions Budget Factors & Categories from Real Churches

Missions pastors responded to a survey of how they allocated missions funds. This is a categorization of their responses.

Primary Factors Governing Investment of Missions Dollars:	*	%
Relationship – e.g. member, functioning attender, denomination, partnership, communication with our church	19	73%
Target Audience or Location of Ministry – e.g. overseas, local, cross-cultural, unreached or least reached, non-English speakers	14	54%
Ministry Task or Type of result – e.g. church planting, support, community transformation	12	46%
Missionary Qualifications – skills, education, experience, preparation, personal qualities, plan, accountability, personal vision	8	31%
Secondary Factors Governing Investment of Missions Dollars:		
Church purpose , philosophy, vision, church leadership direction & decisions	5	19%
Strategic Focus/Defined Priorities – e.g. a church approved project or adopted people group	4	15%
Prayer/God's Guidance	3	12%
Help for our church – educate, mobilize, opportunities for congregational involvement	2	8%
Other – areas of greater need, productivity (# conversions), supporting nationals, sending organization, partnerships with indigenous church, Be in top 5 churches supporting a mission	9	35%
* Number of the 26 entries that listed this factor one or more times		

Commentary on the above:

Relationships play a higher role even than indicated in formal policies. Church leaders feel obligated to support their own people who go into ministry, even if they have uncertainties about the ministry and even the quality of the people. And the people in the pew have a similar sense of expectation.

Target audience and ministry task are the major objective factors. Many policies specify what proportion of the missions budget is to be spent cross-culturally. Church planting and evangelism have been the historic priorities. There has long been a sense that English speakers have much greater opportunity and thus missions is directed primarily to those with fewer opportunities and resources. This is changing, however, as more kinds of ministry are considered missions and a common understanding of missions is disappearing.

Missionary qualifications make up the last item in the primary factors list. Whether it is listed or even consciously considered, the quality of the individual has a huge impact on allocation of support. Those individuals who stand out because of godliness, character, or competence will be preferred for support.

Trends are also occurring among the secondary factors.

More churches are putting higher priority and commitment on a few major projects such as adopting a people group. Churches are also trying to streamline their budgets, supporting

individuals and projects they know and identify with to a greater degree while shedding commitments that have waned in knowledge and popularity.

There is an increasing awareness of the multi-cultural, multi-national nature of missions and a desire to find key roles in multi-organization efforts and to tie into partnerships with indigenous ministries and multi-agency projects.

In the relationships category, churches are looking for projects and organizations that will help build back into the church – vision, opportunities for involvement, mobilization of people.

There is often considerable serendipity in support decisions. This, of course, does not show up in documents.

Source: Email Survey of Missions Pastors, October, 2005
Analysis of information from 26 entries of 31 respondents