

## Values – What Are They?

By David Mays

Values answer the “*what is most important?*” question.

Values are ideas, principles, and concepts that guide us in decision-making and problem solving.

**Operational (actual) values** are those principles that most influence your decisions for dollars, time, prayer, and attention. Think about how you have come to missions decisions up until now. What are 2 or 3 of your church’s *operational values*?

**Aspirational values** are those that leaders seek to inculcate into the congregation and ministry. These are principles you would like to guide you and your congregation in decision-making and problem solving. What might be 2 or 3 values you would like to inculcate in your congregation (and maybe your leadership)?

**Core values** guide our behaviors, even when it costs us dearly.

Can you identify any core values for your missions ministry? Values that guide decisions, *no matter what*?

Values are the principles that help you make decisions and solve problems, especially when

- There are multiple possibilities
- Situations offer potential conflict
- Ethics are a consideration

Example values (guidelines or priorities) for investing missions finances include:

- Prayer and God’s subjective guidance
- Flexibility; specify as few rules as possible; decide on a case-by-case basis
- Our movement or denomination
- Pastoral direction or the guidance of another leader
- Relationship to our church, e.g. supporting first our own people, or missionaries related to or friends of key church leaders
- Quality of the missionary – call, competence, character, charisma, experience, etc.
- Type of ministry, such as evangelism or church planting or supporting nationals
- Location of ministry, such as our community or inner city or “overseas,” a particular country or continent
- Category of people such as Muslims, Kazaks, the unreached, or some other identified group
- Partnerships. Give preference to projects, organizations, and people where we can be involved with them, have a say, and work together.
- Preserve the peace. Don’t rock the boat
- Bang for the buck. Invest where we can accomplish the most for the amount invested.
- Maximize dollars to ministry and minimize internal expenses.
- Invest on many fronts and giving people many choices for prayer and support.
- Concentrate finances on a few people or projects. Work in depth with them and communicate it well.
- Involve the maximum number of our people. Where can we send people on missions trips or get them involved in hands-on ministry at home?
- Invest in what is best for our congregation. What will best help our congregation grow or help disciple our people?
- Serendipity. Support the compelling people who happen to show up when funds are available.

As you look at the past financial decisions of your missions team, what 2 or 3 (*operational*) values do you see that have heavily influenced the decision?

What (*aspirational*) values would you like to see influencing this process?