

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?