

Why missions committees are sometimes only half-right!

I really do appreciate and respect many missions committees in local churches. We had one of the best in the world at The Chapel in Akron, and they helped us grow missions giving and interest in good ways.

But they thought “salt-water missions” more than we should have; in other words, local missions was rather secondary.

And after coaching more than 150 churches, I think that is a normalcy. People who care about world evangelism often do not worry so much about the people across the street from the church building, or the local rescue mission, or the pregnancy services that try to share the gospel and save lives.

So — duh! — we created a local evangelism and missions team of four or five to work with the pastor who had evangelism in his folder and to workk to improve the budget for needs down the street from the church building.

Because people will mark offerings for missions, but not much for local evangelism, we decided to keep the heading “missions” as one of the three or four headings on the offering envelopes and budget, and to designate that something like 18 or 20% of the missions giving would go to local. It worked well.

And now I advocate this all the time, albeit without a lot of success. But I still think for sure it is best.

I know that “Bloom where you are planted” does not come from the Bible, but I get the idea. We owe a lot of care to the town or village or city where we are located. And people there are just as lost spiritually as some in the lands across the salt water.

One thing that helped people give to and pray for missions was the short “living church” moment that was a part of almost every worship service. The schedule we formed: first Sunday, communion....second Sunday, groups (Sunday and home) ... third Sunday, missions, local or overseas.... fourth Sunday of the month, finances. As a part of the worship set, there would be only two-three minutes for an update, often an interview with someone possessing a bias of joy for that area. The staff member holds the microphone because he or she is responsible for the time.

(If you ever allowed the mic to be taken our of your hand, you owed the staff a pizza at the next Tuesday staff meeting. Talk about serious crimes!)

All this in response to the question about how to increase missions giving.