

Help! Where Do We Start?

How did you end up on the mission committee of your church? Was it your idea or did someone ask you to do it? What do you do with all the mail that we get asking for money? Do you know why you are supporting some of those missionaries? Where do we get answers?

Mission committees often feel overwhelmed with their task. Many members of the committee have no previous experience with this the very complex and challenging field of mission. They feel completely unqualified to make decisions and lead the congregation in mission.

The essays that follow here are designed to help your mission committee. However, they will no simplify the process. In fact, they will probably raise issues that never occurred to you. But you should always remember that all mission committees struggle with the same issues. So here are some thoughts on how to start in a way that is manageable.

- 1) Make prayer and learning about mission a regular part of your committee's work. You could read and discuss one of these essays at each meeting.
- 2) Don't try to fix everything right away. Do one thing at a time. For example, track the mission giving in your church for the last five years. Has it gone up or down in total dollars? Has it increased or decreased as a percentage of the total budget? If your committee can simply get this information before the session and the congregation, a significant step will have been taken.
- 3) Ask your session to set a goal for mission giving as a percent of the total budget. Most churches give less than 10% of their budget for mission. Maybe your session would set a goal of an additional percent to mission each year for five years. (An aside: don't let someone suggest that 10% is the appropriate level because it is a tithe of the church budget. This is a misuse of "tithe." There is no Biblical justification for 10% as normative for churches in mission giving.)

Be patient! This is a long term project. If your committee regularly takes another small step, soon you will see a significant difference.