

How to Select the Right Mission Partner for Your Church

If you're a ministry leader, you likely get the request often. It's an understandable—and often legitimate—request. Most church leaders field a lot of requests from ministries wanting to be mission partners. I can't blame them. If you believe in your ministry, then you should want as many mission partners as possible. Churches are often the first place people seek help, and I understand the desire to raise a lot of support.

The Internet age makes it much easier for independent missions, movements, and ministries to raise funding, as well as gain access to the decision-makers in churches. Independent works are on the rise. Expect these types of requests to continue and to increase in number.

How do you begin to select a mission partner with so many out there? What do you say when you're inundated with requests? I've created a six-part checklist to help our church begin the decision process.

We start by answering three questions.

1. Can we put boots on the ground? Unless we can actually send our people to the field, then we are reluctant to form a partnership.
2. Can we form a long-term partnership? While a one-time, one-week trip may be legitimate, we prefer to form partnerships that last years, if not generations.
3. Can we fund them? We want to send our people and our money. We desire to be invested both ways.

If we can answer each of these questions affirmatively, we then ask for three items from the potential mission partner if we want to continue the process. These items are requirements. If a potential mission partner cannot provide these items, we will not form a partnership.

1. *Doctrine.* The first requirement (and in my view the most important), is a formal doctrinal statement. If a group cannot tell you what they believe, then you have no business partnering with them. Some churches may want narrow doctrinal parameters. Our church has broader doctrinal parameters (we partner with people outside of our denomination). However, I *must* know what you believe before I ask my church to send people, money, and time to support your work.
2. *Vision.* The second requirement is a vision statement or some written document that details the future work of the ministry. If a group cannot tell you where they are going, then you shouldn't get on board.
3. *Financial Viability.* The third requirement is financial statements. Understandably, some organizations are small. But they should still show you something that reveals their financial viability. If a large organization is not willing to send you basic financial statements (at least an income statement), then they are hiding something. Don't partner with them.

In my experience, the best mission partners are eager to share these three requirements. Why?

What they believe drives their mission. Their vision is big and excites them. And they have nothing to hide financially.

While this six-part checklist is not comprehensive, it's a way to filter the vast majority of requests that come your way, and you can eliminate most requests without sounding harsh with a quick "no." It will also help highlight those ministries that are the best fit for your congregation.

> [Read more from Sam.](#)
