

Why Mission?

Imperative #5: Understanding Our Local and Global Responsibility.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

Why Do We Call Our Church a "Mission?"

You will hear it often said, "Our church is a MISSION, with a local and global responsibility." We are not simply a church that supports missionaries – we do, of course – but we ARE a mission. God's plan for His church was to display the excellencies of His grace as a platform for bringing the message of redemption to a lost world. Regarding world evangelization, someone has well noted, "The church is God's Plan A; and He has no Plan B!"

We are a mission. We should apply to our church the same criteria we apply to any other faith mission we would support. Are we fulfilling God's call as a church? Are we doing His work, in His way, with His power, for His glory? Are we effective? What is our plan for advancing the Kingdom of Christ in our local community of Fort Collins and around the world? In other words, what are we doing to "... share His heart for people?"

What Are Our Local Mission Priorities and Strategy?

Our church takes seriously our responsibility for reaching our own neighborhood. We must not delegate to others our evangelistic responsibility. Increasingly, we want our church to grow as a healthy, redemptive model of the kingdom of Christ, and to expand our outward focus to the lost and dying community in which we are planted.

1. Core Ministries – Training to equip members to become partners in ministry.

Led or stewarded by pastoral staff, Christ Center offers a full range of ministries in obedience to the five imperatives of Christ: Worship, Prayer, the Word, Community and Mission. We desire to celebrate our Savior, and to equip His saints for ministry. And in our worship and community events, seekers are welcome. Together we can love them to Jesus.

2. Venture Ministries – Member initiated / member led ministries targeting a people group, a felt need, or project.

We encourage the risk-taking faith of our members as they dare to obey the Spirit in developing new and specialized ministries. For instance, some may want to explore evangelistic home Bible studies, or mentoring "at-risk" kids. If you have an innovative idea for a ministry, our pastors will help you explore it.

3. Personal Influence – Building relationships with the un-churched and dis-churched for spiritual impact.

We believe "friendship evangelism" is the most effective in our day (1 Peter 3:15). Our purpose is to train and encourage each of us to focus outwardly – to view all our primary relational environments as possible witnessing opportunities: (1) Family, (2) Work, (3) Education, (4) Recreation, and (5) Civic involvement.

4. City-Wide Impact – Networking with other members of the "City Church" to lift up Christ in Fort Collins.

We believe Jesus Christ is the true "Pastor" of a city-wide church in Fort Collins – made up of many redeemed congregations, led by shepherds He has called, anointed and placed here. We believe Jesus is pleased when all His saints work together in unity and love to serve the spiritual needs of this city. No church can reach our town alone. We need each other. So we are a giving, uniting, and serving church.

What Are Our Global Mission Priorities and Strategy?

Led by the Global Impact Council, Christ Center has as a primary strength the sending and supporting of missionaries around the world. We select our "deputies" carefully and prayerfully to represent our church in the global arena. Short-term missions has also supplemented this sustained effort to reach the world with the gospel.

In our "World Missions Ministry Operational Guidelines," we have state our priorities. These allow us to make consistent decisions which shape our efforts to advance the Great Commission – world evangelization. Here are six important priorities which can guide decision making, without limiting our freedom of exceptional choices:

- 1. The Trans-Cultural Priority:** We prefer to give the greater part of our budgeted and Faith-Promise missions support to foreign mission efforts targeting unreached people groups. To keep this focus, our Global Impact Council limits commitment to various para-church type "home missions" operating in the western culture of America. (International Student Incorporated is an obvious exception.)
- 2. The Church Planting Priority:** We prefer investing resources in missionary efforts focused on planting viable, self-sustaining, indigenous-led churches. The church planting focus is a higher priority than supporting missions which primarily focus on medical, relief or educational objectives. Evangelistic and medical missionary effort, for instance, must be in tandem with our desire to see the fruit of evangelism affirmed and nurtured within the context of local churches. Clear connection between these other missionary objectives and the propagation of local churches is considered in making support decisions.
- 3. The Indigenous Priority:** We prefer to support missionary efforts which help establish and strengthen local, indigenous churches of nationals through evangelism, training, translation and leadership development over works which major in social, medical, or technological development. The reason for this is that the role of the American missionary is changing. It is affected by the vacillating influence of our nation in international affairs. We must redouble efforts to aid the health and stability of national church movements which may at any moment be required to survive and advance without the benefit of traditional "foreign" (i.e., American) missionaries.
- 4. The Individual Priority:** We prefer to direct our financial support to individual missionaries rather than simply supporting missions organizations in general. This allows for an intimate, personal relationship. We get to know and love our missionaries, understanding their burdens and needs. The essence of the principle of "deputation" is that we are deputizing someone to minister trans-culturally on our behalf to help us fulfill the great commission to reach the whole world. To support individuals more easily allows for that glorious love link and mutual prayer burden which has been the backbone of our missionary partnership.
- 5. The Member Priority:** We prefer missionary candidates from within our church family over those requesting support from outside our immediate fellowship. Obviously, they are our first-line responsibility. Our church can act as a sending agent. Most often our members will be associated with an established agency.
- 6. The Long-Term Priority:** We prefer to give committed support to missionaries who intend to serve for longer periods of time, such as a full four-year term over short-term and summer missionaries. We value the short-term missionary activities ("pre-missions") because it allows for growth in the individual serving, enabling them to be come "world Christians." However, long-term missionaries generally impact their field to a greater extent because they break the cultural barriers and build long-term, effective relationships.

*As we become more fully devoted to Jesus Christ,
our mission is to share the heart of Jesus for people – all people!
Lost people! "Dis-churched" people! People of familiar and foreign tongue!*