



### **Episode 021: How to Build Up a Missions Committee Show Notes**

Doug Christgau has served as a mission pastor for over 30 years, he is a presenter for the Perspectives course, and he has personally led over 75 short term mission teams. He currently serves as the Pastor of Outreach at Valley Community Baptist Church in Avon, Connecticut.

#### ***Could you please share with us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be passionate about missions?***

- I had the blessing of being raised in a very missions-focused church in Queens, New York City. They gave 50% of their money to missions.
- As a child, I understood my own salvation in Grade 5 and even from that time, I had a global perspective on my faith and was concerned about the rest of the world.
- I applied as a Christian educator at a church. When I started this position in 1985 I was also asked to run the missions program and I said yes.

#### ***Why is it important for churches to be engaged in global missions?***

- First of all, it's a Biblical mandate. World outreach is the message of Scripture.
- It's healthy for a church to look outward. The more they look inward, the more they are inclined to lose their vitality.
- Missions focus is important for a church because it tells the younger portion of your congregation that you are not ethno-centric and you're concerned about the Majority World.

#### ***What are some of the strategies you've used to engage churches for missions?***

- Our concern for God's purposes is driven by relationships – our relationship with God but also relationships with other people.
- The driving force for a mission program is how well the individual members of a congregation are relating to the church's missionaries.
- I encourage each family to take interest in 1 missionary family, to pray for them.
- Our church has about 3,000 people and we have 1,300 people who have said that they will pray for one particular missionary.



- Don't use the phrase "Pray for our missionaries." It is past the capacity of the individuals of the church. Rather we say, choose one missionary and pray for them. Choose a missionary who serves in a country that interests you or does something similar to what you do. If you're a teacher, pray for someone serving as a teacher overseas.

***How have you seen people engage with their missionary family?***

- When missionaries come to our church to visit, we set up a series of events that are designed to make it easy for prayer partners to spend time with their missionaries.
- Whatever services the missionary might need while they are on home assignment, we call upon the missionary prayer partners to provide those services.
- We arrange almost all of our short term trips to visit the missionaries that we support. We call on the prayer partners to go on these short term mission trips.

***How many missionaries are in your missionary family supported by your church?***

- We have a list of about 40 missionaries. That's the same number that we had 12 years ago when I started at this church.
- We manage carefully the adding and subtracting of missionaries from our support.
- It's hard to say how many missionaries a church can support based on size, but smaller churches could probably aim for 10-12, while larger churches could manage about 25.
- I don't think any church should have over 50 missionaries that they support.

***Should every church have a mission committee?***

- Yes, every church should have a group of people who are committed to communicating missions to the larger congregation.

***What kind of people are you looking to include in a mission committee?***

- People who are convicted that the Bible really teaches that the gospel is for the whole world and believes strongly in the Great Commission.
- People that are healthy in their church involvement. The worst thing you can do is get a bunch of mission fanatics that think that missions is the most important ministry.
- There also needs to be a thoughtful strategy about what aspect of world outreach they want to tackle. You need to choose priorities for the church.



***What are some of the pillars of setting a direction for a mission committee?***

- It needs to represent the personal convictions of the church leadership.

***How many stories or themes or places should a church manage in their mission strategy?***

- In churches that I have served in, the most I have worked with is 8 priorities and even that is large.
- There are all kinds of good things to do, but you must decide what are the best things for our congregation.
- Listen to our podcast with Ellen Livingood ([www.globalmissionspodcast.com/012](http://www.globalmissionspodcast.com/012)) to learn more about creating a mission strategy for your church.

***How would you recommend a church begin to narrow their priorities to a manageable number?***

- In my case, I conducted a survey.
- We released several missionaries over a period of time, in a caring way, in order to focus on what was best, not what was good.
- You almost always need to reduce the number of missionaries the church supports.
- As you do this, you will see that you are more effective as you narrow your focus and priorities.

***What are some pitfalls that mission committees face?***

- The biggest one is for the mission team to be inwardly focused – they are so convinced that what they are doing is right and important that they forget about the rest of the church body.
- Lacking prayer – we get so involved with the administrative side of things, we often forget to stop and pray for missions.
- Don't just staff with older people – you need to continually be reaching out to the younger people in your congregation. Aim for the younger boomers and they millennials. It's easy to focus on the older people as they are more readily interested.

***What is the most important thing you'd want to say to mission committees and churches?***

- Make sure your list of missionaries and priorities is manageable. When your list is too long, you aren't investing wisely. You aren't giving enough money to have an impact.
- You need to build a strategy and inform the missionary families of what that strategy is.
- We have an annual report process that helps us to assess whether the missionaries we support are doing strategic things.

***What is the relationship between the mission team and the pastor and elders?***

- It should involve consistent communication between the committee and the church leadership.



***Do you have any particular advice in regards to looking after missionaries while they are on home service?***

- Know when your missionaries are coming home. Someone on the mission committee should be responding in a timely manner with suggested dates to get them into the church. Don't let your missionaries feel forgotten!
- You want to involve them in as many aspects of the church life as possible. They might not get time during the Sunday morning service, but involve them in small groups, and other aspects of church life. Get creative!

***If our listeners wanted to learn more about improving their mission committee or starting a mission committee, are there resources you can recommend?***

- Contact Doug Christgau at [dchristgau@valleycommunity.cc](mailto:dchristgau@valleycommunity.cc)
- Kingdom Advancement 101
- [SOE in Short Term Missions](#)
- [MissioNexus](#)
- [Perspectives](#)

***How might our listeners contact you?***

- Contact Doug Christgau at [dchristgau@valleycommunity.cc](mailto:dchristgau@valleycommunity.cc)

