

What is the Best Way to Fund Missions in Our Church?

David Mays

Periodically church leaders ask questions along these lines:

- How are churches funding missions these days?
- Is Faith Promise the best way to fund missions or has it outlived its usefulness?
- Do people prefer to give to a missions fund or to specific missions opportunities?
- Can you tell me of any churches that have moved from Faith Promise to a unified budget?

There are many ways to fund missions in the church (see [Stuff](#) vol. I, p. 44 for examples), but most churches have either a unified budget with a line item for missions or a separate budget for missions funded by designated gifts from the congregation. The most common form of separate budget is some version of [Faith Promise](#).^{*} Faith Promise is a means of supporting missions whereby individuals commit to give a projected amount to the missions budget providing God makes it possible.

Here is a paraphrase of a response I sent in answer to one of the above questions:

Faith Promise works very well where:

1. The top church leaders have a very strong desire to maximize the church's impact on the world. They are eager for the church to give as much as possible to missions.
2. Church leaders, along with the Missions Team, plan carefully well in advance to thoroughly communicate to the people what Faith Promise is (and isn't), how it works, and their whole-hearted support for it. [Motivation is quickly undermined if anyone in leadership doesn't understand it or doesn't support it.]
3. The people clearly understand what it is, why it is important, how it works, what they are expected to do, and that church leaders have a passion for it. And they are willing to trust God and respond to his provision.
4. The leaders consistently pray for it.
5. The leaders make it a major emphasis from the pulpit, taking time to explain and promote it over several weeks, informing the congregation of progress, and celebrating results.
6. Testimonials are given throughout the year how people have sacrificed in order to give more to missions and how God has surprisingly helped people with unanticipated funds which they gave to missions.

It also works best where:

1. The church is an older, established, more traditional church with the building paid off and little debt to compete for funding.
2. The congregation consists of older, more established Christians who expect to give heartily and

understand and support missions.

A unified budget may work better where:

1. The leaders support missions, but it is one of many important programs (vs. a primary purpose).
2. The church is young or has substantial debt. A unified budget assures that missions will have predictable support.
3. Congregation members are young in the faith and do not have the training to understand missions and traditional missionary support or have not developed the discipline of giving.
4. The congregation members are young in age, consumer in style, in debt, and have little discretionary funds to give.
5. Talk about money and giving is minimized in the church.
6. The church has highly timed, programmed, and scheduled services where there is little time to talk about missions.

Where leaders and many in the congregation are committed to accomplishing all they can for Christ in the world, Faith Promise is a wonderful vehicle God uses to provide more funding than anyone could imagine in advance. When it becomes routine, ho-hum, or a lower priority, then it works no better than any other method, except for the already committed.

Think with me.

- Would you say that missions is part of the overriding purpose, one of several important priorities, or a sideline issue for the key leaders in your church?
- What do you think it should be? How would you justify your answer?
- What method does your church use to fund missions? How do you think it could be improved?
- Do you think your church needs to focus more on raising and investing funds or on getting people connected to hands-on ministry in missions? Or something else?

*[Email me](#) for more information on Faith Promise.

