

## West Hills Community Philosophy of Missions

At West Hills, missions is an extension of the work that Jesus gave us as a local community of believers (Matt. 28:18-20). We are a people who are about seeing the gospel go forth to those who are lost and showing the mercy of God to people everywhere, be they down the street or across the globe.

Because God's mission is a Spirit led activity, our philosophy is defined by key values that help us discern projects, opportunities and activities in which to participate. The following are the key values that we use to evaluate opportunities that will be embraced by the West Hills Community through sending people, providing funds / resources or promoting / supporting organizationally.

- Great Commission Centered: Jesus called his followers to make disciples as they are going throughout the world (Matt. 28:18-20). All mission activities at West Hills must be connected to the goal of making Jesus followers who are able to make Jesus followers.
- Spirit Led: because missions is a work of God, we strive to be sensitive to the Spirit's leading as we send people, support projects and partner in ministry.
- Local Church Focused: because the church is the primary organism that God works through in making disciples and expressing His kingdom, we seek to support projects and works that are connected to the local church in a given geography. This may take the form of helping to establish and strengthen the local church where there is not a strong witness for Christ.
- Strategic Investment: we seek to be good stewards of God's resources. The resources God has given the church include people with unique gifts and calling, finances, infrastructure, ability of the body to come together around a need, etc. Because we desire to be good stewards, we recognize that we cannot participate in every mission opportunity and therefore are selective concerning which projects and activities we connect with.
- Qualified People: We send qualified people for the work of ministry--qualified means that we seek to send growing Christians with demonstrated gifts / skills to the right opportunity for them, West Hills and the local church. We will not participate in projects or opportunities where one of these critical elements is missing.
- Connected People: We give preference to people and projects having a direct relationship with West Hills or one of its networks.
- Time-bound: We prefer to partner with opportunities that have a defined commitment period that can be reviewed and renewed as appropriate.
- Worldwide: We view missions as encompassing local, regional and international activities and are committed to carrying out the Great Commission in all three spheres. Although we have a high view of missions in these three spheres, we prefer to focus on the following types of activities:
  - Local: we prefer to work through our local church body and community groups as they carry out the work of the ministry in the areas in which God has given them influence.
  - Regional: we prefer to work through the Acts 29 / Norcal network to partner with local churches in North America.
  - International: we prefer to work with organizations and projects that directly support the establishment / strengthening of and are connected with where possible the local church.

- Mercy and Community Development: We view mercy and community development as important expressions of the gospel. We give preference to projects and activities that connect mercy and community development with the establishment of or ministry of the local church.
- Adaptable: We recognize that 20<sup>th</sup> century assumptions about missions need to be adapted to the time in which we live. This means that we continually reassess such questions of who should we send, how long they should stay and how they steward their time both in the field and on home assignment.
- Kingdom Entrepreneurship: we promote, partner with and release our congregation to carry out kingdom work that is not necessarily supervised or financially supported by West Hills.
- Creative Stewardship: although missions often faces on the significant need for financial support, we recognize that the West Hills Community has many resources that can be used for the Kingdom. These resources are not limited to financial, but include people, expertise, processes, equipment and many other things that may be strategically used to carry out the Jesus' mission in our local area, region or world. We are creative and open handed with these resources.