



The Cooperative Program: A Missions Impact Multiplier

As a steward of your church's finances and missions giving, your strongest desire is to assure that your church's giving makes the most impact in the Kingdom of Heaven. Giving to missions is an investment in the Kingdom of Heaven.

What would the Cooperative Program look like if presented as an investment? It would show that the Cooperative Program (CP) is a diversified missions investment portfolio that gives your church a global reach and multiplied impact.

Why is the Cooperative Program a sound missions-funding vehicle that meets your church's fiduciary requirements?

The prudent-person rule

"The sensible person's wisdom is to consider his way" (Prov. 14:8).

A staple of sound investing is the *prudent-person rule*. As *Investopedia* says, this investment principle "is used to restrict the choices of the financial manager of an account to the types of investments that a person seeking reasonable income and preservation of capital might buy for his or her own portfolio"

If you are going to invest your church's financial resources in the Kingdom of Heaven, you should exercise reasonable means to assure there is a return on your church's investment, from a missions standpoint. While your church is not investing in missions as a means to make a profit, you would, no doubt, want to see your investment multiply impact. The prudent-person principle is wise, and it is based on some sound advice from the Bible. Other passages of Scriptures echo this instruction:

- The Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30)
- The Wise and Foolish Builders (Matt 7:24-27)



- The Man Who Builds a Tower (Luke 14:28)
- Cast Your Bread Upon the Waters (Eccl. 11)

Since 1925, Southern Baptists have leveraged the biblical principle of stewardship prudence with great impact. The Cooperative Program is the financial fuel for reaching every person for Jesus Christ, in every town, every city, every state and every nation!

A strategy with conservative stability

Sound investors do not simply throw money into every new idea. Instead they seek to ensure stability in their investment portfolio. When cooperating churches include CP giving in their church budgets, a reliable stream of income is made available to provide a stable base for the thoroughly-vetted missions the church supports. The Cooperative Program provides the stability needed to assure supported missionaries and ministry leaders around the world are freed from the time-intensive task of fundraising, allowing them to focus on ministry instead of development.

The Cooperative Program supports a diversified collection of ministries that reach and serve people at every level. Each ministry is overseen by Southern Baptist church leaders who serve on boards or as trustees, holding leaders accountable to their missional responsibilities.

An aggressive missions multiplier funding strategy

Conservative investments are the foundation of a sound portfolio, but growth-oriented investors want more than just stability. They want increase. Southern Baptists have an aggressive strategy for funding global missions.

Another “*prudent-person*” aspect of the Cooperative Program missions culture is that churches themselves take up the responsibility of fundraising for the Cooperative Program *and* the convention’s designated offerings such as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO), and the Annie Armstrong



Easter Offering (AAEO). Because the Cooperative Program covers the administrative costs of managing and promoting designated offerings, 100 percent of these funds can go straight to the mission fields all over the world. This allows ministries that are supported by the Cooperative Program to multiply their impact in engaging the world with the Gospel.

Instead of the time and money-intensive mission society fundraising used by other organizations, our churches make raising support on behalf of our missionaries their task. This has been our consistent culture of generosity.

This strategy means churches are not constantly inundated with appeals for money and requests for access to their pulpits for fundraising appeals. This also helps our churches maintain focus on ministry instead of fundraising. It's an effective strategy, and it has worked for nearly a century.

Every Southern Baptist ministry that receives funds from the Cooperative Program is able to leverage maximum impact for special offerings that increase their missional impact. *Each of these ministries has a proven track record for biblically-sound Gospel ministry.*

Look at the impact of the SBC missions portfolio when multiplied by the Cooperative Program:

- Unreached people groups are reached by IMB Missionaries on the field who are paid salaries through Cooperative Program funds. This means they are able to use LMCO money strictly for ministry projects.
- The North American Mission Board (NAMB) reports that mega cities and towns of all sizes are able to reach new people with the Good News through church multiplication. Church planters are discovered, assessed, trained and coached because of CP support. Many ethnic churches would not be able to function without supplemental support from the CP.



- A new generation of leaders are educated and trained through Baptist colleges/universities and the six SBC seminaries. Every dollar these schools receive from the CP is a dollar less that has to be paid by students, thus reducing student debt.
- The Cooperative Program makes it possible to have a ministry profile on college campuses and at universities all over the United States, through Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM). The Cooperative Program provides funds for full and part-time ministry leaders who reach students at a critical time of their life development. Because of the Cooperative Program support, future leaders of the world are being reached with the life-transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Comprehensive ministries to children, youth, young and senior adults are enhanced by the Cooperative Program because the need to raise administrative costs is reduced.
- Southern Baptists are able to engage culture by applying biblical principles to social and moral problems while promoting religious liberty through the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. The Cooperative Program funds help Southern Baptists maintain a strong voice for the church and help raise awareness of the needs of the unborn and broken people.
- Physical needs are met for people who are impacted by disaster because Southern Baptist Disaster Relief units are able to maintain readiness through the Cooperative Program support. Because of the Cooperative Program, money donated in times of disaster are strictly used for relief efforts and not for administration and fundraising promotions.
- One hundred percent of SBC Global Hunger Funds are leveraged to feed people, and zero money given to hunger relief is used for administration or promotion because the Cooperative Program covers administrative expenses.

For nearly 100 years, Southern Baptists have been investing in the Kingdom of Heaven by giving through the Cooperative Program. Imagine if every Southern Baptist church would take a fresh look at the level of support they give to the Cooperative Program mission's portfolio. It would have a great impact. Here are a few steps to start.



- Cultivate the culture of cooperative missions generosity in your church
- Review your church's current and previous Cooperative Program giving and evaluate how your church prioritizes cooperative giving
- Increase Cooperative Program allocations in your church's budget
- Include Cooperative Program advocacy in church missions education
- Recruit individuals to be Cooperative Program Ambassadors in your church
- Involve next generational leaders in the process of planning missions giving
- Get involved in the life of our convention; take leadership and help shape our collective future