

# Who is a Missionary?

(Avoiding two extremes)

	<u>Every Christian</u>	<u>Missionary</u>	<u>Evangelists Only</u>
DEFINITION	Everyone involved in the outworking of the Great Commission is a missionary.	A missionary is a God-called, local church appointed, vocational Christian worker who is sent out from a local church to facilitate the planting of New Testament churches.	A missionary must be a preacher with the gift of the evangelist who is directly involved in church planting.
RATIONALE	Since missions is the outworking of the Great Commission, a missionary is anyone involved in that process.	Since the aim of missions is the planting of churches, all legitimate missionary activity must contribute to that ultimate goal, whether directly through a preaching evangelist or indirectly through a specialized team member or pioneering sower.	Since the aim of missions is the planting of churches, the only legitimate missionaries are those who directly plant churches as preaching and teaching evangelists. No other individuals or institutions should receive mission funds.
CRITIQUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to recognize the distinction between missionary work and the obligations of every Christian</li> <li>• Fails to recognize the role of the local church in sending God-called laborers to specific fields</li> <li>• Fails to define a vocational missionary</li> <li>• Fails to account for a missionary calling</li> <li>• Undermines the vocational missionary by failing to distinguish his high calling and role</li> <li>• Fails to recognize that all Christian service, whether vocational or volunteer, local or international, is connected to the Great Commission</li> <li>• Fails by justifying evangelism as an end goal</li> <li>• Fails by legitimizing unaccountable missionary work, institutionalism, and humanitarianism, all under the banner of missions</li> <li>• If all Christian work is missions, then nothing is missions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The church-planting criterion is consistent with the teaching and example of the New Testament.</li> <li>• The church-planting criterion rightly views evangelism as part of church planting rather than an end in itself —“Church-planting Evangelism.”</li> <li>• The church-planting criterion rightly views discipleship’s role in church planting.</li> <li>• The church-planting criterion provides a safeguard against slipping toward institutionalism and humanitarianism under the banner of missions.</li> <li>• The church-planting criterion accepts that material/educational/medical assistance can be utilized to hasten the church-planting process, but not as an end in itself.</li> <li>• The church-planting criterion recognizes the centrality of church planting without rejecting the role of specialization within team missions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricts the definition of <i>missionary</i> beyond that required by Scripture</li> <li>• Represents an over-reaction to the ever-broadening definition of missions during the 20th century</li> <li>• Fails to recognize the biblical example of missions as a collective effort, and of team missions in establishing churches</li> <li>• Fails to recognize the vital role of specialists and helps ministries in facilitating the church-planting process</li> <li>• Fails to recognize the vital work of pioneer missionaries</li> <li>• Rejects female missionaries</li> <li>• Often fails to recognize the vital role of mission agencies in the church-planting process</li> <li>• Restricts missionary support only to church-planting preachers and sometimes, only those who are not under a mission agency</li> <li>• Fails to recognize the vital connection between translation work, training of national preachers, etc. to church-planting</li> <li>• Fails to recognize the missionary work of those laboring in restricted-access fields who cannot openly conduct direct church planting</li> </ul>