

Is it Mission if the Organisation isn't "Christian"?

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Human beings seem to like extremes. Things have to be good or bad, right or wrong. Often, we think of things as being either/or even when they could be both/and.

Should I be a healthy person who eats salad, or the unhealthy person who eats pizza? Surely it is not possible for me to be both a healthy person AND a person who eats pizza sometimes?

Christians do this regarding spiritual issues too, and mission is one of the things we have historically tended to swing to extremes on. Some have put all their energy into doing good works and helping the poor. Some have observed this and thought, "What's the point of this if you don't tell the poor about Jesus?" Not much point saving them from here and now when they're not saved for eternity" [delete "] and have then gone to tell those in need about Jesus while doing absolutely nothing to address their immediate (at times potentially fatal) needs.

From my perspective, it seems pretty clear we need to do both. That does not mean we need to hand out a tract with every donation we give, or make sure we help someone every time we mention Jesus. That means that, in our lives, it is important to help those in need, and it is important to share our faith.

Sometimes that will mean we support Christian organisations whose core point is to help with a practical need rather than to directly spread the gospel. This includes things like "Love Makes a Way" campaigning for proper treatment of asylum seekers, "Baptist World Aid's Disaster



Relief Fund”, or “Samaritan’s Purse’s Operation Christmas Child” boxes. These things are being done because they are good, not because they are expected to lead to conversions.

Sometimes this means we will work with or give to organisations which aren’t religiously affiliated at all. I myself have previously volunteered at my local RSPCA shelter, and currently sponsor a land mine detection rat. After asking on Facebook which not-Christian charities my Christian friends supported, some of the answers were: “Beyond Blue”, “Amnesty International”, “The Heart Foundation”, “Doctors without Borders”, the “Leukaemia Foundation” and the “Cancer Council”, among others.

God calls different people to act on different issues. When you find out what it is that gets you passionate to help, do it because you are passionate about it. You don’t need to check if there is a “Christian” organisation doing a similar thing, and you don’t need to find a different cause just because the one which you are drawn to doesn’t seem “Christian” enough. Join the “World’s Greatest Shave”, volunteer at a local shelter, donate to “Beyond Blue”. Do it because God has led you to care about that particular issue. Don’t feel like you need to make everything you do lead to an evangelical conversation. Have a faith which people will see as they work alongside you on an issue that you both care about. Be the Christian people can relate to because you care about the same things they do.

In short, doing good works is good. Sharing the Gospel is good. Don’t feel like you have to either be doing both together all the time, or that you have to choose between the two. Be the healthy person who eats pizza!

