

# General Policy Mission

Version January 2021

## Preface

This document describes how *mission* is comprehended by mission organization Verre Naasten<sup>1</sup> and from which vision we do this mission work. It is foremost intended for the executors of the Mission work: governors of the national mission board (NMB); governors and staff members of the Regional Mission Boards (RMBs; staff members of Verre Naasten and for (potential) partners of the mission work both domestically and abroad. This policy document is also available for all who are interested in the mission work of Verre Naasten.

### 1. What is mission?

#### God's mission

The Creator of heaven and earth "*Who wants all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men.*"<sup>2</sup> The Bible tells the story of God's mission: through history God himself has been working to bring people back to him and by doing so restoring his creation. The heart of this mission is formed by sending Jesus Christ: God himself comes to earth and shares our existence. The Lord Jesus brings God's kingdom by His service, He atones for the fall of man by His death, and He overcomes the power of death and sin by His resurrection.

#### Mission

By using the term *mission* we indicate that people can participate in this grand mission of God himself. Mission is to make the love of God known to others by word and deed and in that way contribute to the coming of his kingdom on earth.

Motivated by God's love we call people to repent and live as followers of Christ. Mission is carried out both by word and by deed. They are both equally important and they must not be played off against each other. The heart of the mission is to make known the Good News of Jesus Christ. For this, words, stories, testimonies and proclamation are indispensable. At the same time, the Bible accentuates that the gospel of God becomes visible by actual deeds of love, mercy and justice. Therefore mission is *integral mission* to us, as accentuated by many churches and missionary organisations<sup>3</sup>.

#### Dependent

Mission is to get involved in God's mission. It being God's mission encourages us to tackle and take up the things that must be done, even if they are difficult. It also provides us with the peace to be able to let go of matters, churches and people, when necessary or when they are beyond our reach. We want to be dependent on our God and Father and do our work in connectedness with Him. Therefore prayer has an important role in all aspects of the work.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'Verre Naasten' is used in this policy document - for the sake of readability - as a term for the whole of mission work that is taken up by: support churches in the Netherlands, the Regional Mission Boards (RMBs; of which the support churches are members), the National Mission Board (NMB; of which the RMBs are members) and the support organization Verre Naasten.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 2: 4-6 NIV

<sup>3</sup> See the Capetown Commitment of the Lausanne Movement, [www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment](http://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment)

## 2. How do we carry out mission?

### Sharing faith worldwide

Verre Naasten see it as her duty to contribute to this worldwide proclamation: it reflects Gods great work and contributes to His honor. Every follower of Jesus and every church primarily has the responsibility of sharing the faith in his/her/its own environment. Yet we believe in a more international perspective. From the beginnings of the Christian church the proclamation of the gospel has been crossing cultural, social, linguistic, and national borders.

### Local church

We believe that first of all, local churches are responsible for the mission work. Of course there is also a missionary calling for every individual believer and for church denominations and national churches. But it is the local congregation in which the salvation of Christ is received, celebrated and shared. And from there they can spread the gospel outwards.<sup>4</sup>

### Reformed

Verre Naasten works in the tradition of the Reformation, and that colors us. We receive with thankfulness the many good things that God has given throughout the path He has walked with the churches. In the mission work, we carry ourselves with us. Which means among others:

- We predominantly cooperate in mission with partners from the reformed or presbyterian tradition. In areas where they are non-existent, or in case such partners do not focus on mission, Verre Naasten also cooperates with churches and organizations from other traditions.
- In our way of working one may expect reformed input. This applies to materials, manners of conduct, the organization of churches, and reflection on faith and mission.

Mission from a reformed identity is aimed at bringing fellow man to a life with God in the community of the general Christian church.

### Organisation

To perform mission rightly, effectively and efficiently, local churches usually work together in regional bodies (RSV's: 'Regionale Samenwerkingsverbanden' = Regional Mission Boards (RMB's)). A Regional Mission Board coordinates, governs, and finances the missionary work in certain areas in the world. It works on behalf of the associated congregations in the Netherlands, in cooperation with partner churches and organizations.

Together the regional bodies form the National Mission Board (NMB). This national body promotes the cooperation between the regional bodies to strengthen unambiguity and efficiency of missionary work.

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<sup>4</sup> See article C2 in the draft Church Order of NGK/GKv churches

C 2.2. The congregation searches in word and deed for those who do not know God or are alienated from Him, in order to win them too for Christ.

C 2.3 The congregation supports missionary activities, both domestically and abroad, through prayers, donations and involvement.

The professional organization, which supports the mission work, is Verre Naasten. Each Regional Mission Board makes agreements with Verre Naasten as to how the support is given shape.

### Partnership

Mission is to search for those who do not know God or have been estranged from Him. In many countries churches have arisen. This is of great significance to the work of RMB's | Verre Naasten. We respect that local churches have the first responsibility. The spreading of the Gospel needs to be done in cooperation with these churches. This is for practical reasons: local people know the context like no other. Yet it is for theological reasons as well: we should not ignore the work of God's Spirit worldwide. When churches receive the opportunity to spread the gospel elsewhere in the world, they cooperate with local churches as much as possible.

Therefore, for Verre Naasten, partnership is the most important way to do mission. Partnership in mission means: we maintain relationships for mission with churches and Christian organizations who share the gospel in their direct environment, in word and deed. In the cooperations we agree upon the ways in which we can support their activities, in prayer and other support. This is how we want to work together in faith and in being church and in making known God's salvation plan, as brothers and sisters in God's worldwide church. To be of mutual support, inspiration and encouragement, and all of this to the honor of God.

Because we believe that mission is firstly a matter of the church, churches are our most important partners. Secondly, Verre Naasten maintains relationships with Christian organizations and theological institutes. We exercise restraint with regard to sending out people abroad. Sending missionaries should evidently contribute to reinforcing the partner.

### 3. Important values to the mission work

We described what we mean by mission and how we want to carry it out. In this paragraph we explain which values are important to us in mission. We distinguish between three groups of values. We want to work in dependency on God; as good partners in mission; and as responsible administrators of what has been entrusted to us.

#### Dependency on God

In mission, we let ourselves be engaged in God's mission. That is why we know we are dependent on Him and we search for his will. From the Bible we can be held accountable for our behavior. We aim to stay tuned to God. That is why prayer is important in our work. We not only pray in the many different parts of our work, but we also stimulate prayer for each other in the churches and organizations involved.

#### Good partners

Most of the mission work is done in cooperation with partners. We are vigilant to being good partners to them<sup>5</sup>.

This means foremost that we are *reliable*. Being each other's partners means that we walk alongside one another, notice and appreciate each other's strong points and are patient with each other's weak points. We adhere to our agreements.

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<sup>5</sup> In doing so, we align with Micah global's Partnership Guidelines 2020.

We are conscious of the risks of inequality in the relationship. We *respect* our partners and recognize that aspects of differences in power can play a role in our relationships. We stimulate our partners to be the owners of the mission work. Our input should not make our partners more dependent.

Our input is also *complementary*. We connect and join with the work that is already being done by the partners or abilities our partners have. We appreciate their capacities and we aim to contribute to the reinforcement of those capacities. We do not support projects if there is no evident input of the partners. We aim to keep in mind what we can and cannot offer ourselves.

Lastly, we are *prepared to keep learning* in the relationship with our partner. Therefore we regularly *evaluate* our cooperation. We are aware of the fact that our own modes of observation are limited and we are open to different ways and views.

### Responsible administration

We are aware that the means (man power, material, and finances) we work with, have been entrusted to us. Numerous sponsors offer us their trust. After all, we receive the means from the hand of God. That is why we work with it responsibly.

This means that we want to work *effectively* and *efficiently*. Together with the partner we think about the way we do things, we work process-based and regularly evaluate the results.

We evidently act with integrity and *transparency* and we are willing to let ourselves be questioned. Therefore we have our work tested by independent others. Verre Naasten makes use of external audits and a quality mark.