

## The finances of the mission

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As a large organisation, the Basel Mission needed careful management of its finances. Its income came from donations, collections, legacies, the income of its investments and the profits paid by the trading company. Its expenditure included the training of missionaries in Basel, their travel to the mission fields, their salaries, the construction and maintenance of mission stations, schools and hospitals, and the administration of the mission in Basel. The mission published annual reports with detailed accounts, which informed its supporters about the use of their donations.<sup>1</sup>

The management of the mission's finances was entrusted to members of the committee with commercial experience, many of them merchants and bankers of Basel. They applied to the mission the principles of prudence and transparency that they applied to their own businesses: balanced budgets, reserves for bad years, careful investment of endowments and regular reporting. The mission's reputation for financial integrity was essential to its capacity to attract donations, since its supporters expected an accounting of how their money was used.

The Basel Mission was thus an early example of a large non-profit organisation managed according to commercial principles and accountable to a broad base of donors. The modern regulation of non-profit organisations and charitable foundations in Switzerland, which requires transparency in the use of funds and supervision by the authorities, and the certification of charitable organisations by independent bodies such as ZEWO, which awards a quality seal to organisations that meet standards of transparency and efficiency, continue this tradition.<sup>2</sup> The prevention of the abuse of non-profit organisations for money laundering and terrorist financing, which the Financial Action Task Force has addressed in its recommendations, adds a further dimension to the governance of such organisations.

## *The finances of the mission*

### 1 Notes

1. On the finances of the Basel Mission (income from donations, legacies, investments and the trading company; publication of annual reports with accounts), see the literature on the history of the Basel Mission. To be verified. ↩
2. On the ZEWO seal for charitable organisations in Switzerland (Stiftung ZEWO, founded 1934) and the supervision of charitable foundations, see the publications of ZEWO and the Federal Foundation Supervisory Authority. To be verified. ↩

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*For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.*

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