

Covenant OPC
West Plains, MO

A few principles that guide our protocols to those outside the congregation:

- 1) Sheep get priority over goats, but goats are not excluded from mercy from the church. So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Gal 6:10.
- 2) Showing mercy to those outside the visible Church could be showing mercy to a sheep whom God is calling to Himself and saving through the mercy of the church. There is an evangelical aspect to acts of mercy to a stranger, so when in doubt, show mercy. Perhaps it will be a door for the Word.
- 3) The church is not a bank. We are not in the business of a strictly financial transaction. We offer the Gospel and physical mercy. Not one without the other. If a stranger only wants stuff and not the word, then they are seeking a bank. Their request and our services are not a match.

But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" Acts 3:6.

If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? James 2:15.