



CASTING

A VISION FOR

MISSIONS

CREATING A CHURCH MISSION STRATEGY

Everyday, we are honored to interact with churches deeply committed to missions. These churches can look very different on the surface — they might be large or small, urban or rural, well-funded or struggling to make ends meet.

But in our work, we've found one common denominator: **Churches that are deeply-engaged with missions haven't engaged by accident.** These missional churches have developed a vision and guidelines for how they do missions, and they have proactively equipped their members to share the Gospel locally and globally.

Finding the right mission strategy for your church may sound intimidating, but the good news is, God has already equipped your church to fulfill His mission! These six questions are designed to guide your leadership team through discovering how God is already moving and how to engage more people in that vision.

As you prayerfully walk through this guide, keep in mind TEAM has church engagement managers across North America who would love to offer personal coaching for your church. **Connect with a coach at team.org/churches!**

GETTING STARTED

These questions are designed for a mission team, elder board or leadership group of your church to prayerfully answer together. We recommend sharing the questions with each team member beforehand and only tackling one or, at most, two steps per meeting. These are designed to be completed in order.



PRINCIPLES

What are our core convictions regarding cross-cultural ministry?

Use these questions to develop a framework for what responsible and impactful missions looks like at your church. Start broadly in order to establish the core principles that must be true in every ministry with which your church engages. Consider these questions:

- ▶ Why should our church engage in global missions?
- ▶ What does Scripture say about the church's role in missions?
- ▶ What is our church's mission statement? How could it be applied in a global context?
- ▶ How can well-meaning ministries actually harm the people or culture they want to help? How can we avoid this danger?
- ▶ How do we understand/define the term "unreached"? Should churches focus on people groups who have never had the Gospel, or on those who once had but have now lost the Gospel?
- ▶ Should churches focus on ministries in urban centers, to reach the most people, or on rural areas, where they can reach the hardest-to-reach peoples?
- ▶ What makes a good disciple maker? What makes someone good at making disciples cross-culturally?



TAKE INVENTORY

What resources and relationships does our church already have?

The second step is to assess your church's current missions mindset; inventory your available resources and relationships, and consider where you might be best equipped to make an impact. The assumptions behind these questions are that, first, God is probably calling you to engage globally in a kind of ministry that He has already equipped you for locally. The second assumption is that you will be most effective in global ministry if, instead of starting from scratch, you begin by working with individuals or organizations you already know. As a team, discuss:

- ▶ What makes our church unique?
- ▶ What do we see as our unique purpose in our local community?
- ▶ How are members of our church already serving both inside and outside of the church?
- ▶ Is there a department or event at our church that never struggles to recruit volunteers?
- ▶ What sorts of professions are present in our congregation?
- ▶ Do church members feel called and equipped to make disciples?
- ▶ What are our church members passionate about?
- ▶ What ministries do we already support? How did those connections begin?
- ▶ What patterns are emerging?
- ▶ What are the biggest obstacles preventing a church member from serving cross-culturally?



RESEARCH THE NEEDS

What needs is God putting in front of us?

Take some time to list the major needs God has laid on each team member's heart. The list can easily go on and on, but as you discuss, which ones keep coming up? On which issues can you have a major impact? It will be especially helpful to ask community leaders, missionaries, ministries and missions organizations about the needs they see in their contexts.

- ▶ List the local and global needs that feel particularly urgent to you.
- ▶ As a group, list these in a place everyone can see them. Circle the ones that came up multiple times and identify the patterns you see.
- ▶ Which of these needs are addressed in Scripture?
- ▶ Do any seem particularly urgent?
- ▶ How would meeting these needs share the Gospel?



FIND YOUR FOCUS

Where do global needs intersect with our church's principles and resources?

Your church's unique calling is found where the Gospel, God's leading and your resources connect with the needs of the world. In this step, you'll explore where your congregation is already connected, where new connections can be made and how you can leverage those connections to encourage church-wide involvement.

Creating a missions focus for your congregation will help your members be more effective in serving, and get them thinking about how they can meet needs globally and locally. Your focus might be a certain people group or type of ministry. Your church might be really passionate about reaching a certain age demographic or sending a group of missionaries to a certain area. The goal of a mission focus is not to limit where people serve, but to instead cast a vision for every member's involvement in cross-cultural ministry.

- ▶ How do the needs you identified in Step 3 connect with the people, passion and connections you named in Step 2?
- ▶ How do the principles you outlined in Step 1 affect how you would approach these needs?
- ▶ Do you know of, or have relationships with, organizations and/or individuals that are already skilled at meeting these needs?
- ▶ In what one to two **local** needs could your church make the most impact in the next five years?
 - What do we want to accomplish?
 - How will we measure success?
- ▶ In what one to two **global** needs could your church make the most impact in the next five years?
 - What do we want to accomplish?
 - How will we measure success?
- ▶ How do our goals invite the church to faithfully live what God has called us to do?



ENGAGE THE CHURCH

How can every member engage in this strategy?

This step is where the rubber meets the road. You have identified your principles for ministry and prayerfully selected your focus areas. Now is the time to plan how you'll share this vision with the congregation and empower them to take an active role in cross cultural ministry.

- ▶ What does your church believe about cross-cultural ministry? What additional teaching and discipling will be needed for people to catch the vision you want to cast?
- ▶ What individuals or groups could champion a certain local or global focus area?
- ▶ How can your small groups and/or classes begin praying for and serving these focus areas?
- ▶ What communication resources do you have available? What new resources could you use?
- ▶ What would hinder a member of your church from making disciples locally? How can you overcome that?
- ▶ What would hinder a member of your church from making disciples globally? How can you overcome that?
- ▶ What are creative ways different age and interest groups can contribute to this vision (e.g. college students, military, retirees, etc.)?
- ▶ How will you identify, prepare and send cross-cultural workers? Into what ministries/ locations do you expect them to be called?



EVALUATE

How did we steward the vision and resources God has provided?

Any strategy of vision can fizzle out after a few years, or even months! Evaluation and accountability are key factors in ensuring your mission strategy is effective. A great first step for evaluation is to create a document summarizing the vision and convictions this process has uncovered and revisit that document each year. Then, answer the following questions:

- ▶ What have we learned about cross-cultural ministry in the past year?
- ▶ How have our convictions developed or changed?
- ▶ How have we been effective in our ministry focus? Where have we struggled?
- ▶ How are we equipping the congregation to pray for our ministries?
- ▶ How are we communicating the opportunities to serve?
- ▶ Are people hearing the Gospel as a result of this work? How do we know?
- ▶ Do our missionaries feel well-connected to the church? Does our church feel well-connected to them?
- ▶ What would we like to see God do in the upcoming year?
- ▶ What is hindering the acceptance of the Gospel? How do we address that?
- ▶ What new strategies, skills, needs and/or resources are emerging?
- ▶ How do we celebrate what God has done?

NEED HELP GETTING STARTED?

We pray this is a helpful resource as you look to engage your church in missions. Remember, you don't have to do this alone! TEAM has church engagement managers across North America who would love to offer personal coaching for your church. **Connect with a coach at team.org/churches!**

