

10 Principles For Building Your Missions Vision

1. **Prayer**—Proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Missions) is God’s purpose for the local church—He needs to be part of the process. Pray about everything and everyone involved and ask that whatever is done will glorify Him.
2. **Policy**—Having a Missions Policy (written document) helps the ministry team know why they exist and provides foundational principles with which to work. It will help you respond when, for example, the church wants to pave a parking lot using missions money because “it will bring in new people.” A missions policy that defines that missions as outreach beyond the local congregation makes it clear that the parking lot is not an appropriate missions project. Policy needs to include: who’s on the committee, length of term, goals and objectives, definition of missions, who can be supported, how missions is funded, etc.
3. **Prioritize**—There are many needs in the world and a single church cannot solve all of them. But over time, you can make an impact in some areas. Setting criteria for support and priorities (in a missions policy) of who and what to support (geographical, kinds of ministry, type of agency, etc.) sets out a strategy and a vision for your church’s involvement. Acts 1:8 provides a good model for this. (Notice the “AND.”) This needs to be re-evaluated regularly to make sure you are on track with God’s plan for your church.
4. **Program**—The most effective Missions programs are not the one annual weekend extravaganza. While a time of missions emphasis is important, it is better to do it in conjunction with a continuing program of education. Because missions (making disciples) is the primary purpose of the church, concentrate on having an outreach piece in everything else you are about, but particularly with kids. (Parents will catch the vision from their children.) Examples include Sunday School classes and Small Groups have their “own” missionary, VBS collects donations for a local or cross-cultural ministry, and Worship services commission people going on short-term trips. Sermons could regularly include missions-related illustrations, etc.
5. **Passion**—Enthusiasm is contagious. But the process of transforming hearts for missions is an ongoing, never-ending education process. Basic areas of teaching include Bible study (God’s plan), missions history (humankind’s response), cultural considerations (People’s need for Jesus in every ethnic group, language and tribe—Genesis 12:4 and Revelation 7:9), and current strategies (world’s needs now and status of finishing the Great Commission).
6. **People**—The second most effective way of helping people in the pew to have a heart for mission and the needs of the world is to connect them with people who are doing it. This means real missionaries talking about what God is doing through them in face to face meetings (dinners, worship, fellowship times, etc.). Relationships develop followed by a greater interest in that ministry and others followed by increased prayer and financial support.
7. **Pack**—The #1 way to increase your church’s mission involvement is to send someone packing. Whether this is for a one day service project, a two-week vacation, a one year short term stint, or career placement, make sure the whole congregation is aware and involved—before, during, and after the trip. More impact comes by visiting/helping people you support.
8. **Provide**—God’s Word says that where your heart is, there your treasure is also. There are many ways to provide financially for missions and should be a part of the church missions policy. Possibilities: general budget item, tithing (10%) offering plate, special collections, etc. Missionaries also need prayer and encouragement, so look for ways to support in addition to money (letters, birthday cards, phone calls, small gifts, visits).
9. **Patience**—Don’t get discouraged if it takes a couple of years before you see any “progress” in your congregation’s missions vision. It is better to start small and grow it bigger, than to begin with a large event that is poorly put together. People expect excellence, so take the time and add creativity.
10. **Praise**—Your missions outreach has increased. Your people are on fire for the Lord and the world. Exciting things are happening. Before you congratulate yourself, remember that you are witnessing a work of the Holy Spirit in which you have the privilege to be a part. Make sure the glory and credit go to God. For He is able to do more than we can ask or imagine! (Ephesians 3:20)

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