

*Is your missions ministry global? Or just all over the map?*



## ***Developing a Missions Strategy That Fits Your Church***

### Leader's Guide

David Mays

2009

# Missions Strategy Leader's Guide

## CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

- Aim
- Outline
- Preparation
- Set Up
- Introducing Missions Strategy

### I. PROCESS

- A. Guiding Principles
- B. Process Steps

### II. CONTENT

- A. Foundations - Primary Inputs
- B. Priorities - Secondary Inputs: Key Factors in Selecting Focus Areas

### III. IMPLEMENTATION

- A. Principles
- B. Implementation Steps

### IV. APPLICATION AND WRAP UP

## INTRODUCTION

You are on a journey. Your strategy describes how you will reach your destination. It is your roadmap.

Your strategy is intended to get you to some location or some result. Therefore you must ask and answer the Key Question:

***What does God want to accomplish in the world through our church?***

## Aim

This Leader's Guide is designed to help church leaders develop a missions strategy for their church. It may be used by an outside consultant or an inside leader to

- Lead a workshop for one or more churches.
- Facilitate an ongoing process of developing a missions strategy for one church.

It will help leaders understand

- How to select the team who will put together the strategy
- How to begin the process
- What they need to know
- Where to find key resources
- How to establish the biblical basis for missions in your church
- How to design a strategy that supports the church's purpose
- The major issues to consider
- How to rank issues by priority
- How to uncover and resolve unspoken values
- How to outline the strategy document

## Outline

### I. PROCESS:

#### A. Guiding Principles

1. **Key Leader Involvement** – Although our pastors and leaders have confidence in the missions team we involve them in the process so they will have their ideas incorporated and 'own' and 'support' the strategy in the face of difficult decisions.
2. **Prayer** – We want God's direction so we ask for it. And listen.
3. **Consensus Decision Making** – We solicit and listen to input from each one in order to make representative decisions that represent the whole.
4. **Research** – We study the Scripture, the context, and our church to get a solid background for guidance and decision-making.
5. **Being Proactive** – We discover God's direction and pursue it as a regular practice rather than simply reacting to the many opportunities put before us.
6. **Continuity with the past** – We do not assume that God has not led us in the past. Our current missions involvements inform our new strategy? We ask what should be retained, modified, or grandfathered?
7. **Openness to future scrutiny** – We recognize that times and circumstances change and that strategies will also be reviewed and updated in the future.

#### B. Process Steps

### II. CONTENT

#### A. Foundations - Primary Inputs

1. **Scripture** – What does God want accomplished in the world?
2. **Missions** - The Scope: What is included? Definition and Boundaries.
3. **Purpose** – What does our church purpose statement call us to do? What part of this is "missions"?
4. **The World** – What are the major needs, barriers, and opportunities?

## B. Priorities - Secondary Inputs: Key Factors in Selecting Focus Areas

1. **Audience** – To whom are we compelled to minister (geographical regions, religious megaspheres, people groups, least reached)?
2. **Balance** - If local ministries are included, how do we balance local and global efforts?
3. **Focus** – How broadly or narrowly should we spread our efforts?
4. **History** – How has God developed, equipped, resourced, and connected our congregation? What values are important to us? How has God led us in the past?
5. **'Our Own'** – How important is prior relationship to involvement with missionaries, partners, ministries, and projects?
6. **Our Roles** - How has God uniquely gifted and connected our church? What “fits” us?
7. **Participation** – How important is it for our people to be able to participate hands-on in the work?
8. **Partnerships** – To what degree do we desire to work in partnership with other churches, organizations, networks, and movements?
9. **Tasks** – What ministry tasks do we understand as most strategic in the world and fitting for our church?

## III. IMPLEMENTATION

### A. Principles

1. **Continuity with the past** –In what ways do current missions involvements inform and contribute to the new strategy? What will be continued, modified or adjusted, or grandfathered?
2. **Addition** – Move toward your strategy by appropriating and utilizing new resources.
3. **Attrition** – Make changes by not replacing things that don't fit when projects are completed and missionaries or partners change course or leave ministry.
4. **Saying 'no' to good things** – The biggest failure in implementation is the difficulty in saying 'no' to good things, favorite things, pet projects, and people we know or like.
5. **When to disassociate** – Be careful, thoughtful, merciful, and wise.

### B. Steps

## IV. NEXT STEPS

## Preparation

Developing a missions strategy is straightforward – but it's not easy.

- Get the right people together.
- Pray
- Do your research.
- Solidify your foundations.
- Clarify what God desires from you.
- Agree on your priorities.
- Set goals.
- Begin pursuing the goals.

Following are some steps to prepare to teach this material:

- Read and become familiar with the Leader's Guide, PowerPoint Presentation, and Participant Workbook.
- Become familiar with five key resources:
  - *The Missions Assessment Profile (MAP)*, APMC
  - *Exploring World Vision*, Bryant Myers, World Vision Resources
  - *Operation World*, Patrick Johnstone
  - *Building Global Vision*, David Mays
  - *Stuff CD*, David Mays
- Pray about all aspects of the study. Recruit two or three prayer warriors who will pray for the right participants, for the ability to do the study and for fruitfulness.
- Decide whom to invite to the presentation or consultation.
- Consider the time frame(s) for the study and process. The Content can be presented in three one-hour periods but it leaves inadequate time for small group interaction. An additional evening pre-session can cover either a) some missions fundamentals or b) a study of the great remaining obstacles to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This workshop could probably best be done better in two or more independent half-day sessions. The Content takes about 3/4 of the time.
- Decide in which order to do the study. Chronologically the process comes first. However, participants are more likely to understand the importance of gaining the participation and commitment of key people after they understand the content.

- Work out a time and location schedule and get a firm commitment for participation. Be sure to remind people. Be sure to schedule breaks.
- Decide how you will use the information to proceed through the development of your church's missions strategy.
- Give advance assignments to participants, such as:
  - Bring your church purpose statement.
  - Bring your church missions budget (or do an analysis in advance).
  - Bring your current missions strategy or policy.
  - Read any particular articles you may want to assign. See [www.davidmays.org](http://www.davidmays.org) for examples.

## Set Up

PowerPoint Slide Modifications:

1. Modify the first slides to introduce yourself.
2. List the participants invited or committed – individuals or churches.
3. Put in your own schedule so people know what to expect.
4. After "The World" slide, insert, if possible, some maps, charts, or statistics showing the situations in various parts of the world. The *Exploring World Mission* CD (Bryant Myers, World Vision Resources) is an excellent source.

Set up: Seat people at tables for good interaction.

Equipment: LCD projector, screen, cords, computer, whiteboard, pens, missions Scriptures printed out on 8x11 sheets, tape, colored dots

Handouts: Print the Participant workbook and other documents as needed.

Resources to Show: *Operation World*, *Building Global Vision*, appropriate appendices

Have some healthy snacks and coffee available.

Welcome people as they arrive and help them feel comfortable. Put the Welcome slide on the screen.

## Getting Started

- Welcome the people.
- Pray for God's guidance.
- Give some background regarding the source of the workshop and material.
- Welcome the Participants individually, particularly if more than one church is represented.
- Go over the schedule.
- Introduce the topic of strategy and its importance.

My Notes:

## Introducing Missions Strategy

### Why Strategy?

Several years ago a movement among churches was initiated by the assertion of a well-known West Coast pastor, "It's not enough to be faithful, a church must be effective." This movement has been titled by Rick Warren as "The Purpose-Driven Church."

Purpose-driven means that all activities, programs, and efforts are designed, carried out, and evaluated to fulfill the church's purpose. In other words, a church should be organized around its purpose or purposes. Similar thinking has pervaded mission efforts. The church is a steward of the resources entrusted to it. Church leaders have a responsibility to invest those resources wisely and effectively.

Perhaps we sometimes presume upon God to make us effective, even if we don't work to become effective. And God, who is the master planner, has accomplished much more than we could have dreamed. However, because we know so much more about the world than previous generations, it is reasonable to think that God may expect us to apply the knowledge available to us and to work toward becoming as effective as

possible. As church leaders we are responsible for wise use of the resources entrusted to us. God doesn't leave it up to us. He will guide us as we seek His wisdom.

Local church missions leaders have been aware for some time that they have increasing responsibility to be effective with their missions resources. The aiming for effectiveness often takes the form of developing a missions strategy.

In the past church leaders have mostly supported the visions and strategies of a variety of mission organizations and individuals and trusted them to do what God called them to do in the world. But during the 1980s and 90s, mission and church leaders began to discover that much of what God wants done in the world has been omitted or neglected. Church leaders began to ask about their responsibility to direct their resources toward accomplishing God's purposes in the world. Hence strategy.

### **Every church has a strategy.**

Every church has a missions strategy. It may be a written strategy that they faithfully follow. They may have a written strategy that is largely ignored. Or there may be nothing written. In any case there are reasons and values behind the decisions that are made to invest missions resources. *Someone* has a "strategy." It may be the denomination, a pastor, a missions enthusiast, the elder board, parents of missionaries, or someone with a strong voice. Someone takes the lead in deciding where missions resources go and such people have reasons. These preferences and values may be commonly known and shared or they may be unknown or not understood.

An important part of developing a missions strategy is to clarify how missions decisions have been made in the past and how they are being made now. What are the *values* and *priorities* that drive the decisions? It is important that the decision-making group clarify, openly and honestly, why they make the decisions they do and why their predecessors made the decisions they did. Do we follow historical precedent? Do we favor people we know or those a key person knows? Do we vote the partly line with our denomination? Do some of us have vested interests in particular missionaries or organizations? Do we tend to agree with an individual we respect? Do we accept a proposal because it is uncomfortable to disagree?

The true reasons for making decisions must be expressed and acknowledged openly, so that covert values will not undermine a future strategy.

What do I need to pray about right now?

## Definition of Strategy

*A missions strategy is an intentional plan developed and implemented by a local church that seeks to maximize its impact on the world as every member of the congregation moves toward becoming world Christians. [Blake McDaniel, ACMC]*

Note that a missions strategy consists of two dimensions:

- External – the deployment of your people and resources into the world, and
- Internal – the development and mobilization of those resources.

This material deals only with the External or Deployment dimension of strategy.

## A Strategy is a Road Map.

It is a *how* document. It helps you get from where you are to your destination, to your goal. It is a road map. A road map requires two things to be helpful:

- 1) You must know your destination.
- 2) You must know where you are.

## Your Location

You can find out where you are in missions in a broad overall sense by using the ACMC *Missions Assessment Profile* (MAP). The MAP helps a church evaluate the commitment and effectiveness of its mission efforts in twelve key categories. See the catalog at [www.CalebResources.org](http://www.CalebResources.org)

You can find out where you are in regard to deployment by doing an analysis of your current missions involvements using one or more of the budget grids in the supplemental files. We will deal with this later in the process.

## Your Destination

A strategy helps guide you to your goal. It is useful if you have a goal. It assumes that you know where you want to end up. To use a road map, you need to know where you are going.

Your missions destination – your goals or priorities – is the first issue dealt with in developing the content of a missions strategy. It is the foundation for a strategy. I call this the **Key Question**: [See appendix: Key Question Diagram]

***What does God want to accomplish in the world through our church?***

Note there are three parts to this question:

1. What does **God** want done (vs. my individual agenda)?
2. What does God want done **in the world** (vs. just our church or community)?
3. What part belongs to **our church**?

**Discussion:**

- What benefits do you expect from a strategy?
- What downsides do you foresee if you do not develop or update your strategy?
- As you understand it now, what do you think God wants to accomplish in the world through your church?
- What do you hope will happen as a result of this workshop or consultation?

What do we need to pray about at this point?

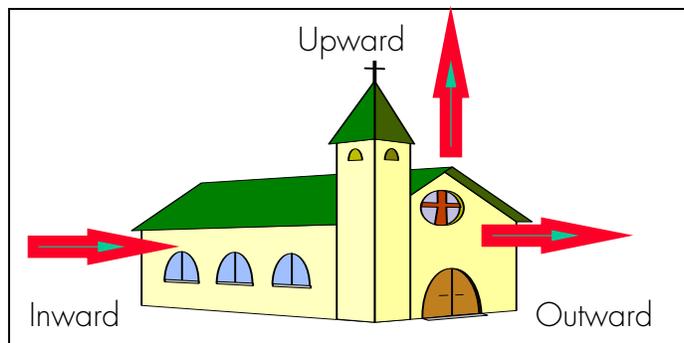
My Notes:

## I. PROCESS

### A. Guiding Principles (adapted from Blake McDaniel, APMC)

#### 1. Key Leader Involvement

Pastors and leaders will often express confidence in the missions team, encourage the team to develop a strategy on their own, and agree to support the finished product. They truly intend to abide by the strategy. However, circumstances often arise that seem to them to supersede a strategy that does not have their personal input and commitment. Their ownership and support of a strategy when there are competing possibilities will only occur if they help develop it and truly "buy in." Therefore it is important to involve them in the process.



Every church has three primary relationships or responsibilities: upward, inward and outward. The church has a responsibility to God in worship, prayer and obedience. It has a responsibility to believers in care, nurture, fellowship, and discipleship. And it has a responsibility to the world in witness, service, and outreach. All three of these functions are equally the responsibility of church leaders. Church leaders obviously take the lead in the upward and inward relationships. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to ask top church leaders to also participate in developing the basic strategy for the outward dimension to the world.

Here are some questions for advance discussion and resolution:

- What consequences do you anticipate if key leaders are not involved?
- Who needs to be involved?
- Whose input needs to be solicited or considered?
- How will you get their input?
- What will you do if their values or desires differ from those of your team?
- What other issues or problems do you anticipate?
- How will you deal with them?

## 2. Prayer

We want God's direction so we ask for it. And listen. There is a very strong tendency to jump right in and work through this material without adequate centering in God. There is much at stake and it is very important that prior to working on a strategy participants be prepared to be open to new information and ideas, to be willing to hear opinions that contradict their own, to be willing to set aside personal biases and preferences, to be ready to think in fresh ways, and to work toward consensus.

It is important therefore, to pray as individuals and as a team, to persuade church leaders to pray, and to solicit others to pray. Further it is important to pray in advance, to prepare us, to make notes of controversial issues, problems, and needs as the group proceeds through the process, and to pray afterward during the ongoing steps of implementation.

Here are some questions to discuss and resolve:

- How do you anticipate generating prayer support for this process?
- How will you personally pray?
- How will you help your church leaders to take this seriously enough to pray?
- How will your team pray?
- Who will list and communicate issues for prayer that arise during the process?

My Notes:

## 3. Consensus Decision Making

We solicit and listen to input from each one in order to make representative decisions that represent the whole.

As you know, in many groups, decisions are made by the most respected person, the expert, the person with the most persistence, the strongest leader, or the loudest voice. These are not always the best decisions, nor do they always gain the active commitment of the whole group.

The ideal situation is for each one to put their unspoken agendas on the table and to clearly hear each of the others, anticipating that God will speak through the group. This requires humility and active listening.

Here are some questions for discussion and resolution:

- How can we avoid having the loudest voice make the decisions?
- How can we avoid a strong leader making the decisions?
- How can we get the unspoken agendas acknowledged?
- How can we avoid those with vested interests making the decisions?
- How can we make sure that everyone is clearly heard?
- How can we reach agreements where we have differences of opinion?

Is there something from the above that we need to pray about?

My Notes:

#### 4. **Research**

We study the Scripture, the context, and our church to get a solid background for guidance and decision-making.

Ralph Winter once said that God can't bless our ignorance, no matter how much we dedicate it. In missions, as in other arenas, we often must make very important decisions with too little information. However, a great deal of information is available that we perhaps have not studied. To be wise in planning, we must learn what we need to know.

Here are some questions for discussion and resolution:

- What do we most need to learn?
- How can we find out what our leaders know and think?
- How can we find out what we need to know?
- Who will research key information on the world condition?
- Who will do the research on our church?
- How will we evaluate our current missions involvements?
- How will we use what we learn?

Let's pray for diligence in research, for an understanding mind, a perceptive heart, and a listening ear to hear God speak.

My Notes:

5. **Proactivity** – We discover God's direction and pursue it as a regular practice rather than simply reacting to the many opportunities put before us.

The primary strategy of many churches has been to support individuals, projects, and programs that have serendipitously surfaced before the missions team. While God has worked mightily in the world through this rather haphazard method, there are many important missions needs in the world that have been neglected or should receive priority. Although it is clear that God can work without our planning (or even getting involved), it seems at least equally clear that He intends us to take responsibility and invest our resources as wisely as we can - with His help. Therefore, it seems prudent to investigate priorities and work toward doing the ministries that we understand to be most urgent, critical, strategic, productive, and effective.

Here are some questions to consider in regard to being proactive:

- How can we move toward being more strategy (vision or goal) driven?
- How can we reduce being driven by factors we consider less strategic?
- How can we avoid making decisions based on whim or precedent?
- How can we avoid being pressured to sponsor "pet projects" of church leaders?
- How can we ensure we make better decisions based on our strategy?

Because this is an issue in nearly every church, whether they have a written strategy or not, let's pray for God's help to respond to Him and what He shows us rather than our own vested interests.

My Notes:

### 5. **Continuity with the past**

We should not assume that God has not led us in the past. How do our current missions involvements inform our new strategy? What should we retain, strengthen, modify, or grandfather? How can we build from what our missionaries are doing now?

Some missionaries and mission organizations have suffered unnecessarily when a new missions team has arbitrarily changed direction without sufficiently considering the impact on their currently supported missionaries and their ongoing ministries.

At the same time, one cannot implement a strategy without making changes. It is best to maximize strategic ministry by building upon the past rather than rejecting it.

Obtaining a clear understanding of what each supported missionary, project, and program is trying to accomplish and how that might relate to a new strategy is an important step.

Here are some questions to consider:

- How much of our current missions ministry should be continued?
- How do our current missions involvements inform our new strategy?
- What current missions involvements do we need to better understand?
- Among our current missions involvements, what should we build upon?
- What should be retained, modified, or grandfathered?
- What common threads tie the past to the future?
- What current ministries fit the new realities?
- What ministries could be 'tweaked' for a better fit?
- Which missionaries may be poised for a new challenge?
- Are some missionaries pointing to new strategic possibilities?
- Where do you expect disagreement, disappointment, or disaster?

My Notes:

## 6. **Openness to future scrutiny**

Times and circumstances change and today's strategies need to be reviewed and updated in the future.

- Who will review this document?
- When?
- How will it be updated?

### **Discussion on Guiding Principles:**

Which principles are we best following now in our missions approach?

- What benefits are we experiencing? What is going well?
- Which of these principles are most influencing our ongoing ministry?
- Which of these principles need to be elevated?
- Where do we anticipate disagreement?
- How will you handle it?
- What are we noting as prayer items?
- How can we keep in mind that these guidelines are to help us ask and accomplish the answer to the key question?

What do we need to pray about further in regard to the above?

**KEY QUESTION:**

As we understand it so far,

**What does God want to accomplish in the world through our church?**

My Notes:

**B. Process Steps - How** we establish our priorities, areas of focus, or goals and write our Strategy. Most of these steps are based on this material.

1. Saturate the entire process with prayer. Begin by enlisting volunteers to pray faithfully.
2. Determine who will make up the strategy team.
  - a. Who will represent the missions team?
  - b. Who will represent pastoral leadership?
  - c. Who will represent your missionaries?
  - d. Who else will be included?
  - e. Consider including the following:
    - i. some of your missionaries
    - ii. a pastor
    - iii. a board member
    - iv. a key influencer
    - v. strategic thinkers
    - vi. a researcher
    - vii. someone who knows the church missions history
    - viii. those with time and objectivity
  - f. Recruit the team; explain the objectives and process; gain their commitment.
3. Determine a meeting schedule to complete a strategy draft.
4. Communicate with leaders, congregation, and missionaries.
5. Survey your leaders regarding their missions knowledge, values, and preferences.
6. Survey your missionaries and ministry partners with regard to their current ministries, goals, and hopes and their insights on key missions priorities in the world
7. Analyze your current missions ministry
  - a. Categorize and analyze current missions efforts (dollars, people, projects, partners).
  - b. Consider how missions decisions are being made now. What guides decisions?

8. Decide on the primary Scriptures that provide your missions basis and aims.
  - a. You may want to do a Bible Study on missions with your group before beginning this section. [See Missions Bible Study guides in the appendix.]
  - b. Write out these Scriptures.
  - c. Write out in your own words your understanding of what these Scriptures
    - i. Call you to \_\_\_\_do what \_\_\_\_\_ (the task)
    - ii. So that \_\_\_\_who\_\_\_\_\_ ( the scope)
    - iii. Receives or becomes \_\_\_\_what\_\_\_\_ (the results or benefits).
  
9. Develop your own definition of missions.\*(See footnote, p.21)
  - a. Write out what missions is for your church.
  - b. In a supplemental statement write the types of things that are to be included and the types of things that are to be considered part of other ministries (in no way denigrating their importance). (See "Boundaries" in the Appendix.)
  
10. Write a purpose statement for the missions ministry.
  - a. This may be an addition to, or section, of your church purpose statement.
  - b. It may be an expression of what God has called you to do in the world.
  - c. It may be a statement suggesting your role is "to help church leaders carry out their missions purpose in the church," or something similar.
  
11. Research the World
  - a. Following are some helpful resources (web sites accessed 12/9/2009):
    - i. *Building Global Vision*, David Mays, pp. 35-48
    - ii. *Operation World*, Patrick Johnstone
    - iii. *Exploring World Mission*, Bryant Myers
    - iv. *Missions in the Third Millennium*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Stan Guthrie
    - v. [www.globalchristianity.org](http://www.globalchristianity.org)
    - vi. [www.gmi.org/ow/downloads/YLG2006.ppt](http://www.gmi.org/ow/downloads/YLG2006.ppt)
    - vii. [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)
    - viii. <http://www.gordonconwell.com/sites/default/files/IBMR2009.pdf>
    - ix. <http://www.borthwicks.org/ppt/Missions%20in%20the%2021st%20Century.ppt>
    - x. <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/research.php/766/08-2007>

- b. Write up a series of statements regarding what you see as major obstacles or prime opportunities with respect to:
  - i. People to whom to minister
  - ii. Tasks to be accomplished

## 12. Work through the Secondary Inputs or Key Factors

- a. Explain and discuss each key factor.
- b. Decide which factors most need definition or change for your church.
- c. Decide upon your church's position with regard to those that you select.

## 13. Agree on priorities

- a. Review strategies from other churches.
- b. Identify the primary considerations for focus or concentration - A and B levels, taking into account your history, values, and current ministries.
- c. Set up budget categories and goals in the form of grids [*Stuff IV, 18*]
- d. Do additional research on various geographies, peoples, and ministry tasks. Read widely, consult with other churches and mission agencies, attend pertinent networking meetings available in the United States, and, when possible, travel to the field to discern your options.
- e. Develop five-year goals for personnel, finances, and, desired, projects, partnerships and/or focus areas using the grids or other tools.

## 14. Draft a Strategy and Get Feedback and Approvals

- a. Use the Strategy Template if it helps.
- b. Get input and feedback on each section as you proceed.
- c. Develop budget percentages, personnel project, and perhaps volunteer involvement targets (this year, next year, 5 years).
- d. Get approvals.

## 15. Communicate Broadly

- a. Leaders, missionaries, congregation, potential missionaries

## 16. Implement

My Notes:

### **Discussion on Process Steps**

- What have we omitted in our list?
- What have you been doing best?
- What benefits have come from it?
- What do you see as most urgent?
- What do you see as most difficult?
- What do you see as most likely to cause misunderstanding?
- What do you see as potential roadblocks?

What is worthy of prayer in the above discussion?

My Notes:

\*Note: The missional church may prefer the term "mission." "Mission" usually includes the total outward dimension of the church whereas "missions" usually refers to the international or cross-cultural portion of the outward focus. If your perspective is missional, simply substitute "mission" for "missions." The definition and scope of "mission" will be broader than that of "missions," but all the material should apply and serve you well.

## II. CONTENT

### A. Primary Inputs - Foundations

Note 1: Parts of this section are covered more thoroughly in *Building Global Vision*.

Note 2: You may want to do a Bible Study on missions with your group before beginning this section. [See Missions Bible Study guides in the Supplemental Documents.]

Begin by reviewing the **Key Question**. Note the three elements

- What does God want?
- What does God want done in the world?
- What does God want to do in the world through our church?

Developing a strategy can easily devolve into a combination of personal interests and preferences. Therefore it is imperative to keep the Key Question in view at all times. Everything we do in developing and implementing a strategy should help us understand and fulfill the answer to the Key Question.

### Key Question Diagram



In this diagram, Strategy comes just below the Key Question. The answer to the Key Question is the foundation for a strategy.

[See the Key Question diagram in the Supplemental Documents for the inclusion of Strategy, Structures, Policies, Procedures, and Personnel]

Your missions foundation is based on four primary inputs to the Key Question:

1. Scripture
2. Missions
3. Our Church Purpose
4. The World Situation (or World Context).

These make up the basis for answering the Key Question.

Pray for God's guidance in establishing a solid God-honoring foundation.

My Notes:

### **Content: Primary Inputs and Secondary Inputs (Key Factors)**

Drafting a reasonable strategy requires a degree of knowledge in several areas. A young man once asked the noted pastor and author, A. W. Tozer, how to write a book. Tozer, not known for his tact, reportedly said, "You have to know something first. You can't write a book out of an empty head."

The same can be said of crafting a missions strategy. You have to know something first. And some of the most important things we need to know are subjects of this workshop.

In this section we are studying Four Primary Inputs that are foundational to a good strategy. In the next section we will discuss several Secondary Inputs that help us understand how to channel or prioritize our energies and efforts to be effective.

### **Primary Inputs**

Scripture is nonnegotiable. It is the basis for all the church is to do. Many people come to missions leadership with relatively little exposure to the theme of God's heart for all peoples in Scripture. [\[See the appendix for a list of "missions verses."\]](#)

Nearly everyone comes to a church missions ministry with a different view of what missionaries are, what missions is, and what missions is supposed to accomplish. Unfortunately these various notions and stereotypes are often not brought into unity by a study of Scripture.

While we readily admit that Scripture is the basis for missions, we may not have a good handle on what Scripture tells us God wants done in the world and what missions is supposed to accomplish. Further, when we study Scripture, we come to it with biases based on our own personal experience that are reinforced by some passages of Scriptures while other passages escape our notice.

Thus is it important that a missions team study the Scriptures together and decide what verses or passages provide the foundation for the church's missions ministry and what those passages call us to do.

In our day, missions brings to mind for many people the Great Commission passages in the New Testament. These generally focus on proclaiming the gospel and discipling all peoples. For others, missions brings to mind the passages in Jesus' ministry, such as Luke 4:18-19, that note God's heart for the poor, diseased, oppressed and marginalized of society. These call for compassion and mercy ministries. And some focus on passages such as John 10:10 that emphasize "abundant life" and see in these passages a call to help provide people with health care, education, fair government and similar needs for their social well being.

Pray that God will lead us to the appropriate Scriptures to guide our missions ministry.

My Notes:

## **1. What Scriptures inform your direction in missions?**

My experience has been that a group of missions leaders in a workshop, off the top of their heads, will think of only half a dozen verses on missions: two Great Commission verses, perhaps the Romans 10 passage, Genesis 12:1-3, and maybe a verse or two in the Old Testament.

If your group is similar, you may want to take a break at this stage and spend a few sessions doing a study of the missions theme of the Bible before you undertake this section of strategy. [See Missions Bible Studies in the appendix for some good resources.]

After your study ask the group to select the one key Scripture that expresses God's goal for humanity. This will probably be the verse that establishes their primary missions aim.

Then ask them to identify supplemental verses to support the missions ministry. Together these provide the biblical basis for missions.

Ask three questions about each verse selected:

1. Does this verse suggest a scope or extent? Who is included?
2. Does this verse suggest a result or benefit? What is supposed to happen to these people?
3. Does this verse give a command? What are we supposed to do?

Ask them to write out the answers in their own words, not simply quoting Scripture.

Here is an example:

Isaiah 49:6b. ...I will also **make you a light for the Gentiles**, that you may bring **my salvation** to the **ends of the earth**.

Scope: **The ends of the earth**. Everywhere on earth, everyone on earth.

Result: People receive **God's salvation**. People are rescued by God.

Command: **Be a light to the Gentiles**. We are to witness to all nations.

From the above answers for all the verses the group can write a statement about missions that states 1) what we are supposed to do 2) for whom 3) to achieve what results. With some modification this can be written as the Big Goal of missions or God's big goal for mankind, what God wants to accomplish in the world through His people. Have them write it out in their own words, not just quoting or paraphrasing Scripture. Force them to interpret and say it themselves.

Note the unanimity or divergence among evangelistic and/or compassion ministries. Sometimes this is a source of contention. Evangelistic ministry and social ministry are pitted against one another. When both are in balance, we refer to it as “holistic” ministry (or *wholistic* ministry). It is worthwhile to note what Jesus did and what he taught his disciples. It is also worthwhile to note what the early church did in Acts. And what the Apostle Paul did and taught.

The key question here is “What is God’s Big Purpose or a Big Goal? Does God have a destination in mind? My perspective on this is that God has

- A big purpose: disciple the nations (Matthew 28:18-20), and
- A big vision (or goal): people from every tribe, tongue, and national worshipping around the throne (Rev 7:9-10).

If these are God’s big purpose and goal, then they will form the backdrop, foundation, and overall aim for our missions ministry.

If our group discovers a different purpose or goal, then that will form the backdrop and purpose for our missions ministry.

Perhaps there will be no immediate agreement on a final goal or purpose. In that situation, you will

- Continue to wrestle with the Scriptures you have selected, and/or
- Ask if there are additional Scriptures, and/or
- Ask if some of the Scriptures chosen do not fit missions, and then
- Organize around what those Scriptures call you to do.

Pray for a common and enthusiastic agreement on God's leading in this area.

Your missions strategy will probably begin with a Biblical Basis Section or with a Philosophy Section that begins with the Biblical Basis for your missions ministry. This section will include the key Scriptures that form the basis of your ministry.

**Task:** Using the Strategy Template:

- Write out the scriptures that provide your foundation for missions.
- Write out your understanding of God's end goal for humanity and our part in it.
- Write out the supplemental missions Scriptures.
- Write your own commentary on what you understand these Scriptures call your church to do for whom toward what objectives or results.

## 2. What is Missions?

Not everything that the church is called to do is missions.

It is important to define missions (or "mission") for several reasons:

- Missions is not a biblical word so it is important for you to develop a definition that reflects what you understand the Scripture requires that goes beyond the normal work and ministry of the church and Christians in their normal lives.
- Everyone has their own understanding of missions so you will need to develop a definition you can agree upon so that everyone is talking about the same things.
- Every para-church ministry applies for missions funds. A definition helps you with deciding what is appropriate for your support from the missions budget.
- When missions becomes too broad, church leaders have difficulty seeing what you are trying to accomplish. The missions budget begins to look like a "miscellaneous" budget and purposeful leaders always try to minimize the "miscellaneous" to maximize funds for their true purposes.
- When missions become too broad it is difficult to make a solid impact in the most critical, or strategic arenas, toward the big purpose or goal.
- When missions becomes too broad it can begin to look like everything the church does and lose its particular urgency.
- Missions can become simply "good deeds" while critical ministry is neglected.
- If we pay others out of the missions budget to do ministry that we, the congregation, can do, we limit what the church can accomplish in the far and difficult places of the world.
- If we're fuzzy about what missions is, we tend to respond to the urgent or to vested interests rather than to undertake the neglected and important.
- If church work gets called missions, the hard and far away work of extending the church to the unreached gets neglected. We fail to finish the task!
- If everything is missions, then how do we make progress toward the goal? If everything is missions, then nothing is missions.

Part of your discussion of what missions is will necessarily include what differentiates missions from other church ministry. In many people's minds, missions is almost everything the church does. Why isn't everything missions? And if everything is missions, why is missions a separate ministry? How is missions different? What makes one thing missions and another not missions? Clear answers to these questions are difficult but important.

This is a good place to ask your group to write a definition of missions. This can be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Have each one read their definition. This is a good exercise in hearing the variety of images of missions.

After all definitions have been read, you might ask the rhetorical question: "Should the definition of missions be related to the goal of missions?" The key question here is whether only those things that directly contribute to reaching all peoples is missions or if missions is much broader than that.

In most people's minds, missions is quite broad. When they think of a missionary they may think of someone in Africa, but when any para-church cause is presented, they are likely to think of it as a missions ministry. Further, when someone says, "but that's not missions," what is heard is the hurtful, "but that is not important."

If your definitions do not include humanitarian work or same-culture ministry in your community, you might suggest some examples and ask if that work is missions? Those who say 'yes,' have a broader definition.

My Notes:

**Scope and Boundaries.** A list of "this or also this" choices can help people sort through what they really think. [See a more complete list in the appendix or on the Stuff CD under missions boundaries.](#) There is likely to be substantial disagreement here and a fair amount of negotiation may be required to reach a reasonable consensus.

## Definitions of Missions.

The following is my definition of missions. Yours will probably be different.

*Missions is sending trained and equipped workers across barriers or boundaries for spiritual purposes and supporting these efforts."*

We send someone to do something because it is important and because we can't do it ourselves. Missionaries are trained professionals. Untrained people may be helpers or visitors or trainees. The barriers – language, culture, distance, etc. – are what prevent us from doing it. The ultimate goal is spiritual. All efforts in some way contribute to forming people who know and love Jesus.

Here are two additional definitions of missions.

*Missions is any endeavor aimed toward the goal of reaching beyond the needs of the local congregation for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission – by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ making disciples and relating to the whole need of mankind, both spiritual and physical. How Missions Minded is Your Church? APMC*

*Missions at College Church shall be defined as ministry which fulfills the Great Commission by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ cross-culturally through evangelism, discipleship, Bible translation, church planting and church leadership development, giving priority to the least reached. We recognize the importance of meeting physical and educational needs when this serves the growth of the gospel.*

College Church, Wheaton, Bruce Wilson, September 11, 2007

A good definition of missions suggests several things: (Note a definition of "mission" will be much broader than the following.)

- Missions is work or ministry delegated to one who is *sent* to do it. A mission is something that, by definition, is important to be done.
- *Sending* implies that a person does not choose himself to undertake the mission. It is not his own mission. It is God's mission and the church's mission. The missionary is selected to be the steward of the mission.
- The person who is sent must be equipped and trained for the undertaking as needed to accomplish the mission. One doesn't go simply because he or she is available. He/she must be prepared. One reason a person is sent may be because the mission requires special training, experience, or skills.

- Missions includes *sending* because the work cannot be done by the church people themselves for reasons of distance, culture, language, or other barriers. That which the congregation can do, they should do. What they can't do, they send someone to do.
- All ministry has a spiritual component. Whether it is preaching or humanitarian efforts, whether the spiritual part of the ministry is the major or minor part, there is no mission (in the missions sense) without a spiritual purpose. As Christians we are to love and help those in need. As missionaries, we are to do all that Christians do and also to help people come into fellowship with God. Unless people come to God, all is lost.
- Because missions is a complex and difficult process, all the work behind the scenes that helps make it happen on the front lines is part of the mission enterprise and may be considered part of missions.

The above definition makes some assumptions. Missions is something in particular. It has a meaning and a definition.

It is *not*

- Something we do for ourselves and generally not for Christians.
- Something WE can do in our normal Christian life. Otherwise, we should do it.

It *is*

- Something done "outside" the church. Not for church people.
- Across barriers, e.g. cross-cultural.

Patrick Johnstone defines missions as "Any activity in which Christians are involved for world evangelization." (*The Church is Bigger than You Think*, Patrick Johnstone, p. 12) He says a "missionary" is a Christian SENT OUT with a mission. (Johnstone p. 50)

A missionary is a "professional." To say you are either a missionary or a mission field is like saying that you are either a patient or a doctor! Or you are a student or a professor! It takes training, understanding, perseverance, and experience. Two weeks in Panama doesn't make you a missionary!

Someone has said "Evangelism is the church *growing* where it is. Missions is the church *going* where it isn't."

## Your Church's Definition

You get to decide on your own definition of missions. It may be different from the ones proposed. If the definition is too narrow, it may exclude ministries and tasks that are supportive, indeed required, to accomplish the results you seek. If the definition is too broad, it is difficult to establish priorities among widely divergent kinds of ministry. The task is to set boundaries that differentiate missions from other church ministries.

If people want to define missions too narrowly, you may need to undertake some education of the leadership and congregation to get agreement and commitment. If your definition turns out to be broad, you may later use a budgeting grid and goals to establish an appropriate balance. [See grids in the Appendix. Grids will be dealt with later.]

At this point, attempt to negotiate an agreed upon missions definition. Add additional statements to give examples of categories of ministry that are included and categories of ministry that are not included.

### Task:

Using the Strategy Template:

- Write a definition of missions for your Strategy. [Examples from *Stuff I & II*]
- Write a statement describing the boundaries. Include examples of the kinds of ministries and peoples that would be included in missions and examples of those that would not.

Pray for a common understanding of the scope of missions for our church.

Pray for grace on the part of those in our leadership or congregation who may not understand or agree.

My Notes:

### 3. Purpose

This section is based on the premise that everything a church does should contribute to the purpose of the church. Rick Warren in *The Purpose Driven Church* stated that church leaders should discover their purposes from Scripture and organize the church to fulfill those purposes. Thus every program and activity is organized, conducted, and then evaluated for its contribution to the purpose of the church.

Further, the church missions leadership team exists to help church leaders fulfill the missions part of the church's purpose. The Team is not an independent group establishing its own purposes separate from the church. It is an integral, contributing part of church leadership, pulling together with top church leaders.

To write a strategy that fulfills the church's purpose it is necessary to review the church purpose statement or constitution and identify what part of it requires or suggests cross-cultural or global missions. What does our church purpose statement say? What does it mean? What portion of this purpose statement is fulfilled by doing missions as we have defined it?

Church purpose statements generally fall into three categories:

- The statement, by its wording, clearly *requires* our church to do cross-cultural or international missions.
- The statement, by its wording, does not clearly require missions but doing missions obviously contributes to the purpose. It *allows* missions.
- The statement, as written, does not have a place for missions. If the church purpose statement is geographically or culturally limited or if it is limited to our congregation or our community, missions, according to your definition, may be - in the strictest perspective - *prohibited*.

In either of the two latter situations, the missions team or strategy team may want to help church leaders understand the implications of the church purpose statement and help them consider an appropriate revision.

**Task:**

Using the strategy template, write a Purpose Statement for the missions ministry that obviously builds on, and contributes to, your church purpose. Where possible, use words and phrases from the church purpose statement. [See examples in the appendix or on the Stuff CD.]

Our church purpose statement is a very important document. Let's pray that our congregation will understand and support it and that we as a congregation will wholeheartedly pursue the missions aspect of our purpose.

My Notes:

## 4. The World

Note: If possible add some slides to the presentation from *Exploring World Mission* (CD) by Bryant Myers, (World Vision Resources), or from *Operation World* (CD) by Patrick Johnstone, (Global Mapping Project) or from Jason Mandryk's "The State of the Gospel," <http://www.joshuaproject.net/download.php#ppt>. Post a large world map or have a globe available.

An important part of being strategic is doing work or ministry that

- Is important for the Kingdom, perhaps critical
- Does not unnecessarily overlap or duplicate others' work
- Has not already been done, perhaps has been neglected
- Cannot readily be done by the people in the congregation themselves
- Can be leveraged or multiplied to maximize impact
- And so forth.

For many decades Christians from the West could go anywhere in the world and do almost any ministry or service and it would make a positive contribution to the Kingdom. However, after much research in the 80s and 90s, it has become clear that much important work is not being done, there is much overlap in ministry, and much work being done by Westerners could be done better by nationals. Most importantly, there is work that isn't being done and roles that are desperately needed to reach the Big Goal. Churches should especially consider whether they have a role in such work.

For most church leaders, the critical work still needed to reach the goal is not part of their life experience, their education, or their thinking patterns. Thus we must educate ourselves if we are to understand the most critical obstacles, barriers, and opportunities for reaching the End Goal.

To be strategic, it is important to know quite a bit about the world. This will almost surely require some research on your part.

Some things you may want to know:

- How is Christianity distributed among the countries and nations?
- What is not being done?
- What has been neglected?
- Where are the greatest barriers and obstacles?
- What has the most leverage?
- Where are the greatest opportunities?

- Where are the largest concentrations of the great non-Christian world religions?
- Where are the poorest people?
- Where are the least reached people?
- Where is the church strongest? Weakest?
- Where are the greatest concentrations of Christian resources? Where the least?
- Where do people suffer from hunger, poor water, and diseases like AIDS?
- Where are missionaries restricted?
- Where are there many indigenous mission agencies and missionaries?
- Where is the church growing the most rapidly?
- Where are people least responsive to the Gospel?
- Where are the largest concentrations of missionaries? The smallest?
- What roles and resources are most needed from Westerners?
- What are the greatest needs, barriers, vacancies, and opportunities in relation to The Goal?

It will probably be necessary to assign to one or two researchers the task of answering the above questions. The most significant findings could be written up in a summary or set of summary statements and perhaps listed in a chart form such as that below.

Pray for your researchers, for diligence and insight in the research, and for a common understanding of the results among your team.

My Notes:

The following example chart lists some Big Challenges:

Add any major challenges to the following list.

Rank these challenges as

- A (Should be a top or important priority for us)
- B (Should be considered as a priority for us)
- C (Although important, this is not our particular role)

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Priority to Us</b>			<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Priority to Us</b>		
Muslim World	A	B	C	Poor and Oppressed	A	B	C
Other world religion	A	B	C	Children & Youth	A	B	C
Out of Reach Groups	A	B	C	Diseases and Disasters	A	B	C
Creative Access Areas	A	B	C	Persecution & Fanaticism	A	B	C
Asia	A	B	C	Pluralism & Nominalism	A	B	C
Cities	A	B	C		A	B	C
					A	B	C

**Task:**

Using your strategy template, write out a section called Major World Challenges listing your primary findings. Include a summary of your consensus on the most important obstacles, barriers, and opportunities for reaching The Goal.

Resources for Research: *Operation World*, *Exploring World Mission*, *Mission Frontiers Magazine*, <http://www.joshuaproject.net/download.php#ppt>

My Notes:

## Discussion of the Four Primary Inputs:

What have we learned that contributes to answering The Key Question?

What have we learned about what God wants done from Scripture?

What have we learned about our church's commitment from our church's purpose?

What have we learned about the great needs and opportunities in the world?

What common threads are appearing?

Can you see some things that God has clearly arranged or that He is doing now that give us direction and priority?

What items do we need to specifically pray about?

My Notes:

---

## II. CONTENT (continued)

### **B. Secondary Inputs: Key Factors for Establishing Priorities and Selecting Focus Areas**

We now focus on Key Factors for helping us establish priorities and consider areas for focus within the overall big project of missions. These factors are unique for each church; they represent what you understand – after research, prayer, and discussion – to be most strategic for your congregation in order to accomplish what you understand God wants to do through your church. You will deal with some of these factors and disregard others.

These are preferences, but they are more than preferences. They are negotiable, but not on the basis of your pet project, your friend the missionary, your hot button, or your vested interest. They are the factors that you, together, believe God will leverage to help maximize your particular church's contribution to His purposes in the world.

Not all factors are equal in importance to every church. Some of the factors will elicit strong feelings and opinions. Others will seem to be of little interest for your church. Try to distinguish between those where a few individuals hold strong preferences and those that are truly important for your church's strategy.

A common commitment to gain a consensus on the key factors for your church will help you narrow down the myriads of needs and opportunities to those where God may have you effectively focus some of your efforts.

For each factor, there are several questions that are appropriate to ask. For example:

- How have we historically operated with regard to this factor?
- How do our current missions decisions show our position on this factor?
- How strongly held is this position?
  - By leaders or key influencers?
  - By our congregation?
  - By members of our team?
- Where do we think we should be in relation to this factor in the future? Do we have strong opinions? Are they similar or divergent?

- How important is this factor in regard to what we know so far about the Key Question (*What does God want to accomplish in the world through our church?*)
- How difficult do we expect it to be to bring the appropriate changes?
- Is this an issue we should tackle sooner or later?
- Is there some education (upward or outward) that is needed before we try to make this change?
- And finally—do we need to deal with issue in our strategy or is it largely irrelevant? If you don't need it, forget about it and go on to the next.

Pray together for insight and unity as you enter this important section of strategy development.

My Notes:

## 1. Audience

"Audience" addresses the "whom do we serve?" question. Who should be the focus of our ministries? Who should receive priority attention—evangelism, service, ministry, love, or assistance—from our church? This question may encompass location, culture, religious background, people groups, and/or various kinds of needs. Following are some examples.

- Geography: People in our community, in a certain portion of our city, in a particular city, or a rural area, country, or region of the world
- Culture or ethnicity: Our own culture, an inner city urban culture, an immigrant group, a nationality here or abroad
- Needs: Poverty, oppression, physical or emotional handicaps, justice, abuse, incarceration, addiction, AIDs or disease, orphans, etc.

- Religion: Christians, nominal Christians, non-religious people with a Christian heritage, evangelized non-Christians, persecuted Christians, the young developing church, non-religious, other great religions, tribal religions, least evangelized.
- Least reached: One category that should at least be considered by most churches is the category of those that are least evangelized or have least access to the gospel, that is, are most "out of reach." All lost people are equally lost. But not all lost people have equal opportunity to hear of Christ. Those who have very little opportunity must receive a high priority from Christians.

The group must determine whether "audience" is a key factor for their church strategy. If yes, they must decide what groups could be their key audiences. If no, they can omit this category and go on to the next.

**Task:**

Determine whether "audience" is a key factor for your church's strategy. If so, the group must write a summary of those groups that are the priority audiences and record them on the Strategy Template [See Appendix.]

Put your choice of critical strategic audiences in a format like the following table.

Rank these audiences as

- A (Should be a top or important priority for Us)
- B (Should be considered as a priority for Us)
- C (Although important, this is not our particular role)

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Importance to Us</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Importance to Us</b>
Continent of _____	A B C	Children or Youth	A B C
Country of _____	A B C	Rapid Harvest Areas	A B C
Religious Bloc _____	A B C	Nominal Christians	A B C
Unreached-10/40 Window	A B C	Heavily evangelized	A B C
Persecuted Church	A B C	Local groups	A B C
Young/Developing Church	A B C	Abused & addicted	A B C
Poor and Oppressed	A B C	Persecuted Christians	A B C

Pray for guidance in this endeavor.

## 2. Balance: Global / Local

How does our church structure for the four categories of people listed in Acts 1:8?

- Jerusalem (the natural spheres of influence of the church),
- Judea (geographically near, culturally similar people),
- Samaria (geographically near, cultural different people), and the
- Ends of the earth (geographically distant, culturally different people)?

I have developed a modern short-hand for these groups:

- People like us nearby
- People unlike us nearby
- People unlike us far away

Is local, regional, or U.S. ministry included in our definition of missions or mission?

- Same culture and/or cross-cultural?
- Evangelistic and/or social/compassion?
- Other?

If your definition of missions includes "local and/or regional or national," how should your resources be apportioned?

### Task:

In the chart below, mark the row that best fits your proposed missions strategy.

Balance: Local, Regional, or U.S. ministries should be	Importance to Us		
	A	B	C
A separate ministry with its own budget.			
The highest portion, 75% or more of the budget			
About equal, perhaps 50% of the budget			
A smaller proportion, perhaps 30% of the budget			
Other _____			
A separate ministry with its own budget.			

In the chart below mark the importance to your church of each listed component and any others you wish to add.

If this is important to your church, write a section in the Strategy Template about Balance: Global and Local.

<b>Balance:</b>	<b>Importance to Us</b>		
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Local ministry to our same or similar cultures</b> Evangelism or church planting ministries Compassion and social ministries			
<b>Local ministry to other cultures</b> Evangelism or church planting ministries Compassion and social ministries			
<b>Local ministry to ethnic minorities should be</b>			
<b>Regional or U.S. ministries</b> Evangelism or church planting ministries Compassion and social ministries			

### 3. Focus – 1000 Points of Light or a Beacon

How broadly or narrowly should we spread our efforts? Is this an important factor for us? What factors help us decide?

**Task:**

Determine whether this is a key factor for your church. If yes, decide how you hope to distribute your resources and efforts. Use the chart below. If no, omit this category from your strategy and go on to the next.

Do we have focus areas now? List any of your current missions ministries that receive a much greater focus than other missions involvements.

<b>Degree of Focus</b>	<b>Select One</b>	<b>Importance to Us</b>		
		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Just 1 or 2 major thrusts				
A few major emphases and several smaller ones				
Several large efforts and many smaller ones				
A broad variety of missionaries, partners and/or projects				
Other _____				

Write a paragraph of commentary or explanation of your proposed position on this strategic factor.

#### 4. History - Church Missions History and Values

One of the hazards of developing a new missions strategy is the possibility of weighing too lightly what God is doing through our church's missions efforts now. This may occur because some of our team are new and have little acquaintance with the church's missions ministry or because we have been out of touch with the missionaries and the mission work we have supported.

However, to quote Tom Horn, "We should not assume that God has not led us in the past." Even though we may suspect that past missions decisions were sometimes made whimsically or without due deliberation, that does not constitute proof that God has not been working behind the scenes to provide guidance. We are obligated to assess carefully the ministry in progress before abandoning it for a different approach.

Before making decisions, it is important to learn as much as possible about current missions efforts, current supported missionaries, projects and partnerships, their progress, goals, and hopes. However, like research and development, evaluation cannot consist of results alone. Spiritual progress in some areas of the world and among some people is much, much more difficult and slow than in others. It is important to understand much more about the ministry than just things that can be counted.

How has God led us in the past? What has been important to us? What factors have guided our decisions? How much of this heritage is important to retain and build on? What needs to change?

As we consider future changes, how gradual or how abrupt will our changes be from our past to our future in missions? How important is it to make a slow, graceful, smooth transition from the past because of current critical ministries, a high level of congregational commitment and investment or a high level of missionary/ministry dependency on the church?

Alternatively, how important is it to break with the past to become more effective and purposeful and to gain leadership and congregational commitment?

History and Values	Select One	Importance to Us		
		A	B	C
The new strategy should look a lot like now				
We should make minor changes slowly				
We should make major changes but slowly				
We should make major changes quickly.				
The biggest change we need to make is:				

Great potential exists for missionaries and church people to misunderstand this process and/or for us to unintentionally cause distress. Pray that we will be wise, generous, and merciful while being true to following God's direction in this area.

**5. 'Our Own' - Relationships and Congregational Candidates**

According to surveys, most missionaries supported by a church were selected for support *primarily* because people in the congregation knew the individual or family. There are a number of reasons why relationships are important and a significant factor to be considered. However, when a prior relationship takes priority over the other important inputs in this list, it is perhaps subject to discussion whether relationships should enjoy such a high priority. It is difficult to find other ministries or businesses (outside a family business) in the Western world where relationships are the primary factor for deciding whom to employ. For example, we don't hire our senior pastor or our church business manager based on who we know that feels called to the position.

How important is your prior relationship to the missionaries you consider for support or to a potential ministry partner organization? What priority will you give to identify, raise up, train and send candidates from your own church? Will you support 'your own,' even when most other considerations would suggest someone else? Will you partner with, or support, missionaries sent from other churches? Will you deliberately build relationships with new organizations or individuals to pursue a ministry or focus area? What priority will you assign between the two?

How important has this been in our past? How difficult will it be to change?

Pray here.

**Task:**

Determine whether a prior relationship is a precondition, an important factor, or a minor factor for partnering or support.

If it is not an important factor, skip this section and move on to the next.  
 If this has been an important issue in the past, then determine how important it is and how we will address it for ongoing missions ministry.

Discuss the following questions:

- How important has this been in our past?
- Do we want to try to change it?
- How difficult will it be to change? Who will resist?
- How will the issue keep surfacing?
- What will we do when a candidate applies with whom we have a relationship but whose ministry does not fit our strategy?

Relationships - As a criteria for support Having a sound relationship through our church or movement or school <i>prior to</i> partnering with or supporting a ministry should be	Select One	Importance to Us		
		A	B	C
Central to our strategy and operation				
One of a few important factors				
Just one of many factors				
Other:				

## 6. Our Roles - Church Appropriate Roles or “Church Fit”

Just as individuals have different strengths, gifts, and personalities, individual churches have different strengths, gifts, and personalities. Some kinds of ministry seem to be particularly suited for a given church. How much will our particular qualities as a church influence our missions ministries, projects, partners, and missionaries? For a fuller treatment of this subject, including worksheets, see **Building Global Vision** and **More Stuff**, p. 18. Some of the factors to consider are included below.

### Task:

Determine whether we believe this is a significant issue for our future missions ministry. If it is not, skip this section and go on to the next.

If so, research your church for those qualities that can positively affect our missions ministry. Write a brief summary of what you learned about values, philosophy, dreams, vocations, hobbies, and spiritual gifts of your congregation.

Write a summary of the kinds of missions ministries and involvements that best fit your congregation. Draft a section of strategy entitled Our Roles.

Some questions you may ask about your church (from *Building Global Vision*):

- **Founding Dream:** Who were the people who started our church? What were their interests and concerns? Why did they start this church? What is our founding dream? Our heritage?
- **Social Situation:** What is our special social situation? What are our demographics (age, income, status)? What are our psychographics (our lifestyle: our interests, desires, fears, values)?
- **Special Circumstances:** What is the age of our church? Our facilities? The age of our congregation? Our financial wealth or indebtedness? Our location? Our ethnic composition? Our proximity to people groups or ministry opportunities?
- **Vocations, Skills, Expertise:** What vocations, skills, experiences, hobbies, and gifts are characteristic of our congregation?
- **Philosophy:** How do we operate as a church? Are we pastor led? Elder led? Congregation led? Are we Bible centered? Family focused? Outreach driven? Who makes plans and decisions? Are we purpose-driven? Proactive? Reactive? Contemporary? Traditional? Do we have very professional programming? Are we relaxed and laid back?
- **Ministries:** What kinds of ministries are most important to our church? Where do we excel? Are we heavy on educational type ministries? Do we have formal classes? Are we more experiential? Do we have many side doors through focus groups or recovery ministries? Are we strongest in children's ministry? Are we heavy on home Bible Studies? Are we best at church-based training of leaders? Are we more community focused?
- **Connections and Bridges:** What connections and bridges has God put before us? What ethnicities are present in our congregation? In our neighborhood? What ministries are we involved with that reach out? What cross-cultural needs are in our back yard?
- **What partners do we have?** With what Christian workers or missionaries do we have strong connections? Are we heavily in league with our denomination or a particular mission agency?
- **What trends or themes do we see in our church?**
- **What do we learn from an assessment of our church that helps us see what kinds of missions ministries fit?**
- **What kinds of ministry tasks and roles fit best with the way God has gathered and equipped our congregation?**
- **What do we learn about **The Key Question**:** What does God want to accomplish in the world through our church?

## 7. Participation

Missional churches consider being involved in mission as core to being a disciple. They seek to involve every believer in service, ministry, care, compassion, and witness in their own community and city as well in contributing to reach the greater world. Most hands-on work is local and so great effort is expended to involve as many people as possible in local ministry, both in same culture ministry and cross-cultural ministry. The church often partners with a number of local organizations to facilitate incorporation of volunteers and supports these organizations financially. In addition, these churches often desire to send teams of people to locations farther away to personally participate in mission work.

Questions to discuss and decide:

- How important is it for our congregation to be able to contribute hands-on to the ministry?
- How important is it that our people benefit from involvement in the ministry?
- How important is it that our people be able to go there?
- How important is it for the work to be in an area that is 'safe' and financially accessible to our congregation?
- How important is it that the ministry be the kind of ministry that our people can practically assist on-site?
- How important is it for the work to be nearby?

### Task:

If this is an important criterion for your church, write out a statement describing your intentions and desires.

<b>Participation</b> The opportunity for our congregation to contribute to the hands-on work of the ministry should be	<b>Select One</b>	<b>Importance to Us</b>		
		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
A primary part of our strategy				
One of a few important factors for our strategy				
Significant but not a major factor for our strategy				
Not really important				

You have done much difficult work in evaluating the above factors. You are about to enter into a review discussion of what you have studied and a consolidation of next steps. Pray for God to open minds to receive His thoughts as you proceed.

My Notes:

## 8. Partnership

One trend among churches is the desire to work in partnership with other entities toward a common goal. Rather than supporting a single missionary through an organization with its own goals and methods, the church may desire to work in partnership with its own denomination, a mission organization, or a network of churches and organizations to jointly strategize and deploy resources. Alternatively, the church may desire to support such joint efforts through providing ideas, resources, teams, and perhaps longer term missionary involvement. The key concept here is synergistic efforts toward a worthy goal.

Questions to Consider:

- How important is it for us or our missionaries to be involved with or work in teams?
- How important is it to partner with other churches, organizations or movements based in the U.S. or in our area?
- To what degree do we desire to work in partnership with other churches, organizations, networks, and movements on the field?
- What partnerships are we involved in now?
- Are these partnerships the type we want to foster in the future?
- What kinds of other partnerships do we know about?
- Are any of these particularly attractive to us? Why?
- What particular kinds of partnership do we desire to foster?
- How would we go about it?

**Task:**

Determine whether this is an important issue for our church.  
 If not, skip this section and proceed to the next.

If this is an important criterion for your church, write out a statement describing your intentions and desires.

Write one or more paragraphs that:

- Describe the partnerships that are important to our church.
- Give the rationale for why this is important to us.
- Explain the degree to which this will influence our missions decisions.

Partnerships - As a criteria for support	Your Choice(s)	Importance to Us		
		A	B	C
Our church will partner with our denomination or fellowship				
Our church will partner with other U.S. churches				
Our church will partner with one or more U.S. based mission organizations				
Our church will partner with people group focused networks				
Our church will partner with national organizations or churches				
Our church will partner with a national ministry leader under the auspices of a national ministry board				
Our missionary(s) will partner with national workers or national churches.				
The selected models of partnership will be				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A primary criteria of involvement and support</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of a few important factors for involvement</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just one of many factors for involvement</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not really important</li> </ul>				

## 9. Task - Ministry Types and Tasks

What ministry tasks do we understand are most important, critical, or strategic for missions?

Add to the following chart as appropriate.

Rank these challenges as

- A (Should be a top or important priority for Us)
- B (Should be considered as a priority for Us)
- C (Although important, this is not our particular role)

Ministry Task	Importance	Ministry Task	Importance
Pre-Evangelism, Translation	A B C	Educational ministries	A B C
Evangelism	A B C	Social & Justice ministries	A B C
Discipleship Ministries	A B C	Technology support	A B C
Leadership Development	A B C	Medical and health	A B C
Church Planting	A B C	Poverty & Development	A B C
Service and Compassion	A B C	Support ministries	A B C

### Task:

Pray about whether this is one of your most important factors. There is a wide diversity among individuals as to what tasks are more important and most urgent, and well as what is most appealing or what is most heart wrenching. Pray for God's wisdom and guidance in this area.

Determine whether "the task" is a key factor for your church.  
If not, omit this category from your strategy and go on to the next.

If yes, decide what ministries or ministry types are most important, urgent or strategic using the above chart. Write a summary of those ministry tasks you believe are most important, urgent, or strategic with your rationale as to why this is so.

List the various kinds of missions ministries or tasks that your church is doing or supporting now. Of these you have listed, write those you think are most important or critical. List additional strategic tasks you believe are of high priority for your church.

My Notes:

### **Discussion of the Secondary Inputs (Key Factors)**

Remember that the key factors for your church are not necessarily the ones that appeal to you or raise the prominence of a ministry that you support. Select the key factors that you believe will best help your church to maximize its effectiveness in missions, in reaching the End Goal.

Which factors have been most important in our past?

Which factors are most important for the Key Question?

What needs to change?

Where do we need education?

- For our leaders?
- For our team?
- For our congregation?

Which factors will be most important to other key people and influencers? Who has vested interests?

Where do we anticipate disagreement?

How will we pray through these things?

### **The Key Question Summary Steps:**

#### **What does God want to accomplish in the world through our church?**

[Priorities, Goals, Areas of Focus or Concentration] [*More Stuff*, 16]

Review the charts filled out above.

What stands out as particularly important? [*Stuff*, 37]

- Regarding the Goal (Scripture)
- Regarding our understanding of missions
- Regarding the World
- Regarding the Secondary Inputs (Key Factors)

What common themes, if any, do you see?

Can you begin to see a clear picture of what God wants to accomplish through our church?

Can you identify particular priorities or focus areas or goals?

Pray together as you put on paper your conclusions from the above discussion.

### **Task:**

Priorities: Secondary Inputs (Key Factors)

Using the Strategy Template

1. Select the four or five factors that are most important for your strategy. [If your list does not include *Audience* or *Task*, you may want to reconsider.]
2. Decide how you want to handle each of these factors.
3. Write out a statement for each one that explains *why* this factor is important for your church.
4. Write out a statement that explains *how* this factor should be incorporated in your strategy.
5. Include these statements in your Strategy under the topic: Priorities.

### **Goals:**

1. Review the Budgeting Grids in the Supplemental Documents.
2. Select one that fits your priorities (or modify one as needed).
3. Analyze your current missions involvements in terms of budget dollars, number of missionaries, partnerships, projects, and perhaps volunteers, and put the figures in the "Now" section of the grid.
4. Agree upon goals for 3 or 5 years from now and put those figures in the grid.
5. These comprise your objective goals.
6. Add this grid to your Strategy Template.

### **Caution:**

Look for consistency in your document. Your priorities must build upon your foundation. The secondary factors you choose and your position on them must build upon and support the answer to The Key Question and your foundation (primary inputs). If not, you may have simply confirmed your past biases, preferences, and personal commitments.

For example, if in your foundation you conclude that God's End Goal is for all people everywhere to have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and come to Christ, and if your key factors do not include "audiences" or "ministry tasks," your foundation and key factors may be out of alignment. After going through the whole strategy process, do not allow yourselves to conclude by saying one thing (in the foundation section) and doing another (in the key factor section).

My Notes:

---

## III. IMPLEMENTATION

### A. Principles

1. **Continuity with the past** – We do not assume that God has not led us in the past. In what ways do our current missions involvements contribute to the new strategy? What will we include, strengthen, modify, adjust, or grandfather? How do we need to make changes?
2. **Addition** – Make changes primarily by addition of new resources.
3. **Attrition** – Make changes by not replacing completed projects, missionaries who leave the field, and partners that change courses.
4. **Saying 'no' to good things** – The biggest failure in implementation of a strategy is the difficulty of saying 'no' to good things, favorite things, pet projects, and people we know or like.
5. **When to disassociate** – Be careful, thoughtful, merciful, and wise.

Pray about your upcoming discussion on implementing these principles.

### Discussion on Implementation Principles

What have we done well so far?

Where do we anticipate difficulties?

What remedial steps do we anticipate?

What items do we need to pray about?

My Notes:

## B. Implementation Steps (Suggested)

1. Expand ministry in your priority areas.
  - a. Apply new resources in the under-resourced components of your strategy.
  - b. Discover resources available for movement in the direction of the strategy.
  - c. Seek new missionaries, partners, organizations and projects.
2. Learn how current missionaries relate to your strategy. Leverage them.
  - a. Some fit well.
  - b. Some can bend a little and reorient to more strongly support the strategy.
  - c. Some can assist you in growing in your areas of interest and concern.
  - d. Some can be grandfathered.
3. Allow attrition in non-strategic areas.
4. Use a grid or point system (along with your sound qualitative judgments) for decision making.
5. Say "no."
6. Project numbers of people sent and/or numbers of people involved from your church and build them into your long-range plan.
7. Organize and conduct mission trips to assist supported ministries and follow up with them to keep them involved in the mission effort they assisted.
8. Educate the congregation.
9. Raise up your own missionaries.
10. Recruit, train, and deploy your own people in your strategic missions efforts.

My Notes:

## IV. APPLICATION AND WRAP UP

### Next Steps for Your Church

Items for Prayer:

After a workshop or first consultation, here are some sample assignments:

Begin working through the Strategy Template:

- List (again) the Scripture verses that are foundational to your missions ministry.
- Write out each verse in its entirety.
- From your understanding of these verses, make a list of what your church is called to do. Where needed, give examples.
- Write out your church purpose (or mission) statement.
- Draft a purpose statement for the missions ministry.
- Review your definition of missions and modify it if needed.
- Write out your scope of missions. Give examples of what is included and what is excluded. Be sure your scope and definition are consistent.
- Work through "Our World" – pages 35-48 of *Building Global Vision*
- Work through "Our Church" – pages 49-55 of *Building Global Vision*
- From the Key Factors identified in this session, list those that you need to address in the Priorities section of your strategy.
- For each one write a statement explaining *why* this is important.
- For each one write a statement explaining *how* you will address this factor in your strategy.
- Write a set of goals.
- Modify the Deployment Grid categories as appropriate and agree on target percentages to formalize your goals.

### Assignments with Due Dates:

1)

2)

3)

4)

### Next steps for the Facilitator:

1)

2)

3)

Once the strategy is approved, ongoing steps often include

- Establishing missions policies and procedures that support the strategy
- Restructuring and orienting the missions leadership team
- Developing and implementing missions education for the congregation

May God give you a wonderful harvest for the Kingdom,

*David Mays*

## Template for a Missions Strategy

Missions Strategy for \_\_\_\_\_ Church. Draft #1 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Foundations

#### Biblical Basis

Missions Scriptures: (written out)

We believe these Scriptures call us to \_\_\_\_\_ (do what) \_\_\_\_\_  
 so that \_\_\_\_\_ (who) \_\_\_\_\_  
 can \_\_\_\_\_ (benefit how) \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Missions

Definition of Missions:

Scope and Boundaries of Missions:

Includes, for example, ...

Excludes, for example, ...

#### Purpose

Church Purpose (or Mission) Statement

Missions Purpose (or Mission) Statement

#### Major World Challenges

Statement of greatest obstacles, barriers, & opportunities to completing the Great Commission

#### Priorities

Include your most important priorities from among the sections on audiences, ministry tasks, focus, balance, history, relationships, partnerships, and participation.

#### Goals

In five years, we desire to see our missions efforts change as shown in the chart below:  
 Include a budgeting grid showing today's proportion of efforts and your goals.

## About the Author



### **David Mays, Ph.D.**

David Mays serves as the Director for Learning Initiatives for The Mission Exchange, a network of evangelical U.S.-based mission organizations empowering the global mission community.

For more than twenty years David served as the Great Lakes Regional Director for ACMC. He has advanced degrees in both science and theology and an extensive management background with a major pharmaceutical company. David has been involved in missions as a layman, church leader, and missions consultant. Through workshops, conferences, consultations, and writing, he has helped hundreds of churches to greater missions commitment and effectiveness.

David consults with church leaders in the areas of leadership, management, and communication. He has a keen understanding of how to help churches relate missions to contemporary culture. His passionate, informal and sometimes humorous style makes him an effective speaker. David and his wife, Marcy, have three married children and live in the Indianapolis area.

\* \* \* \* \*

To obtain this material on CD contact [DavidLMays@sbcglobal.net](mailto:DavidLMays@sbcglobal.net) or see [www.DavidMays.org](http://www.DavidMays.org).