

Effective Missions Leadership in Your Church

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Churches today are expecting more from their missionaries. They want them to exhibit stronger spiritual formation, better preparation for the field, more adequate fund raising, better planning for the future, and more adept strategizing skills.

Are we expecting the same from missions leaders in the sending churches? Effective missions leaders have these characteristics:

They are people of prayer.

1. Jesus did—Mark 1:35
2. We should—1 Thessalonians 5:17
3. There is nothing you can do that can accomplish more than to pray
4. Ask the Lord of harvest to send out workers into his fields—Matthew 9:37

They want to accomplish the mission of God.

1. Missio Dei (“mission of God”)—What is the mission of God?
2. Luke 19:10
3. John 4:34-38

They have a developed relationship with Jesus.

1. Transformation (see Romans 8)
2. Sacrifice

They desire the guidance of the Holy Spirit—Romans 8:5-17.

They care about the lost.

1. Be aware of unreached peoples—See the following websites:
 - a. AD2000 (www.ad2000.org/1040ovr.htm),
 - b. Harding University’s Center for World Missions (www.harding.edu/cwm/),
 - c. Abilene Christian University’s Halbert Institute for Missions (www.acu.edu/ministry/centers_institutes/missions.html)
 - d. Brigada (www.brigada.org)
2. View people from a spiritual perspective—2 Cor 5:16
3. Visit field—shows the Christians that we care about them and their people
4. Care holistically—spiritually, physically (but don’t carry the baby all the time; do what truly helps; a “leg up”)

They care for the missionary.

1. The whole person and family—more than just a business arrangement; more than just the employee, also the family; extended family who stay behind
2. Support (financial, physical, emotional, academic)
3. Start to finish—it takes time to prepare for an international move, so don’t expect them to quit whatever job they had before and then move immediately; allow time for bonding with sponsoring church; allow time at disengagement to reconnect in the U.S.

4. Develop accountability (reporting, evaluations)—the mission field is a stressful place, encourage adequate time off for marriage and family; allow for seminars; ask about the family and marriage in reports and evaluations
5. Field visit (interview/evaluation)—use a tool to help you evaluate when you visit; questions you ask everyone

Have a growing knowledge about missions.

1. theology—biblical foundations; make sure you know the purpose of the mission from the start
2. fields—receptive or not, socio-economic level
3. missionaries and missionary cycle—decision-making, training, prep, going to the field, time on the field, furloughs, disengagement, re-entry, new work
4. cross-cultural understanding—different worldviews, expectations
5. strategy and methodology—church planting, schools, ESL, single v. multi-church, small groups, support roles (Continent of Great Cities, missionaries-in-residence, MRN), etc.

They are intentional.

1. Funding—every church needs to do mission work; start small and intentionally build; make the funding adequate for what you are doing
—many “pieces” of work v. seriously engaged; don’t put all eggs in one basket
—long-term missions, short-term, special missions such as Truth for Today, EEM, WBS, WCBC, Herald of Truth, Let’s Start Talking, World Radio, supporting roles (MRN, Continent, missionaries-in-residence, Mission Alive, Kairos)
2. choosing missionaries—very important; don’t just choose the latest one to come along; interview, take applications, questionnaire (doctrinal, other); personality and emotional testing
3. choosing fields—we usually leave this to the missionary, i.e. pick a good missionary and the field will be OK
4. guidelines and policies—it helps to work through it and write it down; helps make some minor decisions; work agreements; long-term and short-term philosophies
5. missions committee—a group of people who have some time to focus on this important ministry; send them to seminars like GMC, Mission Seminar at ACU; encourage them to read books on missions; help develop philosophy, guidelines, policies, help choose fields and missionaries, do support activities

They promote missions.

1. They create missions awareness by having periods of missions emphasis, inviting missionaries to speak, writing, involving church members in sending packages to their missionaries (holidays, birthdays, anniversaries).
2. They are committed to missions education by dedicating a month or a quarter every 2-3 years to teaching missions in the Bible classes.
3. They encourage short-term missions, realizing that they are critical to creating a passion for missions.
 - They help their members go on short-term trips and involve the local church in sending them and praying on their behalf.
 - They make this a budget item.
 - They plan short-term efforts at home and abroad consisting of church campaigns, service projects, inner city efforts, Vacation Bible Schools.
 - They promote accountability by reporting to the church afterward.
4. They raise up missionaries, telling young people at an early age that the church wants to raise up full-time servants, sending them on campaigns, mission trips and mission internships.

Two helpful resource books:

Van Rhee, Gailyn. Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies. Zondervan, 251 pages.

Van Rheeën, Gailyn and Bob Waldron. 2002. *The Status of Missions: A Nationwide Survey of Churches of Christ*. ACU Press, 142 pages.