



cultivate

*Creating a Culture of Missions
in Your Church*

mtw
Mission to the World

Course Outline

- I. **Lay of the Land – God’s Heart for the Nations**
 - a) Who is God?
 - b) What is the Global Context?
 - c) Where Are You?

- II. **Setting the Plow – Establishing Vision and Values**
 - a) Values and Vision
 - b) Alignment to Vision

- III. **Cultivating the Culture – Connecting and Engaging**
 - a) Connect
 - b) Engage

- IV. **Workers for the Harvest – Raising up and Launching**
 - a) Identify and Raise Up Workers
 - b) Launching Workers

- V. **Next Steps Along the Path**
 - a) Next Steps
 - b) Resources

4-Week Online Course	One-Day Seminar
Consists of (4) 1.5 hour Zoom Meetings scheduled over the course of a month (For example: Monday nights at 7:30 pm on Feb 3, 10, 17, and 24)	Consists of a single day, 6 hour seminar; typically 9 am- 3 pm with lunch
Led by MTW Trainer	Led by MTW Trainer
Church missions team members attend Zoom meetings together. There will be lots of time to work together on practical steps!	Church missions team members attend the One-Day Seminar together. There will be lots of time to work together on practical steps!
Online homework is given before seminar and in between meetings	Online homework is given before seminar
You will have an opportunity to learn from other churches also going through Cultivate	You will have an opportunity to learn from other churches also going through Cultivate

SAMPLE LESSON



What Is the Goal or Target? The goal is to be a Sending Church.

As we stated in the introduction, the definition of a Sending Church is: A church where missions is integrated into its spiritual fabric (DNA). Sending Churches:

1. Pray fervently for the Lord to raise up missionaries from the congregation.
2. Challenge members through every avenue of spiritual formation of God's mission to bring the nations to Himself.
3. Identify, develop, and launch members who are called to missions through an intentional and structured process.
4. Act as a sounding board for missionaries' ministry vision and direction.
5. Establish a robust plan for ongoing, spiritual, physical, and emotional care for missionaries serving on the field and while on home assignment.

In order to become a sending church, it is essential to establish your values and vision.

a. Essential Values – Key Convictions for Missions

Values are the guiding principles that keep your vision focused and on track. Well-articulated values are essential in becoming a fully orbbed sending church. The following values use the acronym **GRASP** and encapsulate the convictions we believe are necessary for creating a culture of missions.

1. **Gospel-Centered – Understanding the mission of the church.**
The Great Commission is the specific task of the Church to be established among every people group. Stephen Neill says, "If everything is mission, nothing is mission." While there is a biblical call to evangelize locally and live missionally, the Great Commission is incomplete without intentionally and contextually proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ beyond our "Jerusalem" or our "Samaria" in order to establish gospel-centered churches.
2. **Recklessly Dependent – Stepping out in God-honoring faith**
Following Christ will require faith that seems reckless but honors Him. Every missions endeavor includes risk of some kind whether physical, emotional, or spiritual (and in

most cases all three). Christ made it clear that doing the work of His kingdom will include suffering.

3. Altogether Integrated – Including the whole church

A successful missions movement in the church involves the whole church. The first key ingredient is an “activated leadership” willing to support and champion the vision (Matthew Ellison, *Sixteen:Fifteen*). Once the leadership is on board the entire congregation must then be engaged. We acknowledge the priesthood of all believers with a diversity of spiritual gifts and talents.

4. Strategically Focused – Staying on course in global missions

The saying is true, “If you aim at nothing, you’ll hit it every time.” Having an overarching strategic plan to follow is essential even if it changes over time. Through prayer, a biblical assessment of global needs, and your church’s unique calling, will help you remain focused on your global missions efforts.

5. Prayer for Advancing Missions – Relying fully on the Lord

Corporate and individual prayer is absolutely essential to missions. When we pray for missions we are mysteriously and yet powerfully engaged in advancing God’s global kingdom.

Note: For churches formulating a missions team for the first time, see the document “Missions Committee” for formation, structure, and best practices. This can be found on the MTWLearn resources page.

b. Casting Vision

A common temptation for church leaders wanting to establish and grow a missions ministry is to just jump in and take action (i.e. plan a conference, support missionaries, send members on a summer project). A bias for action can be a good thing, but creating a culture of missions and maximizing your church’s potential depends on one thing: **a carefully developed vision**. Clearly establishing the purpose and direction for your missions ministry will reap a bountiful harvest down the road.

1. Purpose of a vision statement – A good vision statement should do two things: inspire and inform.

- a. Inspire – People want to be part of something compelling, challenging, and significant. God is calling us to something larger than ourselves. What could be more compelling than the Great Commission?
- b. Inform – A church’s vision statement is a compass pointing the ministry in a certain direction—and away from other directions. A good vision statement will help leaders make decisions and to say no to certain possibilities because they’ve said yes to others.

2. Components of a vision statement – A biblical example of a vision statement is found in Nehemiah 2:17: “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” Nehemiah’s statement has four major components that we can learn from in casting vision.
 - a. Clarity – A clear path that enables them to stay on task.
 - b. Motivation – Addressing a need and call for a response.
 - c. Achievable – Within reach over time (in the strength of the Lord).
 - d. Measurable – Has some quantifiable goals.

3. Vision statement examples – Take a moment to read the following vision statements. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these statements?
 - a. First Church will endeavor to plant 50 indigenous churches in 50 great cities of the world utilizing church planting centers with our global partners.
 - b. We will glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commission.
 - c. Fueled by a passion for God’s glory, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit to sharing the gospel and making disciples cross-culturally so that Christ-honoring churches grow among the nations in three geographic locations.
 - d. The goal of the missions ministry of Covenant Church is to support missionaries in cross-cultural settings.
 - e. The missions team exists so that our neighbors and the nations have access to the gospel of Jesus, so that they may believe, follow, and worship Him. We desire all members to have a burden for the nations, evidenced by:
 - being aware of and praying for our global partners and global members
 - personally financing an unreached church-planting/disciple-making work
 - having a friendship with at least one international friend
 - sending five units in an unreached church-planting work by 2030

Individual Work: Vision Words and Phrases

Give everyone 10-15 minutes to spend time choosing vision words and phrases for your missions vision. If your church has a vision statement, refer to that for words, phrases, and ideas you might want to consider using.

Vision Words and Phrases:

Glory/ify	Send/ing/t	Poor	Love
Worship	Missio Dei	Mercy/Deed	Go/Follow/Obey
Global/World	Passion/ate	Church	Spirit Led/Led
Evangelize/ism	Sacrifice	Church Planting	Grow/Mature/
Mobilize	Serve	Word	Form/ation
Strategy	Servant Leadership	Kingdom	Bless/ing
Local Church	Justice	Empower/ing	Ends of the Earth
Community	Local/Urban/ City	Marginalized	All nations
Disciple/Make Disciples	Least of these	Gospel/Grace	Declare/ Proclaim
Extend/Spread	Educate/ Education	Witness/es	Salvation
Partner/ship/ing	Steward/ship	Equip/ping	Life

4. Process of developing a vision statement

Now that we have covered the characteristics of a good vision statement, here is the process of developing your vision. With your values in mind:

- a. Establish the priorities – Examples: Church planting, education, leadership development etc. (Read Tim Keller Article [“Why Plant Churches”](#))
- b. Envision the future. What will it look like in 5, 10, 15 years?
- c. Encapsulate this vision as succinctly as possible. (Note: A vision statement can also include some strategic goals stating how you will accomplish it.)
- d. Evaluate its effectiveness – use the statement(s) to make decisions and adjust as needed.

Breakout Groups: Draft Vision Statement

Create breakout rooms for each church. Give 20 minutes to let group members work on a draft of their vision statement.

c. Creating and Implementing Alignment to the Vision

Once you have established your vision statement it will be important to align your ministry to it.

A serious challenge some churches face is reorienting their direction where missions is concerned. Your church may have supported faithful missionaries for years. Long-term relationships and commitments have already been made. We are not suggesting that you stop supporting missionaries who have a deep and meaningful connection to your church, however, knowing how to align what you are doing with your vision is key. You will have a chance to implement these steps later in the course but knowing them ahead of time will help you in casting vision.

Use the following process for alignment.

1. Confirm your ministry vision – It is impossible to build a straight wall without a plumb line. Similarly, missions leaders cannot align their ministry without a clear direction. The first step in making a transition is clarifying your vision.

Steps:

- Prayerfully seek direction and discuss your vision as a group.
- Ask someone with the right giftedness to consolidate your discussion into a vision statement.
- Tweak the vision statement as needed and approve as a group.
- Involve appropriate leaders in the process and ask them to approve the vision statement.

2. Set criteria for who you will support based on your vision. Some churches support few missionaries for a larger amount. This strategy will allow your church to go deeper with those you support. Some churches prioritize the 10/40 window or unreached people groups while others emphasize working with indigenous churches. Most churches give priority to those raised up from their own congregations provided their ministry fits the vision and values.

Steps:

- Discuss where your vision statement aligns with both the global need and your congregation's interests.
- Discuss where your congregation might need to be challenged to think outside the box.
- Discuss what is most important to you. For example, relationship to the church (member), location of ministry (10/40 Window, Spanish speaking), type of ministry (church planting), membership involvement (mission trips) or some other criteria like immediate urgency (disaster response, etc.).
- Prayerfully consolidate these discussions into a set of criteria or priorities.

3. Create ranges of support – Missions ministries often develop a grid for determining support levels, with a range of support for each category. Doing so provides a framework for directing more funds toward areas they consider the most strategic. Further refinement can be developed by creating a matrix that factors in personnel categories such as members, non-members, and national leaders.

Steps:

- Learn the basic budgets for existing or potential ministry partners.
 - Discuss how realistic it is for you to meet a % of that budget or simply apply an amount. If your budget can grow a little occasionally, then a % is a good way to naturally increase your support.
 - Whether you use a % of the need or a dollar amount, based on prior discussion, use the example provided from other churches to develop your own priorities grid. Download this [PDF](#) for an example of setting priorities for support.
4. Evaluate your current commitments – Get an accurate picture of where you are. Devise a method to assess which ministries are committed to your biblical convictions. You may want to rate each missionary as directly connected, somewhat connected, not connected.

Priorities/criteria for support – Though there are many wonderful ministries to support, we can't partner with all of them. Giving more resources to fewer missionaries allows a church to engage more fully in the work and inspire the congregation to be involved in missions.

List your current missionaries and ask these five questions:

1. Is their ministry in line with our vision?
2. Are they from our church?
3. Are they connected to multiple members of the congregation?
4. Is the ministry connected to our denomination?
5. Can we connect with them in the field?

Steps:

- Run each ministry partner through the grid you have established. If you are not establishing a grid, use a simple matrix that rates missionaries according to the following: relationship to the church, type of ministry, and location.
- Prayerfully discuss each missionary, remembering they are people, not just a number on a rating system.
- Prayerfully consider whether you might need to slowly reduce support for missionaries that don't align with your vision in order to support those who do.

5. Determine a goal and timetable – You may want to have one, three, and five-year goals. Similarly, establish goals for ministry involvement, such as directing short-term projects to sites connected to church planting. This is different than setting priorities. This process requires you to take partial steps to engage your priorities so that they truly become your priorities.

Steps:

- Assess your current involvement in your priorities and where you might be misaligned.
- Investigate with your ministry partners ways to increase involvement where needed.
- Put goals into a 3-year implementation plan.

6. Promote ministry most connected to your vision – Look for ways to highlight missionaries and ministries that are related to your vision. Those who aren't directly engaged with your vision and priorities would fall into a lower tier of visibility and promotion.

Steps:

- Make a list of every possible communication avenue in your congregation (ex. website, email, bulletin, small group, etc.). See your communication worksheet for ideas you already generated.
- Determine which of these communication tools you can integrate with and which ones need to be created (missions table, missions conference, etc.).
- Develop a 3-year communication plan and add it to your goals list.

7. Direct growth in your budget to ministries that most fit with your vision or to new ministries

In a moment of candor, one pastor said their missions support typically goes to “good missionaries who give a good presentation on a good day for the church.” This is where a vision will help you—but it must be clear enough to help you actually make decisions. Then direct new support according to your missions vision.

Steps:

- Develop a 3-year budget where you redirect funds to align with your vision over 3-years.
- If your budget will grow, inform your leadership of your desire.

8. Take a long view – Your ministry didn't get to where it is overnight, so your transition doesn't have to either. Create a plan to get to your goal, be very selective about new commitments, be patient, and trust that God will lead you over time. And by all means, don't cut missionaries without notice or phasing them out. We recommend a 2-3 year phase out depending on the level of support.

Steps:

- Communicate to all missionaries your new vision and priorities.
- Have a one-on-one conversation with any ministry partners who will be impacted.

Considering Missions Models

There are several models for sending missionaries. Discuss the pros and cons of each model.

The partnership model is one that facilitates the best overall preparation and care for missionaries when done well. Although it's impractical to establish a partnership model with every missionary you support, strive to establish this model with at least one of your key partners.

1. Traditional Model



2. Church as Agency



3. Partnership



In the partnership model:

- ✓ We develop deeper personal relationships with people on the field.
- ✓ We become more careful prayer warriors through those close relationships.
- ✓ We give more sacrificially where we have a heart investment.
- ✓ We are eager to go, to be a resource, to encourage and to provide guidance.