

Missions Policy and Program

of

Valley Bible Church

@ The Crossing

Pleasanton, California

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this Missions Policy for Valley Bible Church (VBC) at the Crossing is:

1. To clearly identify the response of VBC to the world-wide mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Church-at-large regarding the Great Commission.
2. To establish a clear direction for leadership by the VBC eldership and Missions Board.
3. To establish guidelines and parameters for an effective missions contribution.
4. To ensure that important decisions are made responsibly and consistently.
5. To glorify our Lord Jesus Christ, help build His Kingdom and prepare for His return.

Flexibility of Interpretation

Exceptions to this Missions Policy and procedures herein stated can be made by the Missions Board with elder approval. It is not presumed to be a legally binding statement, or to be thoroughly exhaustive in its approach.

Review and Revision

This Missions Policy shall be reviewed every two years as necessary by the Missions Board. Items for revision shall be discussed by the Missions Board, and then approved by the elders. Changes in this policy shall be made available to the congregation.

PHILOSOPHY

Missions Defined

Missions at VBC shall be defined as, "Our response to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to reach people across all barriers; be they cultural, geographic, historic, linguistic, economic, or religious for the purpose of offering them the Good News of His salvation and establishing communities of believers for the glory of God."

Biblical Mandate for Missions:

The Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ stated in Matthew 28:18-21; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8 expresses our mandate in the following areas.

1. To go and bear witness to all the nations (people groups).

2. To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. To make and baptize disciples.
4. To teach obedience to the Word of God.
5. To practice the presence of Christ.
6. To continue to the end of the age.

Priorities for Missions

1. Since there are limitations as to how much a local church such as VBC can do, it is necessary to prioritize the effort to accomplish the maximum effect with our limited resources.
2. Examining and establishing these priorities must be a regular matter for prayer by the Missions Board and elders of the church.
3. Simply stated, priority should be given to areas of greatest need (unreached) or where it is evident the Spirit of God is directing us to work.
4. Priority will be given to helping national workers who are working within their culture or a closely related culture, or to North Americans who are committed to, under God developing the national church as soon as possible and then move on. It is not our intent that North American missionaries should have a continuing dominant role that will inhibit the growth of the national church.

Missionary Work Defined

1. General Considerations:
 - a. Goal: To fulfill our mandate by church planting the world, as the Spirit of God leads and enables, with worshipping outposts of the Kingdom of God (local churches) that reflect the life, values, priorities, ethics, and character of that Kingdom.
 - b. The World: The “world” in this context means anywhere on planet Earth; be it across the street, the state, or the seas.
 - c. Local churches as Church plants of the Kingdom: Any kind of missionary work must have in view the establishment and development of local churches that reflect within that culture the character of the King and the priorities, principles and practices of the Kingdom applied contextually.
 - d. Practical Considerations:
 1. Team Concept: Missionary work will normally be done in teams to maintain accountability within a committed community of fellow workers.
 2. Relationships: Where there are married couples and possibly children involved, special consideration must be given to interpersonal relationships and dynamics.
 3. Communication: It is imperative that communication, both ways, between the missionary and the sending church be frequent, informative and contextual. A line (lines) of responsibility or accountability will be established.
 4. Preparation: First term or relocating outgoing missionaries will be required to receive or demonstrate adequate cultural preparation before leaving for their field.

5. Expectations: Missionaries will submit to the elders' short term (1 year) and long term (3-5 years) goals that are attainable, reasonable and measurable.
 6. Children: Special consideration will be given to preparing and supporting children for their "MK" experience. This would include concerns such as relationships with God, parents, extended family, church family, education, safety, etc.
2. Terms of Service
- a. Summer: This refers to inter-cultural (cross-cultural) or intra cultural (within our culture) missionary work done during the summer season and normally will be from 1 to 6 weeks. This work can be initiated by VBC or through some VBC approved mission agency or individual missionary.
 - b. Short Term: This refers to inter- or intra-cultural missionary work of 3 months to 2 years. This can be done with a VBC approved mission agency or individual missionary.
 - c. Long Term: This refers to inter- or intra-cultural work beyond two years.
 - d. Continuing Service: It is not assumed that persons commissioned to missionary work will be performing in this capacity as infinitum. Assessment of this can be considered at any time the Missions Board and/or the elders deem such an assessment necessary. Revoking a commission will be the responsibility of the elders.

PROGRAM

Long Term Career Missionaries

Definition

Long Term refers to missionary work beyond two years.

Guidelines

1. It is the role of VBC elders to commission missionaries.
2. Elders will recommend or require personal development and/or training for each prospective missionary.
3. The normal personal development and commissioning process may take up to two years.

General Qualifications

1. Basic prerequisites
 - a. At least one short term missions is preferred.
 - b. Must know the Lord for at least four years.
 - c. Active member of VBC in good standing for at least 3 years.
 - d. Agrees with or willingly submits to the doctrinal statement of VBC and the VBC Missions Policy.
 - e. Physical age:

- i. A single, or the husband in the case of a married couple, should be at least 24 years of age.
 - ii. The age requirement of the missionaries' mission board must be met.
 - f. Family status:
 - i. A Couple should have been married at least one year before arriving on the field or entering an intensive missions training program.
 - ii. Marital Harmony: The husband and wife must be in agreement with the goals of their mission.
- 2. The outgoing long term career missionary should generally meet the qualifications of an elder. (1 Timothy 3; 1 Peter 5; Titus 1).

Other Considerations

- 1. The candidate possesses necessary qualifications for missions work:
 - a. He/She has a heart to do mission work including motivation for choice of missions service.
 - b. He/She has evidence of Divine guidance.
 - c. The nature of the intended field of service.
 - d. The nature of the intended work.
 - e. The awareness of the missionary candidate of any cultural and/or anthropological considerations, and current missiological thought and strategies, for gaining a foothold of credibility in the desired field of service.
- 2. Personal maturity:
 - a. Physical: General good health and endurance.
 - b. Emotional: Ambition, industry and self-motivation. Overall emotional stability.
 - c. Intellectual: Judgment, general balance and ability to look on all sides of a question without prejudice.
 - d. Relational:
 - i. Humility, discretion, courtesy in speech and behavior, consideration for the feelings, convictions and ideas of others.
 - ii. Transparency regarding his/her own weaknesses, struggles, and needs.
 - iii. Can work with people. Is flexible and adaptable.
 - iv. Has a spirit of openness and acceptance toward, and can work in harmony with, believers of other denominational persuasions.
 - v. Displays a sensitivity and willingness to learn and adapt to a cross-cultural situation.
 - vi. Has demonstrated an ability to relate to persons in other cultures as needed.
 - e. Spiritual:
 - i. Knowledge of and growth in application of Scripture.
 - ii. Consistently involved in Bible study.
 - iii. Devoted to prayer.
 - iv. Seeks the fellowship of other Christians.
 - v. Shows patience and forbearance with others' weaknesses.
 - vi. A minimum of two years of active ministry, while in a full-time, self-supporting work situation, is required. Additional years may be necessary depending on age, background, etc.

- vii. A broad experience in ministry is encouraged, not just participating on the Missions Board or attending a life group.
- f. Financial:
 - i. Lives a financially responsible lifestyle.
 - ii. Is without financial debt or obligation.

Short Term (3 months to 2 years) Missionaries

This program will be similar to the Long Term Missionary Program, but the demands will be adjusted in consideration of the shorter period.

Summer Missions Interns

1. Values
 - a. These programs offer inter/cross-cultural exposure.
 - b. They offer a first- hand exposure to missionary work.
 - c. They can develop a heart for missions in general.
 - d. They can be used of God to develop concern and desire to be a missionary.
 - e. They can provide temporary assistance on the mission field.
2. Requirements:
 - a. Must be a member of VBC and an actively growing believer and disciple of the Lord Jesus.
 - b. Must have a sensitivity and willingness to learn and adapt to an inter/cross-cultural situation.
3. Description:
 - a. Programs initiated by VBC
 - i. These will usually be initiated by the Youth Pastor and would include missionary experiences such as trips to Mexico or work with Native Americans.
 - ii. The Youth Pastor can certainly coordinate with the Missions Board, but he will be responsible to the elders.
 - b. Programs offered by Mission Agencies or individual missionaries.
 - i. These will involve less numbers of people and should have more stringent demands, such as emotional, relational and spiritual maturity. The candidate should also be in excellent health.
 - ii. Candidates for these opportunities must fill out a Summer Missions Intern Application and submit it to the Missions Board.
 - iii. Candidates will be interviewed by the Missions Board and must generally meet the requirements for missionary service.
 - iv. The Missions Board will make recommendations to the elders for final approval.
 - v. Summer missionary interns will be encouraged to aggressively build prayer support among family, friends and church.
 - vi. Interns will be recognized and prayed for at a Sunday service of the church.
 - vii. They may be given opportunity to share their experiences upon return.
 - viii. They complete a debriefing form within two months of their return. (See Appendix)
 - c. Exceptions: There are cases where opportunities to serve in some capacity, e.g. construction, health care, education, become available that require a short term

commitment during non-summer months. These will be treated generally within the guidelines of this program.

4. Financial Aid
 - a. The candidate should earn and acquire as much as possible in the same way that they would for a semester of school.
 - b. They should have no outstanding debt.
 - c. Aid may be available depending on the demands of the mission's budget.
 - d. Responsibility for granting financial aid will rest with the Missions Board.

National Workers

1. Description: VBC recognizes that it is often more spiritually and cost effective to have a national believer, or a person from a related culture or people group, reach people within a given people group.
2. Requirements: A National Worker who is being considered for commissioning and/or support by VBC will meet the following criteria.
 - a. They must be in general agreement with the doctrinal position of VBC.
 - b. They must be endorsed by mature believers in their home and/or intended field.
 - c. Their targeted mission field must be one of the truly needy fields of the world, such as location within the 10-40 window and generally unreached people, e.g., Muslim.
3. Research:
 - a. The Missions Board will follow up on any recommendations and make their report to the elders, who will have final authority.
 - b. It may be necessary to bring the individual being considered for commissioning and/or support to VBC to spend time with appropriate people or groups within the church.
 - c. In some cases, e.g., where the individual does not know English, it may be more feasible to bring a mature church leader from that area to VBC to explore the possibilities of commissioning and/or support.
4. Support:
 - a. The Missions Board will give generally the same support to a National Worker as they give to one from VBC.
 - b. The Missions Board will connect the National Worker with one or more home groups to act as a Support Team.
5. Recognition:
 - a. If the individual is able to attend VBC the elders will conduct a commissioning or recognition of service during a Sunday service.
 - b. If the individual is not able to attend, the elders will make a public announcement of affiliation to the church during a Sunday service.

Missionaries Not Affiliated with VBC

With the exception of national Workers we do not normally support missionaries from outside of VBC membership.

ORGANIZATION

Missions Board

1. Membership

- a. Shall consist of 6 members of VBC.
- b. One VBC elder and/or Director appointed by the elders.
- 2. Term of Office: renewed annually
- 3. Qualifications of members
 - a. Display a deep interest and desire to learn more about missions.
 - b. Committed to the church life at VBC
 - c. Agrees to attend quarterly Missions Board meetings.
 - d. Willing to fulfill responsibilities as part of the Missions Board.
 - e. Cultivates a healthy spiritual life.
 - i. Committed to regular fellowship and accountability.
 - ii. Maintains a regular devotional life.
 - f. Attends annual goal-setting meeting and accepts assignment for the year.
- 4. Responsibilities
 - a. Communicate with, educate and inspire the congregation and leadership in reaching the world for our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. Encourage the church's intercessory prayer for the world and our missionaries.
 - c. Assist missionaries with re-entry.
 - d. Coordinate missionary support teams.
 - e. Assist in the evaluation of all potential missionaries and candidates, short and long term.
 - f. Recommend approval of qualified candidates to the Missions Director and elders for commissioning.
 - g. Coordinate and help in practical ways with the furlough of VBC missionaries.
 - i. Help with living and transportation arrangements.
 - ii. Help develop an itinerary for time in the United States as needed.
 - 1. Schedule times to share work with various groups.
 - 2. Plug into ministry opportunities at VBC.
 - h. Serve as a resource group for those seeking involvement in Christian missions.
 - i. Pray weekly for each missionary commissioned and supported by VBC.
- 5. Frequency of meetings: quarterly (minimum)

Missions Director

- 1. Term of Office: 2 years
 - a. At the end of each term the position may be extended an additional two years.
 - b. Initial extension and term extension shall be decided by open discussion and consensus of the elders.
- 2. Responsibilities
 - a. Be in contact with, and be the point of contact for, the missionary's agency.
 - b. Act as a liaison between the elders and the Mission Board.
 - c. Oversee communication with VBC missionaries and candidates.
 - d. Provide some means of spiritual accountability within the Mission Board.
 - e. Administer the VBC missions' policy and budget.
 - f. Develop and maintain a thorough knowledge of the work of each missionary (i.e., the past, the present work, the future goals).

- g. Maintain a file with:
 - i. Information on each missionary, including correspondence, personal histories and other pertinent information.
 - ii. Financial information, and assess the financial situation of each missionary annually.
- h. Correspond regularly with each missionary (preferably every month but a minimum of once every two months). Writing should include activities and changes going on at VBC.
- i. Oversee the dissemination of current information for the purpose of prayer and praise such as:
 - i. Publish monthly newsletters from missionaries.
 - ii. Public announcements
 - iii. Calls and letters to Missionary Support Teams.

Missionary Support Teams

1. Every missionary commissioned by VBC will receive support from at least one specific home group which will serve as their Missionary Support Team.
2. Responsibilities:
 - a. Pray for and encourage a particular missionary and family.
 - b. Provide practical help for missionary when requested.
 - c. Use creative ways of boosting missionary morale.
 - i. Send sermon and worship music tapes.
 - ii. Send letters, birthday and anniversary cards, occasional care packages, and Christmas presents.
 - d. Help with specific furlough arrangements as requested by the Missions Director.
 - e. Host get-togethers with missionaries while they are on furlough.

PROCEDURES

Process of Approval

1. The candidate demonstrates a sustained confidence of God's call to missions.
2. The candidate becomes familiar with the VBC Missions Policy.
3. The Missions Director interviews the candidate for a preliminary evaluation of qualifications. If satisfactory, the candidate is given an application.
4. The candidate submits an application to the Missions Director who reviews and assists as necessary. (see Appendix)
5. If the sending missions' agency requires a pre-application, it will be files at this time.
6. The candidate meets with the Mission Board for a review of the application.
7. The Missions Director submits the application with a letter of recommendation to the elders, noting any concerns.
8. The elders evaluate the application and recommendations.
9. The Missions Director meets with the elders to discuss the application and make formal recommendation to the elders.
10. One elder interviews the candidate to discuss the application and make formal recommendation to the elders.

11. The elders discuss the candidates' plans, recommendations for personal development, training, education, goal setting, etc.
12. The elders and candidate set time to reach any goals before the next meeting with the elders. (Repeat the last 2 steps to elder satisfaction).
13. The elders advise the candidate on selection of ministry, location, team, agency, term of service.
14. The elders write a letter of commissioning "To Whom It May Concern."
15. Upon elder approval the candidate makes formal application to the mission agency.
16. The candidate is accepted by the agency.
17. The candidate raises financial and prayer support.
18. There is a public commissioning service.

The Elders Responsibilities

1. Provide timely consideration and feedback to the candidate.
2. Maintain close communication with the candidate.
3. Give the candidate an estimate of available financial support, as advised by the deacons.
4. Assist and advise the candidate.
5. Provide accountability for the candidate's personal development goals.
6. Make the final decision regarding commissioning of the candidate.

The Commissioning

1. The church entrusts, commits, hands over, and commends the individual to the grace of God as part of his /her commissioning.
2. The commissioning is initiated by the elders and supported by the believers of VBC.
3. The missionary candidate is thus officially recognized, setting him/her apart for full-time Christian missions work.
4. The commissioning is normally stated both in a letter from the elders and also demonstrated in a public service with elders laying hands on, and praying for, the missionary.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Of the Missionary to the Elders

1. Once a person has been qualified and commissioned, he or she is under God's special care while on the field, but retains a disciplinary and advisory accountability to VBC elders.
2. Missionaries must report accurately and adequately to the VBC elders. They should provide quarterly work reports and monthly personal reports.
3. Missionaries must initiate requests for VBC elder guidance before making major personal or ministry decisions.

Of the Missionary to VBC

1. The missionary must maintain frequent contact with their Missionary Support Team.
2. The missionary should send monthly reports to the Missions Director including:
 - a. Prayer needs and praises

- b. Current activities and plans
 - c. Pertinent family matters
 - d. Special financial concerns
 - e. Travel plans
 - f. Reassignment plans
 - g. Furlough plans
3. The missionary must have monthly contact with prayer partners.

Of the Elders to the Missionary

1. The elders will commit to providing regular and frequent prayer support at elder meetings.
2. The elders will maintain regular and frequent communication with the missionary.
3. The elders will be available for general counsel and moral support.
4. They will serve as an accountability base for guidance and administer corrective discipline as needed.

Furlough

1. Provides opportunity to reconnect with elders, supporters, and Missionary Support Team.
2. Is an opportunity to rebuild financial and prayer base.
3. The missionary is to be available to share experiences.
4. Will be provided counsel from the elders.
5. Should include opportunity for rest and relaxation.

Continuing Education

1. Relevant missionary education will be mutually agreed upon by the missionary, the mission agency and VBC elders.
2. VBC will financially support commissioned missionaries for up to a full year of approved continuing education.
3. Financial support will be maintained at the same level, or be raised at the elders' discretion.
4. A full year of education will not take place more than once in seven years.
5. Continuing education will only be available to those missionaries who will commit to four more years of service.
6. Continuing education must be applicable to the needs of the field and those being served.

Visitation

1. As God enables, the elders will establish a fund to finance occasional (every two or three years) visits to VBC missionaries.
2. Visits will be made by elders or an appointed member of the Missions Board.
3. Visits by elders will be prioritized according to the difficulty of the work situation and the needs of the workers.
4. The purposes of these visits will be to:
 - a. Encourage the missionary.

- b. Get insights into how the missionary is faring (spiritually, family, health, standard of living, lifestyle, etc.)
- c. Evaluate the ministry.
- d. Discuss future plans (ministry, furlough, education, etc.)
- e. Learn as much as possible about the culture, environment, conditions, and the people with whom the missionary works and lives.

FINANCES

Mission and Support Priorities

1. The following criteria, in order of priority, will be used in determining support priorities for newly commissioned missionaries:
 - a. Direct evangelism, discipleship, and church planting within a specific unreached people group.
 - b. Direct evangelism, discipleship, or church planting within a specific unreached people group.
 - c. Support services of the above within a specific unreached people group.
 - d. Direct evangelism, discipleship, and church planting within a specific reached people group.
 - e. Direct evangelism, discipleship, or church planting within a specific reached people group.
 - f. Support services of the above within a reached people group.
2. The more unreached the people group, the higher the priority.
3. Missionaries working with a team will be given higher priority.

Missionary Support

1. Financial support levels will be recommended by the Missions Director to the Finance Committee and be approved by the elders.
2. Support will be evaluated yearly.
3. Support will be terminated and/or adjusted for any of the following circumstances:
 - a. The missionary fails to maintain monthly contact with the Missions Board and elders.
 - b. The missionary decides to discontinue service with their Mission Agency.
 - c. The missionary fails to maintain the standards used to originally qualify for support.
 - d. The missionary takes more than a year of furlough. The missionary will need to reapply for support if he or she intends to return to the mission field.
 - e. The missionary takes more than a year of school.
4. Insurance, education of children, and retirement are the responsibility of the missionary (and his/her Missions Agency, if applicable.)

Financial Status of Missionaries

The missionary will report at least annually to the Missions Director on his or her economic picture (cost of living, exchange rate, support level, special needs) and keep the deacons and Finance Committee advised through the elders.

Financing the Missions Budget

Because the church is sincerely committed to supporting a serious missions program, we will express this resolve in terms of financial commitment. Our Lord said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If VBC puts a significant amount of its treasure into reaching the world; across the street, across the state(s), and across the seas, this will touch the heart of our God and He will bless.

Therefore, VBC will make an initial commitment of financial resources in the amount of 10% of our income. This is our starting point and as God blesses this can be increased.

APPENDIX

Missions Education at VBC

Opportunities for Missions Education

1. Missions Conferences
2. Mission Emphasis Events
3. VBC missionaries sharing at Sunday services.
4. Missions giving in children's Sunday School classes for VBC missionaries (special projects).
5. A bulletin board featuring VBC missionaries.
6. A "Missions Resource Center" display with mission related materials (books, videos, articles and brochures on mission service opportunities).
7. International dinners.
8. "Minute for Missions" announcements during Sunday services.
9. Sending Missions Committee members to mission's conferences.
10. Encourage those interested in missions to participate in VBC intern opportunities.

Enactment of Missions Education

1. The Missions Committee will ensure that education takes place on all age levels, using combinations of Christian Education classes, Sunday Services, Home Groups, and other educational opportunities.
2. Sunday School, coordinated through the Sunday School Administrator, should offer at least three missions related lessons per year, plus one entire month of lessons every two years, for all ages. Missionaries on furlough should address the Sunday School and visit individual classes.
3. Sunday Services will include two missions' related messages per year. Speakers should be encouraged to speak from a world perspective. Occasional special reports or prayer requests may be offered.
4. Home Groups:
 - a. Each group will be encouraged to serve as a Missionary Support Team for one of VBC's missionaries.
 - b. Home Groups which accept these responsibilities should:

- i. Have a meeting at the beginning of the year to educate the members of the history, present activities, and future plans of the missionary they are supporting.
 - ii. Send “care packages”, Christmas, birthday, and anniversary presents, etc., in addition to weekly prayer for and monthly correspondence with the adopted missionary.
 - iii. Meet with their missionary or any of their co-workers who are home on furlough.
5. Areas of education should include:
 - a. Basic Biblical Orientation
 - b. Exposure to current missiological thought.
 - c. Exposure to cultural anthropology from a Christian point-of-view.
 - d. Giving to world missions.
 - e. How to pray for missionaries.
 - f. How to write to missionaries.
 - g. What specific missionaries are doing.
 - h. Specific world-wide and national developments.
 - i. What basic opportunities and options for service are currently available.