

Welton Baptist Church

Pathways to Mission

Welton Baptist Church holds the view that we are not a church which 'does mission', we firmly believe that the church IS a mission. There are two aspects to this statement:

Firstly, the normal function of our church - or any local church - is to worship God and make Him known in our locality with the objective of bring others to faith in Jesus Christ. This is the full-time mission for all believers.

Secondly, as commanded by Jesus, we are to *'go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'* Jesus first called His disciples, then He equipped them and finally He sent them. And this is the model for the church today.

None of us become experts the day we start following Jesus, but from that day on He gives us 'on the job' training. As we go about our day-to-day lives we should be seen for who we are – His passionate followers, and eventually it might dawn on us to use this passion wherever He wants to send us. We call this 'going on mission'.

The leadership of the church have a stated aim, within its 10-year vision, to see 50% of the membership experience life on the mission field, whether this is in long or short-term mission, home or abroad. Implicit in this vision is that the church has both guidelines and duty of care for those it sends, and the people it sends have a sense of calling from God which is confirmed by the church, and accountability to the church as it sends them.

This document highlights the guidelines for those wishing to be released from the local church to serve God overseas and also the responsibilities of Welton Baptist Church in sending them.

Guidelines for those considering going on overseas mission

Q.1 Our advice for those considering long-term mission would be to engage in short-term mission first. This gives the benefit of finding out much about the mission field they are considering:

- It can confirm, or otherwise, whether they are really called.
- Are they in the right place and could they live and work there full-time?
- What about the logistics of being there full-time?

There will be many other questions regarding long-term mission and some of these may be answered in the guidelines below for short-term mission:

Q.2 Why do you want to go?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I looking for a faith-stretching experience?
- Do I feel a calling to serve God on the mission field?
- What shall I do on my Gap year?
- Now I've retired, how best can I serve God?
- I feel God is changing the direction of my life, but I don't yet know what.

What next?

The following are not options or sequential, but all important next steps to take:

- Pray and....
- Share with a friend; ask them to pray with you.
- Seek the advice of those who have been 'on mission'.
- Consider any prophetic words or scriptures you have had – share these, and ask God to speak to you in multiple ways that bring clarity.
- Share with one of the church leaders and ask their advice. Ask the leadership to pray and listen to God for you.
- Investigate ways the church can help you by meeting with the church missions team.

Q.3 When do you want to go, and for how long?

- How much time can you give to your trip? Weeks? Months? Longer?
- The longer you go for, the more impact you will make and the more experience you will gain.
- Remember, your mission trip can impact other areas of your life: Studies, work, family, relationships, interests etc. Think about what is most important to you.

What next?

- Pray and....
- Don't be vague. Have a clear plan regarding your timeframe – when and for how long.
- Sort through the impact on other areas of your life and discuss with those who are affected.

Q.4 Where is God calling you?

- As you think about the world you live in, is there a place you feel pulled towards? Is there a country or a work that fuels your interest?
- If so, find out more about the place, the people there and what you could be involved in. This will assist in your preparation.
- You may not know where you want to go, but believe you are willing and God will send you where He will.

What next?

- Pray and....
- Begin your research. Search the 'Operation World' website, it's full of facts and figures and is the definitive prayer guide to every country in the world. (See *appendix*). Search also for 'Joshua Project'. Joshua Project is a research initiative seeking to highlight the [ethnic people groups](#) of the world with the fewest followers of Christ. (See *appendix*)
- How will learning a language affect your preparation? How can you start understanding / researching the culture / people you want to embrace?
- If you are unsure of where to go, keep your mind open to possibilities so you don't miss the Lord's leading.

Q.5 What can I do?

- Consider what you would like to do on short term mission?
- What are your natural and spiritual gifts? If you have not already done one, take a Spiritual Gifts questionnaire and prayerfully consider the outcomes. (See *appendix*)
- Maybe you are an out & out Evangelist?
- Maybe you are interested in practical Christian work?
- Maybe you have identified skills or abilities that you want to use?
- If you go on mission, go with a plan and not a vague notion of what you may be able to do.

What next?

- Pray and....
- Talk to family and friends, ask them what gifting they see in you.
- Talk to your church leadership, ask them what gifting they think God has given you.

Q.6 Should I go with an organisation?

- There are many Christian organisations who work overseas and who offer short-term mission opportunities. Maybe you already know of one which has appealed to you.
- Most short-term mission opportunities are team based, but some organisations may offer individual placements, often to work alongside an existing missionary.
- Before committing to a particular mission organisation, seek the advice of the church leadership regarding your choice.
- Your own church may also offer short-term mission visits with their existing mission contacts.

What does a mission organisation do?

The basis of your missionary work should always be the backing of your local church. At WBC, we are well placed to give this backing and will always work hand in hand with your chosen agency should you go down that route. However, many churches lack the capacity and experience for comprehensive support of their missionaries and for reacting to all the challenges found on the mission field.

Mission organisations help missionaries and their churches. An experienced missions' agency will provide practical knowledge, expertise and a legal framework for missionaries and their work.

They provide missionaries with services such as:

- *Introductory seminars and training courses.*
- *Cultural orientation.*
- *Assistance with Visa applications, residence permits and financial affairs.*
- *Travel & accommodation.*

Agencies care for missionaries individually, pray for them and stand with them in their work on the mission field. They also counsel churches in supporting their missionaries.

What next?

- Pray and....
- Talk to your church leadership about mission opportunities your church may be able to offer.
- Research mission organisations and consider whether you can match your aspirations to what they have to offer. (See appendix)

Q.7 Preparation.

Things to consider:

- **Immunisation:** Check with your GP for jabs and medication required for your trip. Factor in a cost for these in your planning.
- **Clothing:** Are you going to a hot or cold climate? How should you dress in the country you are going to, you don't want to cause offence? Don't take unnecessary clothing as there are weight restrictions with most airlines.
- **Finance:** If you travel with an organisation they will advise you of cost. In fact, with most mission agencies, they will require you to raise a certain amount of finance. If you are travelling independently, calculate the total cost of your trip, including airfares, accommodation, transport and day to day living. Try and find out the cost of living at your destination.

Speak to the leadership team or one of the missions' team to find out how Welton Baptist Church can help financially – but be prepared with your information!

- Schools: If you are looking to go longer term as a family, you will need to consider schooling for your children.
- Training: What training do you need to be as prepared as you / the leadership feel is right? This could include: Cross Cultural training, Language training, Church Planting Training, DTS style high impact training, Gift identification, etc. Learning a new language requires years of commitment and enjoyment. The earlier you start the better! It is the surest way to getting to grips with the culture and getting to feel like the people amongst whom you want to work.
- Communication: Communication whilst you are o/seas is essential – this is a 2-way flow between the local WBC family and the partner(s) who are overseas.
You will need to communicate using a variety of mediums (email, Skype video, phone calls, prayer requests, stories and testimonies etc) to grow vision and the sense of being family in another nation. WBC will be committed to these goals and work together with you sharing these goals.
We encourage longer term overseas missionaries to communicate ‘little and often’, ideally weekly, to maintain the ‘family in another nation’ dynamic.
Ideas for great 2-way communication will be considered before you go, and an agreed plan set in place.

Going out on Christian mission is not an easy option when it comes to serving God. To an extent, you will be walking into the unknown with all its different cultures and possible difficulties. However, when you are where God wants you to be, He will provide all you need to serve Him. You will be a blessing, but you will also be blessed. You can teach, but you will also learn. You can bring others to faith, but you will mature in your own. You will be an encouragement, but you will also be encouraged. Your time on mission may be tough sometimes, but it will bring you great fulfilment.

The commitment of Welton Baptist Church to those wanting to go on mission

So, you and the church leadership (and any outside missions’ agency that may be involved) have agreed in principle it may be right for you to be released to serve God overseas – How can WBC support you at this key stage?

C.1 Leadership, advice and confirmation.

The church leadership and/or missions group will listen to your proposal to be sent out on mission. They will pray and go through the practical and financial implications with you. They will discuss your situation before deciding whether or not they can affirm your proposal.

C.2 Financial.

The church has finance available for those who make a case for support in being sent on mission. As we are a sending church we would expect to financially support those we send. The level of support will vary according to each person and situation. As a general rule, it is advisable for those going overseas on mission to have multiple sources of support. WBC, as a sending church would be a faithful partner in this assuming there is agreement with the leadership and wider church.

C.3 Preparation.

WBC would be supportive of any help and advice needed in your preparation to go. There are mission-experienced people in the church to assist you and give you guidance.

If you are going on a WBC based mission, those leading the trip will be experienced missionaries.

If you are travelling with a missions' organisation, they will make your arrangements and will give you advice. However, we are still available to you for support and encouragement.

For short term missions, WBC will provide an orientation / preparation training morning (or 2 evenings) which will cover the basics of: team life and responsibilities, cross-cultural awareness, what if something goes wrong (+ emergency contact info), prayer strategy before and during trip.

For long term overseas, there are a range of preparation options we will consider with you. These will likely take between 6 months and 2 years.

C.4 Prayer support.

WBC lifts all those it supports on the mission field in prayer. This might be during services; in house groups – it would be good if you were already part of a house group; as part of our mission services; powerhouse of prayer and also by individuals committed to pray.

C.5 Long Term Overseas Workers Support:

For those based overseas for more than 1 year, or prior to their return back to the UK, one or more WBC leaders will aim to visit you on the field once per year. We will also carry out an evaluation annually.

We would also seek to invite (where possible) you back for special occasions such as the church weekend away.

We will provide ongoing contact / assistance by Skype / Phone on a monthly basis.

We will provide a key person(s) within WBC who would be a 'point person' agreed on with you before you leave. This person, most likely from the missions' team, will be the main conduit for information and vision sharing.

C.6 Family – being and growing as part of the WBC family while overseas:

We believe any overseas missionaries sent out from WBC remain a full part of the WBC family. As such we will aim to ensure a 2-way flow of information and vision between the local church and the overseas family members(s). This is a 2-way responsibility, and requires WBC and the o/seas partner(s) to make time to communicate, pray together, visit etc etc.

C.7 And after....

WBC will undertake to meet with those returning from the mission field. This would either be with one of the leadership team or someone from the missions' team. We are interested in finding out how you found the whole experience of being on mission. This is helpful for you, if you choose to go again, and it is also useful for others who are preparing to go.

As a church, we believe we are part of the Body of Christ. The parts of the body make up the whole, so if one part of the body chooses to go onto the mission field, then in a sense we all go; what a blessing!

Appendix

Operation World: <http://www.operationworld.org>

Joshua Project: <https://joshuaproject.net>

Spiritual gifts questionnaire: Such as mintools.com

Mission organisations: A wealth of information regarding serving on the mission field, and a comprehensive list of mission organisations can be found at oscar.org.uk. 'OSCAR' stands for 'One Stop Centre for Advice and Resources' and is a website dedicated to missions.