

## What's Your



# Missions Pastor



# Profile?

## Gifts and passions that shape the role

Part 2 of 2 on church missions leadership

*By Ellen Livingood*

As our global context radically changes, local churches are rethinking their involvement. So it's no surprise that the role of missions pastor is also undergoing major adjustment. Many aspects of the job were unimagined when the position of missions pastor was first introduced about five decades ago.

Even if your congregation doesn't have a staff position focused on missions, this article will help you step back and consider the missions leadership functions you see as critical in these shifting times. How will other pastoral staff or volunteers fill these roles? How do their gifts match your priorities?



In many church contexts, the missions pastor role has not so much shifted as expanded. Missions pastors find themselves filling an increasingly multi-faceted job. No one individual brings all of the needed gifts. Whether you are the person currently in such a role or you represent a church searching for a missions pastor, it is crucial that you identify the role and related gifts that are considered most essential in your context. Then determine how you will cover the other areas you value. Here are five profiles and how each serves different church missions priorities.

Here are five profiles and how each serves different church missions priorities.

# 5 Missions Pastor Profiles

1

## The Strategic Visionary

This type of missions pastor is great at leading the way. They develop visionary plans that challenge the rest of the pastoral staff and the congregation to engage in God-sized global efforts. They quickly see and grasp new strategic opportunities. People are energized by their leadership. However, they are often drained by dealing with details and may be impatient with others who move at a slower pace.

folks, and they may struggle with developing strategic direction.

2

## The Administrator

This type of missions pastor is good at building teams, developing plans and policies, overseeing budgets, and running events. Internal programs hum with this type of leader. Short-term teams go out well prepared. The CFO loves the administrator type because their financial reports are accurate and on time. However, administrators often struggle with generating excitement in the congregation and generally aren't creative in developing new paradigms.

4

## The Mentor/Mobilizer

This type of missions pastor has a passion for taking people from where they are to more effective engagement in global outreach. They are great at nurturing missions interest all along the line from children to retirees. They may have such a connection to individuals that they find it excruciatingly hard to make tough decisions about people and priorities.

3

## The Missionary's Pastor

This type of leader loves to focus on being a pastor to the missionary family. They always have their ear to the ground listening and identifying the struggles of field workers. They are passionate about avoiding missionary burnout, caring for MKs, and facilitating missionary transitions. But organizing creative programming in the church is often painfully difficult for these

5

## The Field Leader/ Partnership Developer

This type of missions pastor may be bodily in your church, but their heart is somewhere on the front lines of ministry. This leader spends as much time out in ministry as possible, whether it is on the other side of the globe or in a new outreach ministry in your own city. Often they are great at negotiating partnerships with nationals and at helping field teams to function more effectively. However, field-focused leaders often struggle to bring the congregation along with what they are doing abroad, and they usually are not strong administrators.



So, which kind of missions pastor are you? What profile best fits your church's needs and priorities? No one person has all of the gifts. Most will have a dominate passion/gifting and one, or perhaps two, secondary strengths.



## Kelly Junk

Director of Global Outreach  
First UM Church, Tulsa, OK



I have learned, sometimes the hard way, I can't do it all and am not gifted to do it all! I found my strengths primarily in administration, missionary care, and strategic vision. This article confirms the value of cultivating leadership and empowering those around us to lead in their areas of strength. To do this, we have to lay down our pride and accept help.

Having others lead in their areas of creativeness and giftedness helps me to slow down, seek God, listen to His voice, and step into what He is calling me to do. It is still a challenge to find the time to cultivate new leaders. If I am stuck at my desk (my administrative side pulls), then I am not effective in spending time with people and helping to empower them in leadership. This is a catch 22 for me, as work does need to be done.

I have discovered that in different seasons, I focus on different things. My first years in this role were centered more on strategy—refining and re-visioning our direction. Then I could move on to focus on cultivating new leaders. I also began to do more teaching of our congregation on shifts in mission practices and philosophies. And we reworked our STM training and focus.

I have the constant pull of wanting to do more hands-on ministry. But in this season of my life with a growing family and new grandchildren, I have learned that it is okay that my travel is limited to two or three international trips a year; my volunteers carry the bulk of the travel load. Sometimes it is hard; I want to be doing more direct ministry!

## If your church is seeking a missions pastor...



**Kevin Cain**  
Outreach Pastor  
Olive Branch Church  
Corona, CA

When I was initially hired as outreach pastor, I was exhilarated by the visionary aspect of the job. It was clearly in the job description, and it definitely fits my gifting. However, two years in I am being pushed to develop the other areas of my job. It's easy to feel like a failure when I am focused on the things that I don't do well. And frankly, it can take a while to get a good volunteer to lean on to fill in my weaker areas. For me, that aspect is still developing.

The roles mentioned here in this article affirm what I need to do *and* the people that I need to continue to get around me.

### Church leaders may want to ask:

1. Which of these strength profiles is most crucial for our church in order to have a healthy, growing global outreach program for the next few years? Why?
2. If we hire this type of missions pastor, are we realistic about the gifts they will likely **not** bring to the task?
3. How will this type of person fit into our staff structure?
4. How should we draft the job description in light of this profile and our priorities?
5. How can we help the person we hire as our next missions pastor to build a team around them who will bring the gifts they don't have?

## If you are currently a missions pastor...

### Missions pastors may want to ask:

1. Which type of missions pastor am I? What is my dominant passion/gifting? What are my secondary ones?
2. Does my profile match my job description and what my church expects of me? Do I need to have an honest conversation about this with the person to whom I report?
3. Have I built a leadership team around me who address the areas where I am weak?
4. How much do I need to function in an area that is not my passion/gifting? What will help me to do this effectively?

### Johnathan Merle

Missions Pastor  
Jubilee Fellowship Church  
Littleton, CO



My personality is analytic/thinker, so I am naturally task and project focused. As missions pastor, I do need to work at connecting with people. To balance out my natural inclination to focus on tasks, I set goals to be “out there” with our people. During our weekend services at each Jubilee campus, I look for people interested in connecting and schedule appointments/coffee/lunch/dinner with them.

I often say, “There are things that we have to do and things that we get to do” in our jobs. There are tasks that I am not as passionate about. Sometimes, I just have to do them. Sometimes I can delegate them to my associates. And sometimes I have the freedom to drop things that I’m not passionate about.

I try to staff to my weaknesses. I was able to hire an associate who is more social than I am, and we balance each other out nicely. In August, I am bringing on another associate who is both a gifted project manager and a creative worship leader. She will further broaden our reach and influence in the church.

### From a missions pastor who recently reassessed his gifts and role

A few weeks ago, I asked myself question #2 in the list at left, and it led to a hard conversation about gifting and job description. The bottom line is that my gifts were not a fit for my current role and I’ve left that position.

Since I fall squarely in the strategic visionary profile, I gravitate quickly to new strategic opportunities. If the church defaults to the status quo, this often leads to frustration and pride (“These people just don’t get it”) which is never good.

Most missions pastors at mega-churches oversee multiple staff, so no matter their gifting, they have to be managers. So if this is not a strength, they will need to ask themselves how to lead in an area of weakness.

I wish I had more administrative gifts and the missionary’s pastor profile in my tool kit. While I’m good at building teams and developing budgets, I get bogged down in details. I tend to lose sight of being a pastor to our mission family when I’m so excited about the next thing that’s going to mobilize our people. The best solution is developing and delegating to people who have different leanings. Then everybody wins: the global family, the new leader, the church family, and me!

### For more on this topic...

- Sample job descriptions are available [here](#).
- Interested in a Skype call to discuss job fit with other missions pastors? [Email us](#) for details.
- Read our related **Worth Considering...** blog entitled, “[Shaping the Job to Your Leader](#).”

### Interchange Postings

Catalyst’s *Postings* e-newsletter is a free, monthly publication of practical articles highlighting what churches and agencies are doing to mobilize untapped potential for global impact.

**SUBSCRIBE** at [www.catalystservices.org/postings/](http://www.catalystservices.org/postings/). **READ** past *Postings* at [www.catalystservices.org/postings-gallery-of-archives/](http://www.catalystservices.org/postings-gallery-of-archives/).

© 2016 Catalyst Services, Inc.