

18.26 Network

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Vocational Missions FAQs for THOSE INTERESTED in Being a Vocational Missionaries

Your basic questions about vocational missions may be some of the *frequently-asked-questions* (FAQs) that we are often asked:

What is a vocational missionary?

A vocational missionary is a Christian who responds to Christ's Great Commission globally, using their professional gifts and talents which God has already given them. The vocational missionary is willing to work globally and thus actively searches for a job somewhere in the world where he or she can partner with a mission work.

Why do I need to be part of a network? Can't I do this alone?

You don't need us in order to be involved in vocational missions globally. Your company may simply transfer you overseas and you just go! Even if that happens you may need our help to be involved in global vocational missions *well*.

Many people who have moved overseas as part of a vocational missions calling have told us that it is incredibly hard to engage in vocational missions without significant levels of support in the areas where we can come alongside you — connecting, coaching and caring. We don't create your ministry, we enhance it.

How do I find a job overseas?

People interested in overseas work find jobs in a variety of ways: internet searches, international headhunting companies and even word-of-mouth, or being transferred by their current employer to an international location. Mission teams can provide us with useful job data that may help you.

A thorough job search also entails an understanding of God's plan for your life. Finding the right international job, in the right international location, with the right cross-cultural ministry opportunities is an incredible validation of God's calling. We want to provide all the help we can.

How does it work? Would I be a MTW missionary? Will I be part of a MTW team?

Vocational missionaries are not MTW missionaries but serve in partnership with the team at their invitation. Vocational missionaries' first ministry is to be faithful workers and excellent members to their community. US State Department estimates are that over 9 million Americans live and work internationally. We want to see more of them serving intentionally with mission works in the place they live and work. So the 18.26 Network connects people with current reformed mission works by helping them develop a memorandum of understanding between the vocational missionary and the mission work.

What is the relationship of the vocational missionary to the missionary and leadership?

Since the vocational missionary is not directly under the authority of the mission team the relationship is one of mutual respect and accountability. The vocational missionary agrees to be under the leadership in regard to ministry. That means their ministry should compliment and promote the mission's ministry. The vocational missionary will participate in Bible studies and worship services as they are able. They will invite people to activities and services of the team.

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Do MTW teams want vocational missionaries?

Since this is a new path for people to serve and most MTW teams haven't encountered this before, they will have some question about how a vocational missionary will partner with them. Of course, having another person that will need help and some oversight adds to the leaders work. It means there's another relationship for the missionaries to develop and maintain. It may mean that the vocational missionary and possibly their family will not understand how difficult living in another country is, thus it will mean more care and helping of them. In the end vocational missionary add ministry value to a mission work.

How will a vocational missionary be helpful to a mission team or a global partner?

There are many benefits of having vocational missionaries and here are a few. They make contacts with people that the team probably would not. They are able to come within months after they first start communicating with the 18.26 Network about them serving as a vocational missionary. Because they have a job and their company helps them some, the mission team doesn't have to help them as much as they do new missionaries or interns.

Do I need training to do global vocational ministry?

The most important aspect of your job overseas *is* your job overseas. We don't provide initial job training — you should already have that. What we can provide is training on different aspects of global ministry.

Then what training and preparation to serve in a foreign country will I have?

We are preparing a series of video trainings including webinars on 7 vital areas. All training will be virtual and somewhat interactive. A vocational missionary will be able to pay a onetime fee to access and watch videos as they need them. Watching these videos and answering related questions will be essential to serving well as a vocational missionary.

1. Spiritual Foundations: how to keep you spiritual life vibrant and active
2. Cross-cultural Skills working in a different culture,
3. Developing a ministry plan that includes understanding MTW's core values,
4. Biblical and theological essentials by partnering with Third Millennium,
5. How to work with a team including church planting values and biblical conflict management,
6. Evangelism basics in a foreign context,
7. Language Acquisition Skills

What is the process for me to be a vocational missionary?

First, a person must believe that they are called to serve the Lord as a missionary whether or not that has a global or local context. That is usually confirmed by a person's activities in the US and by the person's pastor. On our application form we ask the names of two people who can confirm this about you.

The process with the 18.26 Network involves completing an application, a personal interview by someone from the 18.26 Network and interviews by missionaries with whom they might serve. Sometimes the hardest part of becoming a vocational missionary is obtaining a job globally. If someone works for a company that has international offices, then requesting to be transferred to a foreign location would be a possibility. Once a person is approved by the 18.26 Network and the mission team with whom they will partner, then they could move at any time depending on employment.