



JOHNSTON
evangelical free church

Missionary Criteria

While recognizing that it is God who calls and equips those whom He sends into missionary service, Johnston E Free (JEFC) also recognizes the important role that He has designed for the local church in that process (Acts 13). Consequently, there exists a need for the church to have clearly identified criteria with which the Missions Mobilization Team (MMT) can evaluate the potential calling of prospective missionary candidates. These criteria focus on qualities and characteristics that have proven over time to provide for a reasonably effective and fruitful missionary service.

These expectations are divided into six major areas: spiritual, interpersonal, intercultural, ministry, personal & family, and organizational. While accepting the reality that no one person is perfectly formed in all of these areas, there does exist the expectation that our church missionary candidates will have embarked upon a consistent pattern of growth in all six of these areas.

Spiritual – Our walk with God is fundamental to everything we are and do.

- Loving and obeying God
- Loving people
- Knowing and being guided by the Word of God
- Growing prayer life
- Displays submission to biblical authority

Interpersonal – All ministry takes place in the context of relationships.

- A listener to people
- Lovingly confronting and receiving the same when required
- Manages conflict biblically
- Builds trust with others
- Appreciates life in community with others
- Handles grief and able to comfort others in grief
- Manages stress
- Maintains moral purity
- An encourager

Intercultural – Every missionary is by nature of his or her task an intercultural specialist.

- Manages transitions, able to “let go”
- Develops proficiency in language
- Understands oneself and one's own culture
- Learns to make adjustments, is flexible
- Understands other worldviews
- Not quick to judge or undervalue other cultures
- Develops intercultural social skills
- Forms intercultural relationships

Ministry – The work of making disciples requires basic competencies.

- Committed to and engaged in, evangelism
- Displays ability to nurture new Christians
- Seeks to develop spiritual leaders
- Understands and exercises one's spiritual gifts in accountable ministry

Personal & Family – Caring for self, family, and friends is vital to missionary effectiveness.

- Maintains physical and emotional health
- Builds and maintains healthy friendships (near and far)
- Manages finances well
- Manages time well
- Able to live within reasonable "margins"
- Committed to cultivation of a strong marriage (if married)
- Healthy acceptance of singleness (if single)
- Raises resilient children (if parent)

Organizational – Compatibility with group practices and policies are essential.

- Understands and appreciates culture of the church
- Supports doctrinal and policy statements of the church
- Supports missions philosophy and strategy of the church
- Maintains accountability
- Displays compliance with administrative procedures

The above qualities are those desired in a missionary candidate. They also represent growth areas for missionaries following their appointment to active service. In many respects, they represent a lifelong commitment to growth and development. Prior to appointment to missionary service, much of the responsibility for the development of these qualities is a joint venture between the candidate and their church. Following appointment, the mission agency normally brings considerable expertise and resources to aid in that development. In all cases, there exists an unavoidable need for the missionary to own the personal responsibility to be a learner and grower upon which all outside assistance is based.

Candidates are additionally to be evaluated in four different levels:

1. **Call** – Is there evidence that God has indeed been at work preparing and directing the candidate to missionary service? This should be observable and confirmed by those in positions of spiritual leadership.
2. **Character** – Does the candidate display attitudes and actions that reflect a growing Christ-likeness? This should be evidenced primarily through relationships in and out of the church.
3. **Competence** – Does the candidate exhibit skills and abilities that are needed for the intended missionary service? These skills and abilities should be demonstrated in relevant fashion "here", as opposed to hoping they will be developed "there".
4. **Compatibility** – Does the candidate "fit" into the strategy, philosophy, aims, and relationships of the missions ministry of the church?

Whereas much attention is traditionally focused on the first two areas (*call* and *character*) significant attention must be invested in the second two (*competence* and *compatibility*). While not discounting the significance of a biblically based call and the formation of godly character for the missionary candidate, far too many missionaries have returned home prematurely because they were not competent in their field of

intended service or because they did not really fit the organization or the context into which they were sent.

The Missionary Mobilization Team (MMT) of JEFEC is committed to the establishment of meaningful training and development ministries that will aid those called by God into missionary service. This will represent a collaborative journey for the MMT and the prospective missionary as they together seek God's wisdom and guidance, both for the Missions Ministry of JEFEC and the prospective missionary. To this end JEFEC has partnerships with Perspectives, Engage Global, and Radius International. All these organizations have classes and training that will better equip the prospective missionary candidate for years of service in church planting among the unreached. Where needed, the MMT will encourage and, in some cases, require specific training for some missionary candidates before accepting them on as a supported missionary. This will vary depending on the competencies and skills that the candidate has and the experiences that God has provided previously.