

The 18.26 Network

Vocational Missions FAQs for MTW Teams

How do vocational missionaries complement your work, your calling?

If we owned a package delivery company, let's say in Middletown, Delaware, and the only fleet vehicles that we used were tractor trailers, we would be seriously limited in terms of the variety of packages that we could deliver to customers who lived and worked in the various urban and suburban sections of our community. We would be able to bring heavy loads into distribution centers quite efficiently but delivering small packages to back city alleys and down twisting farmhouse lanes would be nearly impossible and a huge waste of resources.

Let's say we have a competitor, who also delivers packages in Middletown, Delaware but they have a hybrid fleet that includes, not only tractor trailers but also single- and dual-axle unibody trucks, vans and small cars. They are also investing in mopeds, electric bikes and drones. They can deliver heavy loads to large distribution centers but they can also move various combinations of lighter packaged loads to congested urban areas, suburban neighborhoods and rural locations that are seldom serviced by our company.

Can you think of places in your ministry context where you can't go? Places where you might not have access or the ability to penetrate in a culturally incarnational way? Vocational ministry allows Christians – like you, in terms of vision, values and mission, and yet not like you in terms of providing special skills that are salable in the various areas of commerce, industry and the arts in your city – to bear fruitful Kingdom witness and to work with you alongside a vibrant local church. The question becomes more of “*why not,*” then “*why?*”

But when will they have time to do ministry if they work 50 or 60 hours a week like most expats?

I guess the answer to that question depends on what you consider to be ministry. Would the *normal* members of the church you attend in your ministry location be considered *full-time* Christian servants? Do they exercise ministry through a church office that is often neglected when we speak about community outreach – *the office of the ordinary believer*? That would be the goal of most pastors and church staff.

Expats who model that commitment to incarnational life at their workplace, in their neighborhood, at their gym or in their language-acquisition class, etc. are a great gift to the church that you will want to help develop and grow. By adding expat vocational missionaries to help you accomplish your goals, through your willingness to become a hybrid team (like the package delivery company with a hybrid fleet), you maximize your ministry potential.

What happens if they don't work the way we want? Who's really in charge of their work?

The question of line authority is better suited to a hierarchical organization than a movement-oriented network. The 18.26 Network is not a hierarchical organization. We are movement oriented and collegially connected through shared vision, values and mission. We don't tell our members what to do in detail, when to do it or how to do it. They are, technically, independent contractors.

Leadership by example, collegial relationships that characterize network-style partnership and the judicious use of “soft power” paves the way for successful joint ministry. The 18.26 Network is willing to work with you and your team to talk about our history of relationships with MTW. You can contact us through our resource team or our information contact form on our website: 1826network.com.