



Bluntisham Baptist Church Mission ACTS

March 2019

What is the Lord asking us to do in world mission?

Overview

BMS World Mission has produced a resource called Mission ACTS to help churches define their role in world mission. Mission ACTS is designed to help individual churches gain a sense of focus and purpose with respect to mission support and engagement. There are needs and good causes almost everywhere and in a snapshot survey it was shown that Bluntisham Baptist Church members are involved with around 60 different mission initiatives. According to BMS research, too many churches, it seems, have arrived at their world mission engagement and support by accident rather than design.

It was agreed that Bluntisham Baptist Church should use this resource to move forward in our mission activities and as part of our overall church vision process.

In summary Mission ACTS will guide us in evaluating what we currently do, analyse our effectiveness and by the end of the process will result in us developing our own mission strategy that is Agreed, Clear, Targeted and Strategic (ACTS). This is our part in the Great Commission.

Mission ACTS

On Sunday 10th September 2017 a Sunday morning service was dedicated to Mission ACTS so that the whole church could be included. This was an abbreviated version of the full BMS Mission ACTS package due to the time constraints of a Sunday morning service. The aim of the service/process was to recognise where we are presently with respect to mission and to understand the process of how we move forward with mission in the future as part of our churches vision process. A separate Youth Mission ACTS meeting was held on the 1st October 2017 with the conclusions being included in the overall church vision.

Process

The fellowship was divided into 10 groups of roughly 6-8 people. The tasks were achieved within the time allocated however discussion was limited so the opportunity to explore the reasons behind each decision especially in Exercise 1 was insufficient although not a major issue. However my impression was that the groups did begin to understand the principles of the exercise and how it will relate to our own future decisions. Mission ACTS is a process to ensure that as a church we are agreed on what our mission activities are, that everyone is clear about what we are doing (and why), that we have a targeted approach to mission and that we are strategic in our decision making.

There was a very high level of engagement in the groups and the decision to include the whole church was worthwhile.

Exercise 1. Making world mission engagement choices

This exercise was to see how groups (the church) would decide on how to spend the churches mission budget reported as a percentage. There were six mission scenarios all of which are worthy causes and the groups had to decide which ones to support.

World Mission Engagement

Group	Bangladesh	Peru	Kazakhstan	Uganda	North Africa	Pakistan
1	50				50	
2	50	25		25		
3	25	5	15	20	20	15
4	50			50		
5	33	34			33	
6	27	27	12	12	12	12
7	3	1	30	1	30	35
8	10	15	15	15	20	15
9	10		30		30	30
10	50					50

This was quite a tricky task and fortunately it had been reduced from 12 to 6 scenarios.

All the groups said it was difficult to decide – no guidance was given.

From what I could tell most of the discussions focussed on the actual scenario issues rather than the concept of the question. This was also noted during our Beta testing. From the results it is clear some groups wanted to support all the projects while some preferred to focus on two. No group decided to focus on just one project. I did not pick up on any group commenting on the practicalities of supporting several projects at the same time nor of other support activities on top of funding the projects. This is where more discussion would have been beneficial and will be addressed when we move forward with our new strategy.

Exercise 2. BBC Mission Portfolio

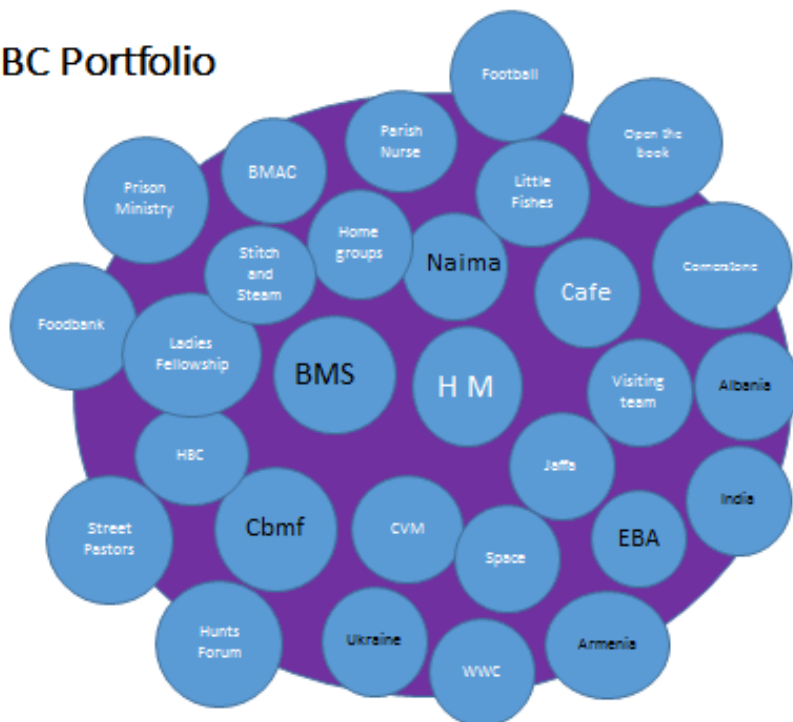
The exercise was to map our current churches mission portfolio and to see if we fully appreciate our churches activities.

- The large circle represents the boundary of the church’s collective interest
- The circles inside the large circle therefore represent what the church, collectively, engages with and/or supports. Black text for world mission and white text for local mission.
- A circle spanning the boundary is probably something that is making its way in to collective church support from being a personal interest.
- Circles outside of the main church sphere were not included as these are personal mission activities although they are noted.

Each group came up with different answers and there were lots of circles within the main circle as well as outside which illustrates that we are involved in many mission activities. It was interesting that some activities such as Cornerstone and the foodbank were placed both inside the church circle and outside indicating an uncertainty about our relationships. There was no mention of church partnerships, Cbmf or EBA which is understandable and Naama was overlooked by several of the groups.

It was pleasing that all the groups had a good overview of what we are involved with. Below is the map of our main portfolio with apologies for those not mapped as yet.

BBC Portfolio



Exercise 3. Portfolio ACTS

This exercise was to ascertain if we were in line with the ACTS concept. Basically is our mission portfolio agreed by the whole church, is it clear, is it targeted or random and is it strategic? Each heading is a score out of 10 as agreed by each group with 10 being the highest score.

Group	Agreed	Clear	Targeted	Strategic
	7.5	4	5	0
	8	5	6	3
	5	3	5	4
	6	7	4	6
	8	7	5	5
	7	6	9	3
	8	8	5	6
	10	7.5	7	5
	7	5	8	5
	7	8	5	5
	7	5	8	5
Mean	8	6.5	6.7	4.7

As with previous exercises there was a range of scores/interpretations.

The mean values demonstrate that we are good at agreeing what we are doing/going to do with respect to mission. The scores for clarity were more varied which may be due to the different levels of engagement by the group members. It seems we are reasonably targeted

yet as expected we are not strategic in our decision making which highlights the importance of this exercise.

Exercise 4. Mission Possible

The final exercise during the service was to have a snapshot of where we should be going in the future

There was a clear message for following a ministry focus rather than a specific country focus with education and training being the main suggestions. A couple of groups did say a combination of ministry and country focus. There were also several requests for equal focus on local as well as overseas mission.

Taking Your Mission Temperature

At the September members meeting a further exercise was undertaken to test the temperature of our mission. This was based on 10 questions reviewing how we approach mission over the year and our commitment. There were 25 completed questionnaires which is deemed representative of the church fellowship. Each question was scored and the final total reported as a percentage.

The table below is the individual percentage scores

64	54	53	67	54	59	43	64	57	34	32	51	64
38	46	59	47	69	42	62	74	82	44	55	48	

The average score for the 25 contributors was 55% with a spread between 32% and 82%

The definition of the score as per BMS guidelines is:-

0%-20% Church could do better in all areas relating to world mission

21%-40% Engagement, awareness and exposure to world mission is likely to be weak

41%-60% Church is mission aware but engagement could improve. Prayer and giving is probably modest

61%-80%. Good understanding of world mission. Church may give well/pray regularly and will probably be exposed to world mission issues often

81%-100%. High profile of world mission within the church. Prayer and giving may be strong and generous. There may be clear emphasis on discipleship in calling and sending

Notes

From the questions there were high scores were for education regarding mission, our commitment and that we encourage mission service.

Low scores were for 5% or less of our church budget being spent on mission, lack of a mission group, the need to set specific goals for mission and our minister only occasionally mentions mission.

As usual there was a mix of answers as our minister also scored highly for 5 respondents and mission service was given a low score by 5 respondents. Clarity and understanding were the issue.

The low score for mission group was obvious as we don't have one as such although a couple of high scores were given which I suspect is based on the leadership structure. A low score for goals was expected and again backs up why we need Mission ACTS.

Youth ACTS

A separate session was held with the church youth, again as part of a Sunday morning service.

Mission ACTS concepts and the process were explained starting with the decision making process. The mission portfolio was reviewed and the group identified activities which were missed by the adults which was encouraging. There was greater familiarity with local rather than world mission

The group think we are OK at mission.

There was a willingness to get involved in mission with some great suggestions which will be included in the future options.

Mission trips were discussed including Action Teams for the future and again there was a willingness to get involved.

The youth group would like more information on mission with separate mission sessions when we have visiting mission workers.

The group gave feedback to Cherie at the end of October as to what they think their skill sets are which could be used in mission and possible mission scenarios for consideration. A second session with the youth filled in some of the gaps and the possibility of mission trips reviewed. The key issue here is safeguarding and hence why BMS do not offer youth mission trips outside of Action Teams. It was agreed that we should hold specific youth events when we have visiting missionaries.

Mission Scenarios

At the January 18 members meeting the fellowship were asked to pray about mission opportunities and then to feedback on where they felt we were being called and why. The countries that came up were Myanmar, Armenia, Kenya, Tunisia, Peru, Ukraine, Albania, Africa and China. No reasons were given at the time although subsequent conversations supported the proposals. Following further discussions with BMS, 21 scenarios were produced for discussion by the leadership team with the aim of reducing this down to six which would be presented to the church. However the leadership thought that this was too complicated so we agreed to have a follow up Sunday evening prayer meeting plus two sessions during our Week of Prayer before a final service to discern God's will. During the service the fellowship were asked to pray for the top five topics that were on their heart for both world and local mission then note them down.



The results were collated and in a slight deviation from the ACTS process we decided that we should have three areas for possible mission trips, three scenarios that we support and three scenarios that we pray for so that the whole church could be involved. During a

subsequent Mission ACTS Sunday morning service a survey of opportunities for mission was issued and key scenarios were identified.

The church survey concluded that the three countries for potential mission trips were Albania, Armenia and Ukraine. The three support scenarios were to continue to support our church partner Naima in North Africa, to re-establish links with Chad and to continue to support Tools with a Mission. Scenarios to pray for were Syria, North Korea and Russia. In addition to this we would work with Mission Direct for those individuals who had specific mission wishes and for families who want to experience mission together. The next stage was to establish a mission team and it is pleasing to report that we now have a team of six who will cover the individual scenarios as in the table below.

Visit	Albania	Armenia	Ukraine
	AM	WC	ML
Support	Naama	Chad	TWAM
	ML	MW	AM
Pray	Syria	N. Korea	Russia
	LL	ML	JB

The mission team will be involved in regular updates and sharing experiences for each of the allocated areas plus there will be mission trips to work with missionaries in the field, practical support with regular collection of clothes and tools etc. plus of course lots of prayer opportunities.

The team have agreed to:

Produce a bi-annual newsletter covering all the scenarios in May and November.

Produce a quarterly prayer sheet for each area. Urgent prayer topics would be covered by using the Prayer Ring, BBC News and during services if appropriate.

Hold two church prayer meetings per year plus inclusion in any Week of Prayer activities.

Establish a new World Mission notice board in a key position.

Increase home assignment visits from Church partners.

Update the mission section of the church website on a monthly basis.

The aim of course is that everyone in our church will be involved in mission in one way or another.

Summary

A good cross section of the fellowship has been involved in the Mission ACTS process and the feedback from the exercises may be considered representative of the whole church. ACTS has shown that although active in mission we are not strategic; it is not clear what we do and why we do it. ACTS has also shown that mission is instrumental in moving forward as a church.

This process of developing our role with respect to mission is to confirm what we should be doing as a church and should not impact on individual support for all those other worthy organisations that we are involved with.

It is clear that Mission ACTS links in with our church vision process and how we connect with our community and the wider world. Thank you for being part of this journey.

Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed. (Proverbs 16 vs 3)

The World Mission Charter was agreed and signed at the BBC AGM on March 27th 2019