

Your Church Can (And Should) Change The World

MissionInterchange
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(A Service of Team Expansion)

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SECTION I: GOD'S HEART FOR THE WORLD

The Scriptural Basis for Missions Involvement

The Bible is the record of God seeking to save the lost. The message of sovereign grace is foundational in God's plan, and is found throughout the Bible. Covenant theology teaches that grace is conceived, established and perfected by God Himself. These Biblical themes express God's command and His gracious acceptance of man's obedience in spreading the gospel of Christ. In II Corinthians 5:14-21, Paul teaches that the love of Christ compels us to be faithful ambassadors in the ministry of reconciliation. Christ, who came from heaven to earth, was, in fact, the primary missionary. As we proclaim the gospel around the world, we follow Him.

Where specifically can the scriptural basis for involvement in missions be found?

Consider these verses:

- God's promise to Abraham that through him all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 22:17,18, Galatians 3:7-9,29)
- God's heart for the world (I Kings 8:43,60, Psalms 22:27, Psalms 67:1-7, Psalms 96:3, Isaiah 45:22, Jeremiah 3:17, Haggai 2:7, Malachi 1:11)
- The purpose of Christ's coming to bring good news to all people (Luke 2:10,30-32, John 3:16)
- Christ's missionary example in forgiving and saving the Samaritan woman (John 4)
- Christ's Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46-49, Acts 1:8, Acts 26:16-18)
- Paul's example of missionary commission, compassion, zeal and purpose (Acts 9:3-15, Romans 15:20-21, 16:25-26)

What must be our response?

- a commitment to church multiplication: evangelism, discipleship, becoming Good News
- to organize our missions efforts as a people of God
- to teach and preach the Biblical mandate in and out of all our churches and groups
- to encourage those who have a call toward world missions
- to pray for the harvest and workers for the harvest
- to support the efforts of our partners and friends when priorities align and as God leads

The Harvest Is Plentiful

In John 4:35b-36a, Christ said, "I tell you, open your eyes and look to the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life."

The Bible tells us that the task of world evangelism
-that is, a church for every people and the gospel accessible to every person—
is the responsibility of the church.

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). When Jesus gave the Great Commission to His followers, He commanded them, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

The Bible also tells us that people from every nation, that is, every ethno-linguistic group, will be in heaven. John wrote in Revelation 7:9, "After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb."

Jesus commissioned His disciples, saying, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). Christians worldwide are to bring a church to each ethno-linguistic people and to provide each person access to the gospel.

You only have to look around you to see that the need is great in our own backyard. How much greater is the need around the world!

- *Cities around the world are growing at an astounding rate. The population of Sao Paulo, Brazil increases by 500,000 annually. This is like the entire city of Pittsburgh moving into New York City—every year.**
- *More than 1.2 billion people in areas of the world traditionally labeled "Christian" are non-practicing, nominal "Christians."***
- *There are 3,557 people groups throughout the world in which less than 50% of the people are likely to have ever heard the gospel.***

All of these peoples need the good news of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. Our desire is to give the church the means to get the job done.

* John Maust, Cities of Change

** Operation World, 21st Century Edition

SECTION II: Our RESPONSE TO GOD'S HEART FOR THE WORLD

The Purpose of the Local Church

The first step is to ask, what is the purpose of your local church. God has established His Church with a purpose in mind, placing it in the center of all that God wants to do on earth.

If missions is about the expansion of God's kingdom, then the priority of missions must be to establish churches where none exist (Romans 15:20). Because it is God's plan that all peoples will worship him (Revelation 7), churches must cross cultural barriers to establish communities of believers among every people group.

Ultimate purpose: Exalt the Lord. The Bible teaches that there is an ultimate purpose to which all creation moves: God's own glory. The glory of God is his chief aim for eternity, the fulfillment of all creation, and man's highest purpose for existence. All of God's plans are inexorably working toward this one end. Indeed, God's glory is the final purpose of the church (Romans 15:6,9; Ephesians 1:5ff; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 1 Peter 4:11).

Outward purpose: Evangelize the lost. The Bible clearly teaches that there is an outward purpose for the church. Christ came to reach a lost and dying world (Luke 19:10), and He has similarly called the church: "As the Father has sent me, so now I send you" (John 20:21). This mission focuses the church outside itself, to reach out to those without the gospel through word and deed, whether across the street or across the ocean.

Inward purpose: Edify the laborers. The Bible tells us that an equally important purpose for the church is to build up its members. Nurture, mercy, discipleship, fellowship, teaching and training are some of the many ways that the parts of the body are to connect and support each other.

These two purposes (outward and inward) can be simply stated as evangelism and edification. The people of God gather for edification, in order to scatter to do the work of evangelism. But one purpose does not exist for the other. Rather, they are *interrelated and interdependent*. As the church is built up and members love and serve one another, they will be better equipped to reach out to a needy world. A simple separation of these functions leads to a program orientation, with often-disastrous results for the congregation. Instead, the functions of the gathered community should prepare every believer for the outward focus of the Great Commission.

Towards a Paradigm Shift in the Ministry of the Local Church

Model 1 - Program Perspective

Although most congregations believe the Great Commission is the primary task to be accomplished, missions often receives a "program status" in the church. It competes with other church programs for finances and emphasis.

Model 2 - Philosophic Perspective

In this model, the gospel is the central foundation for all programs, thus eliminating competition. The Great Commission is the integrating factor for all that the church does. Each ministry of the church becomes a way for the members to see themselves, each other, and the world disciplined toward Christ.

How Can Your Church Be Involved in Missions?

- Become informed by reading
 - news and world missions magazines
 - books on missions philosophy, strategy and activity
 - missionary biographies
- Take mission trips to fields where your church and others are laboring
- Participate in a vision trip to a field where new workers are needed
- Use special missions presentations:
 - videos
 - missionary presentations
 - presentations from partner agencies
- Organize a church missions team
- Develop positive, proactive policies
- Develop a focus area partnership
- Have a missions conference

Maximize Missions Involvement

In order to maximize missions involvement, the local congregation must have ownership of its own vision and program. Members must grow far beyond mere giving of personal and congregational finances. Ideally, members will adopt a church's mission goals and plans as their own. They will identify with missionaries and invest themselves in missionary support by nurture, prayer, and giving. To achieve this goal, missions must be personalized and brought within reach of the individual Christian.

Personalize missions for your congregation through:

- having an area of focus
- a global focus event (such as a missions conference)
- prayer participation
- short-term outreach
- financial outreach
- prayer participation

Results of Personalization:

- develops a world vision and a burden for the lost.
- builds the congregation's awareness of missions.
- establishes personal contact between missionaries and congregation members.
- helps members identify with missionaries through knowledge, understanding, and awareness.
- develops prayer support for missions.
- discovers and enlists new people to serve on the missions team.
- exposes new missionaries to the congregation.
- stimulates higher giving to missions (for both general support and special needs).
- educates the congregation about your church or denomination's missions activities.
- involves the congregation in missions projects.
- extends the ministry to the local church.

Missionary Recruitment in the Local Church

Missionary recruitment is a vital process in which the local church must become involved if it is to fulfill its role in world evangelization. In the past, the role of the local church has been largely reactive, endorsing missionary candidates already selected and accepted by their mission boards. The local church then functioned as the funding source for those candidates who appealed to them for support.

Ideally, the local church will become increasingly proactive in the difficult discipline of prayerfully challenging church members to become missionary candidates rather than merely evaluating the candidates who come seeking support. Churches who commit to this role will find that they will discover, prepare and send the qualified from within their own ranks, becoming the wellspring of missionary recruitment.

Some of the most qualified potential missionaries can be found in your church and others like yours, but they must be challenged *personally* by pastors, elders or a missions committee to seriously consider missions. It is in the matrix of the local church that mechanisms must be developed to discover those whom God is calling to go.

(Agencies like Team Expansion are happy to help you on this journey. Contact us for more help at www.TeamExpansion.org)

Some Suggestions on How to Model Missions for Your Church

1. Meet together as a missions team at least once per month.
2. Spend significant effort in prayer.
 - for one another, the church, the pastor
 - for the church's missionaries
 - for the unsaved
 - for your focus areas/partnerships
3. Develop a loving Christian community within the missions team.
 - get to know one another well
 - care for each other
 - learn to disagree agreeably
 - have fellowship and social times together
4. Commit to missions as your primary church responsibility.
 - support the entire church program, but avoid over-involvement
5. Support your pastor.
 - pray for him, his family, his goals, his leadership
 - pray for his relationship to God, the church and the world
 - provide funds for him to travel overseas, especially to our church's areas of focus

Suggestions (continued)

6. Put Christ ahead of the task.

- commit first to know and worship Him
- realize that missions is a consequence of following Him
- institute this attitude of heart into every program, project, and focus area

7. Become individually involved in the lives of non-Christians.

- concern for those we know precedes compassion for a lost world

8. Maintain personal contact with individual missionaries.

9. Alter lifestyle decisions in view of God's global priority.

- reduce extraneous involvements
- spend less time and resources on yourself in order to spend more effort and resources on others

10. Give generously and wisely to kingdom causes.

11. Read, listen, write, tell, open your home.

12. Encourage those individuals from your church who are called to short-term and long-term missions.

SECTION III: ORGANIZING A LOCAL TEAM

The Missions Team and the Purpose Statement

Perhaps the best way to begin educating your church and adopting a vision for world evangelization is to form a missions team. It is important to clarify your team's goal by creating a purpose statement. The purpose statement should be a guide for planning, implementing and evaluating the ministries, programs and activities of the missions team. The missions team's purpose statement should be built upon the church's purpose statement.

To write a purpose statement:

- list the tasks of the missions team (evangelism, discipleship, mercy, support-raising, educating, involving church leaders in missions)
- place the tasks in order of priority
- create a statement of 30 words or less from your list

Consider these examples:

1. (Our church missions team) exists to glorify God through obedience to the supreme tasks of the church, the evangelization of the world, with all its ministries supportive of those tasks.
2. (Our church missions team) exists to glorify God, encouraging fellow believers in the faith so we are involved in going out and making disciples of all nations through the work of the Holy Spirit.
3. (Our church missions team) exists to glorify God by seeking to partner with those areas in the world where our church might have a part in making and equipping disciples of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Make the missions team purpose statement an integral part of your church

- Present the purpose statement to the elders for approval.
- Inform the congregation of the purpose statement.
- Include the purpose statement in the bulletin or newsletter.
- Have each team member sign the statement.

What is a missions policy?

After writing the missions purpose statement, drafting a complete missions policy is necessary. The policy will consist of a series of guidelines that will shape your missions activity.

A missions policy will:

- Build confidence and cohesion in your missions ministry.
- Permit thoughtful evaluation of critical issues.
- Prevent confusion, inconsistency, misunderstanding and hurt feelings. Let the policy say "yes" or "no."
- Define the responsibilities of the church, missionary and agency.
- Communicate to the congregation what the missions team has in mind. It informs as well as builds trust.
- Allow everyone to know "up front" what to expect (church member, ruling boards, pastoral staff, missionaries and agencies).
- Facilitate partnerships between the local church and the field.

Consider these things:

1. How rigid is this missions policy? If it is too flexible, it will be no policy at all. If it is too stringent, misunderstandings and discouragement could result.
2. How often should the policy be revised? By whom?
3. What authority is given to the missions team?
4. Do the staff and session understand and support the policy?
5. How will the policy be communicated to the congregation?

POLICY ONE - Structure & Operation of the Committee

Perhaps your church has already determined the issues that will be presented in this section. If so, you can refer to the church bylaws as a basis for writing these structure policies. They will need to be reviewed and revised in order to meet the specific needs and goals of your missions team. Church elders will approve the team and appoint an elder to serve on it.

1. Determine the number of committee members (check one)
 - five members
 - seven members
 - nine members
2. Determine the length of service of committee members (check one)
 - one-year term
 - two-year term
 - five-year term

- three-year terms, with one-third rotating off each year
- membership on missions team continues indefinitely
- chairperson (or missions pastor or administrator) is permanent, members rotate on and off yearly
- pastor or church board representative serves indefinitely, and other members rotate on a three-year term

Consider these questions:

1. How often will the missions team and subcommittees meet? Annual planning sessions?
2. Will there be a larger advisory team that meets annually to advise the missions team?
3. Will there be permanent subcommittees? What are their specific duties?
4. Is there a missions pastor? If so, what are his duties and relationship to the team?
5. Is there a missions administrator? If so, what are his/her duties?

POLICY TWO - Criteria for Membership

Determining the qualifications for those serving on the missions team is vital. The missions team will have a variety of responsibilities and it will be important for members to exhibit a wide range of skills and gifts. The criteria listed below describe some of the most necessary prerequisites. Few people will exhibit all of these qualities, so temper idealism with realism.

The individual should:

- practice a faithful, personal relationship with Christ
- be interested in world missions
- consider missions as one of the primary roles of the church
- have a desire to learn more about missions
- be willing to undergo initial training
- possess gifts supportive of the missions team's efforts
- be committed to prayer
- be willing to serve on a subcommittee
- be willing to be a project leader
- understand and support the policies of the church's missions team

POLICY THREE - Officers and Functions

Decide what officers your missions program needs and consider the functions each officer will perform. How will your missions team be organized?

- Chairperson (consider whether this will be an elder)
- Vice-chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

- Prayer Coordinator - Receives prayer requests from missionaries, coordinates prayer within the church for its missions ministry, missionaries, missions conference, Day of Prayer for Persecuted Church, etc. May organize teams and/or regular prayer meetings.
- Missions Conference Chairperson
- Hospitality Chairperson (for missionaries who are visiting and/or on home assignment) - Stays in regular contact with missionaries to know when they are visiting the U.S., coordinates any lodging, transportation, or other needs.
- Short-term and Missions Project Chairperson - Drives, plans, promotes short-term trips for the congregation.
- Assimilation Coordinator (into every ministry of the church) - Focuses on moving missions and the Great Commission from a program status to the driving force for all the church's ministries (see page 7).
- Candidate Coordinator - Funnel opportunities for supporting new candidates to the missions team and session; is aware of the team's and session's goals for new candidate support.
- Representative from the session - Serves as a channel of communication between the session and the missions team, to ensure unity in purpose, plans, and goals.

POLICY FOUR - The Role of the Missions Team

The main tasks and responsibilities of the missions team are to:

- work as a committee of the session
- elevate the church's awareness of the biblical basis for missions, the need for world evangelization, and current events in missions
- educate and inspire the congregation about world missions
- aid members of the local church in responding to God's call to missions
- stimulate prayer for missionaries and world missions
- care for missionaries on home ministry assignment
- ensure that pastors, staff and officers participate in mission project
- recommend missionary candidates according to set guidelines
- oversee the annual or semi-annual missions conference
- prepare the annual missions budget and present it to the elders for approval
- process and utilize prayer letters/email
- visit areas of priority or focus of the church

Each responsibility should be discussed by the missions team and used as a basis for writing individual policies. By asking the question, "how will this be accomplished?" for each task discussed, the team will be able to develop concrete guidelines for each issue. The more specific the criteria, the more smoothly the activity will run.

For example:

1. Ask the question: How will we care for our missionaries on home ministry assignment (furlough)?
2. Brainstorm for ideas and invite the congregation to help care for missionaries.

Some ideas:

- a missionary guest house
 - a supply of household items, or a team assigned to fulfilling this kind of need
3. Choose or vote on suggestions based on what best suits your church.
 4. Write a policy that will cover the specific ways your church will care for missionaries on home ministry assignment (furlough).

POLICY FIVE - Prioritizing Giving

Decide what will be your church's primary focus area(s). Design a "pie chart" of your priorities. You could give toward partnerships, mission projects, unreached people groups, various geographical areas, various ethnic groups, or to areas not previously supported. Ask God for input. Listen to His response. Note: We suggest that unreached people groups should be a priority due to the fact that they've never had a chance to hear the Good News even once.

POLICY SIX - Support Guidelines

Consider these guidelines as you establish a policy for supporting missionaries:

Long-Term Missionaries:

- What will be your criteria and guidelines?
- Amount of support and type of support committed are to be in effect until a change in country of service, at which time support can be re-evaluated according to the church's missions goals

Two-Year Missionaries, Interns (2-11 months)

- Decide what your church will do.

Short-termers from within and without of your church

- Brainstorm and pray for input.

SECTION IV: PLANNING AN ANNUAL MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Why Is A Missions Conference Important?

For the church that has begun to recognize the primacy of missions and evangelism, the missions conference is an opportunity to fuel that vision in a unique manner. It is an opportunity for a congregation to re-focus on its biblical mandate in ministry and to restore perspective upon its church's mission. In many churches whose vision and involvement in missions has become the focus of a few members of the church, a conference is an opportunity to push that vision outward and to give opportunity for ownership to the congregation. Paradoxically, rather than depleting the local church, a missions conference serves to enhance interest, resources and fruitfulness of the local church.

Global Focus Event: Goal - "To Increase the Spiritual Condition of the Church"

Your missions conference will be a time for explanation, illustration and personalization of world evangelism. In order to accomplish this, you must discover ways to bring the world to your church.

Key ingredients of the annual conference:

- *Personalization:* Involve large numbers of the congregation in the event, especially children.
- *Saturation:* Expose members through meals, special events, displays, Sunday School, hospitality and public services. The information gleaned through these events will inspire the congregation and produce involvement.
- *Involvement:* The concentrated time during the missions conference opens lines of communication for things previously unknown.

Key components of the annual conference:

Personnel:

- Missionaries and nationals from the church's areas of focus, missionary candidates, main speakers, music team, children's ministry team, internationals

Program ideas:

- Sunday worship service in morning and evening. Flags from around the world could be carried and displayed.
- Have a missionary speaker in Sunday school classes.
- Schedule the main speaker for weekday morning meetings.
- Special events such as a men's breakfast or a women's luncheon.
- Set up displays which include prayer cards of missionaries the church supports, photos, informational brochures, videos, maps, flags, and other such resources.
- Children's conference
- Home meetings in which missionaries share pictures, videos, and speak informally in a question and answer time.
- Phone calls to missionaries in other countries during gathering in the sanctuary or homes.
- Opportunities for congregation to meet missionaries and nationals from church's areas of focus

Two Alternative Programs

Alternative One

Alternative Two

<p>FRIDAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Orientation Meeting ● Covered dish supper ● Introduce missionaries (2-5 min. each) ● Kick-off message from main speaker (40 min) ● Display area for missionaries 	<p>FRIDAY</p>
<p>SATURDAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Men's breakfast: a missionary shares (20 min) ● Women's luncheon: a missionary shares (20 min) ● Youth supper: a missionary shares (20 min), discussion follows ● Dessert in homes: missionaries share slides, videos and a Q&A time 	<p>SATURDAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Orientation Meeting ● Family night supper with brief introduction of missionaries.
<p>SUNDAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sunday School: missionaries share in all classes ● Morning worship: missionary shares (3-5 min), message by main speaker ● Covered dish lunch at church ● Evening Worship: a missionary shares (3-5 min), message by main speaker 	<p>SUNDAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sunday School: missionaries share in all classes ● Morning worship: missionary shares (3-5 min), message by main speaker ● Evening Worship: a missionary shares (3-5 min), message by main speaker
<p>MONDAY</p>	<p>MONDAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Men's breakfast: a missionary shares (20 min) ● Evening Worship: a missionary shares (3-5 min), message by main speaker ● Seniors' luncheon
<p>TUESDAY</p>	<p>TUESDAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Women's luncheon: a missionary shares (20 min) ● Evening Worship: a missionary shares (3-5 min), message by main speaker ● Dinner with officers and wives

Subcommittees

Dividing the responsibilities for the missions conference and appointing leaders of the various activities can greatly ease the organizational challenges of the conference. Depending on the size of the conference, one person could undertake more than one responsibility. Subcommittees also provide an excellent means for personalization. Encourage church members to volunteer for different responsibilities and involve them as much as possible in the planning of the conference. Remember to contact partners and partner organizations for displays, materials, guest speakers, and more.

Choose a leader for each subcommittee. The conference chairperson will lead the subcommittees.

Publicity:

- Make posters and banners
- Design and produce a conference brochure
- Coordinate publicity with other church workers to promote the conference among their groups
- See that the announcements are made from the pulpit as appropriate
- Include conference information in the church paper or newsletter
- Send press releases or set up interviews with local newspapers and radio or TV stations
- Produce and place posters in local public buildings
- Personal visits to each Sunday school class

Facilities:

- Plan, produce and put up decorations for all sessions
- Arrange for facilities as needed for special events
- Provide signs for clear direction to and in facilities
- Reserve or arrange for necessary equipment
- Reserve and decorate display tables
- Coordinate set-up of facilities as needed for each event

Hospitality:

- Arrange housing and meals for incoming speakers
- Work out transportation for speakers
- Arrange housing and meals for missionaries
- Buy or make name tags for all speakers and missionaries
- Coordinate coffee breaks and fellowship times
- Send information packets to all program participants (conference brochures, schedules, maps, housing arrangements, etc.)
- Provide encouraging seminar just for missionaries

Subcommittees (continued)

Missions Displays:

- List organizations which should be contacted
- Write a letter inviting the organizations
- Arrange for display area, table, etc.
- Arrange for a book table with missions books and periodicals
- Arrange for workers to staff the book table

Finances:

- Determine the costs of the conference
- Establish a detailed budget (income and expense)
- Arrange for tickets where needed
- Collect funds for events where needed
- Make sure bills, honorariums and other charges are paid
- Keep good records
- Design and produce Faith Promise cards and informational brochures; final totals may be presented at the closing meeting

Follow-up:

- Keep attendance records of all events
- Record conference evaluations (you may design and distribute evaluation forms to your congregation)
- Provide for response cards if there is a call for commitment to missionary service
- See that financial commitments are acknowledged when appropriate
- Inform the church as to the results of the missions conference
- Send thank-you notes to all volunteers and missionaries

Plan One Year in Advance

12 Months in Advance

A. Choose conference dates

1. What is optimum time of year?
 - a. Church calendar
 - b. Social calendar
 - c. Community calendar
2. Determine length of conference

B. Begin consideration of conference theme (see page 20)

C. Plan to use conference as a time to target any new focus areas

D. Invite main speaker(s)

E. Invite church-supported missionaries (usually those on HMA or furlough)

F. Invite special musician(s)

G. Work on conference budget

9 Months in Advance

- A. Invite missionaries/nationals from focus areas
- A. Invite other missionaries
- B. Invite mission board representatives
- C. Invite nationals
- D. Select theme
- E. Select subcommittee chairpersons (see page 17)
- F. Determine special events (see page 15)

6 Months in Advance

- A. Develop subcommittee heads, personnel, responsibilities and six-month assignments (see page 17)
- B. Begin work on publicity
- C. Research missionary candidates' applications
- D. Arrange for speaker and special events
- E. Plan "Theme Display" for sanctuary and other decorations

3 Months in Advance

- A. Arrange for hospitality (see page 17)
 - 1. Distribute hospitality cards to potential hosts
 - 2. Develop master chart of visitors and potential hosts
 - 3. Mail letters to hosts
- B. Choose candidates and notify them of support policy (see page 14)
- C. Review conference budget
- D. Confirm candidates' conference participation and interviewing process
- E. Discuss veteran missionary support and interviewing process
- F. Develop sign-up board for prayer commitments

2 Months in Advance

- A. Prepare pastoral letter to be mailed to congregation with Faith Promise devotional
- B. Secure Faith Promise devotionals
- C. Evaluate committee functions and conference preparation progress
- D. Set Faith Promise goal (see page 21)
- E. Plan contents of guest packet (include information about your geographical area, your church, etc.)
- F. Send final confirmation letter to conference guests
- G. Finalize speakers for special events
- H. Develop a spreadsheet or database of all events and missionary schedules

1 Month in Advance

- A. Evaluate progress
- B. Finalize hospitality procedure
 - 1. Master chart
 - 2. Send meal letters out

- 3. Send lodging letters out
- C. Establish schedule of conference assignments
- D. Review conference schedule, programming and personnel with the pastor
- E. Prepare conference guest packets (include pertinent information about your geographical area, your church, etc.)
- F. Mail pastoral letter with Faith Promise devotional
- G. Finalize theme display for sanctuary
- H. Finalize sign-up board for prayer commitments

THREE WEEKS in Advance

Begin distribution of conference publicity brochures to congregation on Sunday to advertise the missions conference

TWO WEEKS in Advance

- A. Check with subcommittees on progress
- B. Assemble conference guest packets

ONE WEEK in Advance

- A. Set order of services (see page 16)
- B. Check with subcommittees on final details

CONFERENCE WEEK

Orientation meeting for missions conference personnel prior to launching the conference

Themes for Missions Conferences

Consider these possibilities as you create your own theme:

- A Light to All Nations
- A Needy World, A Saving Message
- As the Father Has Sent Me, So I Send You
- Compelled by His Love
- Expect Great Things from God, Attempt Great Things for God
- Extending Christ's Kingdom to All Peoples
- For God So Loved the World
- From Every Tribe, Nation and Tongue
- Here Am I, Send Me
- The Light of the World
- Lord of the Harvest
- Missions: The Fullness of God's Love
- One Message for Many Nations
- Our Focus in Missions
- Reaching the Unreached
- The Unfinished Task
- White Unto the Harvest

SECTION V: FAITH PROMISE GIVING

Faith Promise Giving

The grace of giving is one of the most amazing blessings of the Christian life. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, God reveals that He intends that His redeemed people—those bought by the blood of Christ—are to be the channel for His gospel to be extended to the all the nations of the earth.

'How, then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.'"

Romans 10:14-15

It is both the privilege and the duty of the Christian to send missionaries by way of generous financial gifts. In ways beyond all human understanding of logic or of math, God takes our gifts, multiplies them, uses them, and repays the giver with blessing. As a spirit of selfless generosity is a mark of a healthy Christian, so the practice of collective benevolence is indicative of a vital church. The adage, "Show me your wallet and I'll show you your heart," is as applicable to the church as a whole as it is to the individual.

Funds designated for world missions are called by a variety of terms, the most commonly-used being *Faith Promise*. However, the nomenclature used is far less important than the fact that these gifts flow from the hearts of God's people through the local congregations and denomination to the various ministries around the globe.

What is Faith Promise giving?

- A method of giving which grows out of first giving ourselves to the Lord and then to His servants. "They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will" (2 Corinthians 8:5).
- 2) A method which encourages voluntary, purposeful giving. "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- 3) A method which encourages generous, sacrificial giving. "We want you to know about the grace of God that has been given to the Macedonian churches. Out of their most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability" (2 Corinthians 8:1-3). "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6).
- 4) A method which encourages giving in which we trust God to provide our material needs and to give us spiritual blessings. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus"(Philippians 4:19).

How can Faith Promise giving be implemented where the church presently gives a percentage of the general budget to missions?

Plan for a transition

- Consider bringing someone in to explain Faith Promise and answer concerns
- Begin with the pastor/missions leader
- Make a list of key people
- Informally meet with key decision makers (missions leaders, finance/administrative leaders, influential members)
- Meet with elders and deacons

Four important ingredients in bringing change

1. Information
2. Discussion
3. Making a decision
4. A plan for how to implement over a period of time

A Faith Promise Challenge

If we ignore the privilege and joy of giving, who is hurt?

Remember this: *'Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously'* (2 Corinthians 9:6).

During the Roaring Twenties a man named Arthur Berry became quite notorious as a jewel thief-and a good one. He only stole from the rich and famous, and it became quite a mark of prestige to have been hit by Mr. Berry. Eventually he was apprehended, shot three times in a gun battle with police, and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

After his release reporters were clambering to interview him. One insightful young man inquired, "Mr. Berry, you robbed an awful lot of wealthy people in your life as a jewel thief. From whom did you steal the most?"

Without a moment's hesitation Berry replied, "The man from whom I stole the *most* was Arthur Berry."

When *we* fall down in our stewardship, some say we are stealing from God. God, however, doesn't need our money. Others indicate that Christian work will be handicapped, but God cannot and does not fail. When we fail in our giving, we rob *ourselves* of the privilege, the joy and the blessing that come to those who *'excel in the grace of giving'* (2 Corinthians 8:7).

Faith Promise Giving for Your Congregation

Where does the money come from?

Here are three possible sources to consider for Faith Promise:

- 1) Change your spending priorities - Look at your expenditures and ask, "What am I willing to give up, or sacrifice, so that the Good News can be proclaimed and churches planted?" This reordering of priorities is likely to pinch, but it is fully biblical. The Macedonian Christians gave out of their poverty and beyond their ability.
- 2) Be creative - You might make an investment and dedicate all the proceeds to Faith Promise. You might take on a second job for a few hours, a week or month. You might use carpool income. You might make and sell crafts. The point is that if giving for missions becomes a priority, you can think creatively of ways to have more money available for the purpose.
- 3) Through serendipity income - Many of us receive income we didn't really expect throughout the year. It may come in the form of gifts, overtime, an investment that pays off beyond expectations, an inheritance or a tax refund. This extra income could be committed, all or in part, to missions. Instead of using it to buy something for ourselves, we commit to giving it so that we may make Christ known.

How Do I Do It?

- Pray about your desire to give more to the support of missions.
- Determine what you would like to do for the Lord in the next year in support of missions, and indicate that intention by filling out a Faith Promise card.
- Give not to a particular missionary, but to the work of missionaries, looking to the missions team to give leadership in your support of missions and church planters.

SECTION VI: SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

Write a special set of guidelines for this popular approach to mobilize and disciple prospective future cross-cultural workers.

Consider the following steps/themes:

- Encourage pastors, staff and members to take short-term mission trips.
- Create an application process that will include a channel for funds to finance these trips.
- Establish policies on raising support for members and projects.

Check existing partners for opportunities -- or create your own.

SECTION VII: PARTNERSHIPS

Background

Until recently, the dominant model for mission work was for churches to send members and resources to the field via a mission agency. The advantages of this model were an experienced system of oversight and support, a coherent philosophy of ministry, and the pooling of resources. Churches were *rarely involved in field ministry*, except through praying for the work and hearing from the missionaries.

Recently, however, advances in communications and transportation have led to a greater demand by churches for *direct field involvement*. Short-term projects and instant connection to the field via email are common examples of this trend. In some cases, congregations have bypassed the agency altogether by sending and supporting members exclusively through the church. While increasing congregational ownership and commitment, this model can also suffer from decreased expertise and sustainability of the ministry.

Write guidelines to help your church leverage and maximize involvement with fields in partnership.

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