

Missions Consultation:

Eight Steps of the Missions Continuum



International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention
Richmond, Virginia

FORWARD

The Eight Steps of the Missions Continuum Workbook

The ***Eight Steps of the Missions Continuum*** is a workshop designed to help a pastor, church, or sending agency expand their capacity to fully embrace the Great Commission. This workbook is intended to serve as a record of the process of setting a standard of involvement, evaluating God's specific call to His mission, assessing progress toward that vision, and developing plans to move forward in the continuum.

This workbook is not designed to create this transformation by reading alone. It is intended to be used in the context of a workshop with like-minded individuals, including discussion regarding current missions and church realities, unpacking the principles of Scripture, and leading to a true transformation of the heart and mind to focus on God's plan for His Church to share the gospel with every language and people. The goal is to work toward more healthy churches that fully embrace God's call to be involved in His Mission: the Great Commission.

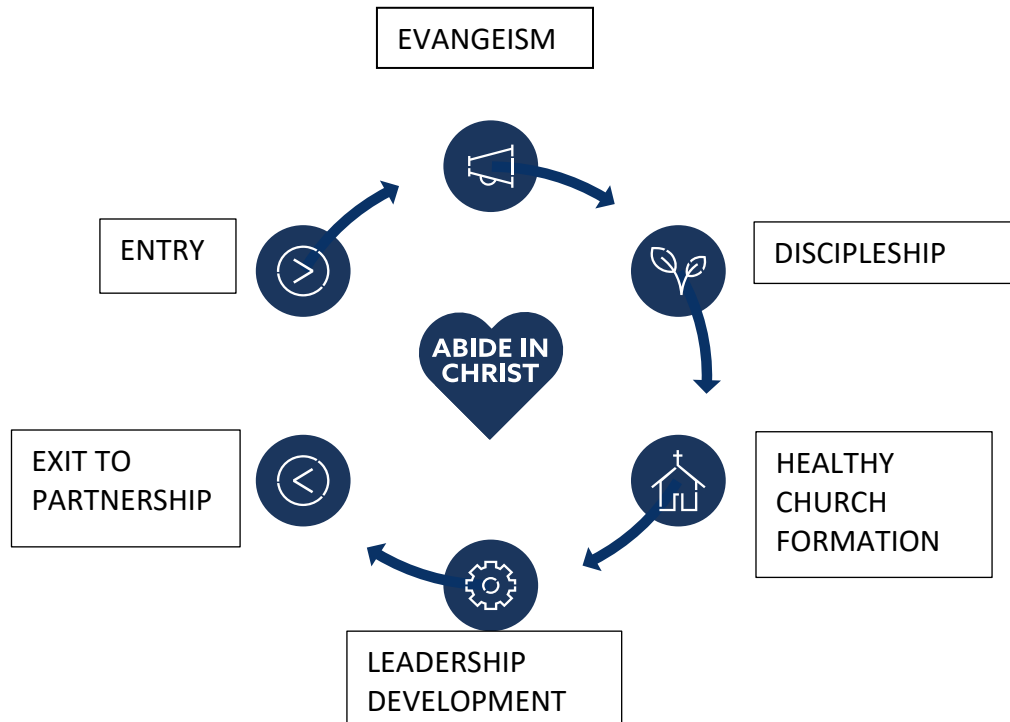
God has designed His work to be done in community. Although the decision to follow Him is made in the hearts of individuals as they respond in repentance and faith, the mission of God is accomplished in community. Therefore, we believe that lives can better be transformed when people interact with this material in a community atmosphere. God will sometimes speak to individuals in the group with His message for the entire group. This reinforces our need for the Body of Christ: His Church. We must recognize that even the strongest and largest churches need partners to fully embrace the Great Commission, establishing multiplying churches among the unreached and under-served communities.

If you, your church, or your agency are interested in participating in an ***Eight Steps of the Missions Continuum*** workshop, please contact the Globalization Team of International Mission Board (IMB).

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What Does a Missionary Do?

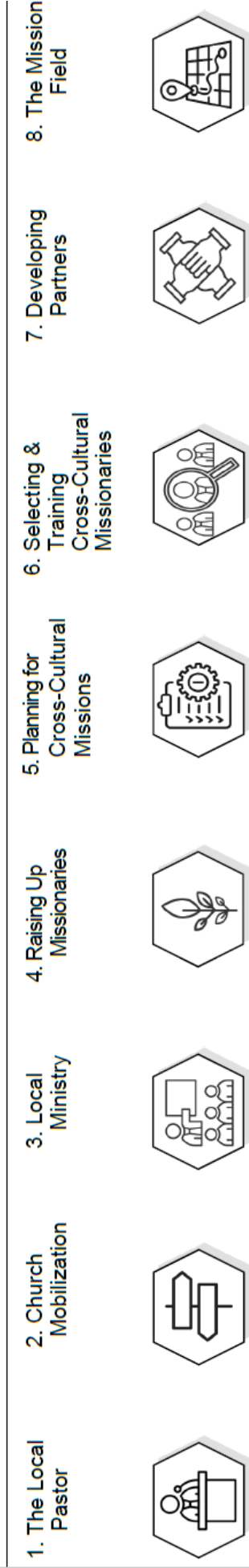
The Missionary Task



Components of the Missionary Task:

1. Entry
2. Evangelism
3. Discipleship
4. Healthy Church Formation
5. Leadership Training
6. Exit to Partnership

Eight Steps of the Missions Continuum



Cross-Cultural Ministry

Helping Missionaries Work Among Different Cultures

Culture: The sum of all knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors shared and transmitted by members of a society.

A culture different from my own may have both positive and negative characteristics. For example:

1. In Chinese culture all are expected to honor and respect their parents and the elderly in general.
2. In Chinese culture many go to the extreme to worship their ancestors, giving offerings and making sacrifices to their spirits.

God's Word, and not our own culture, should be the standard whereby we live: we are to be transformed by His Word rather than conformed to this world (Romans 12:1-3).

1. Some cultural norms will be compatible with Christianity, but others will not.
2. Man has an inner desire to know God (Romans 1:18-32), but man's ways to God are inadequate and constitute false worship. God reveals Himself to us (John 6:44) through the Holy Spirit, the Word, and the testimony of believers – all pointing to Christ and His work of salvation.
3. The gospel mandates that those who believe in Him should share cross-culturally – that was His plan in Genesis 12:1-3, to take the message to the nations.
4. God challenges His disciples to minister cross-culturally as shown to Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10).
5. Paul demonstrates how to share the gospel cross-culturally in Acts 17:22-34, using a bridge from their culture.


Ten Questions to Aid in Understanding a New Culture:

1. How do they celebrate, especially in weddings and births?
 - Celebrations help us understand what they value.
2. How do they accept loss or mourn, especially in death?
 - Grief helps us understand their view of life and the hereafter.
3. How do they make major decisions such as in marriage or selecting leaders?
 - The decision-making process helps us understand whether they are individual- or group-minded, merit-based or hierarchical.
4. What is taboo or unacceptable in their culture?
 - Taboos help us understand social standards, and often how men and women interact.
5. How do they define the concept of "sin"?
 - This helps us understand right from wrong; honor/shame; innocence/guilt.
6. How do they confront one another?
 - That helps us see how they understand conflict and reconciliation.
7. How do they say "yes" and "no" in their culture?
 - This helps us understand how to communicate respect, maintain relationship, and understand cultural nuance and how to approach invitations.

8. How do they bargain at the market or in a business deal?
 - This helps us understand their view of fairness, business, and competition
9. What are the basic beliefs of their religion?
 - Recognize that there may be a syncretistic aspect to their beliefs, such as Muslims and animism in Southeast Asia.
10. What is their view of people from your culture?
 - This helps us understand how they might view us as we attempt to interact with them.

It is helpful for each missionary to analyze his own culture in light of these questions and then understand his worldview as opposed to the worldview of those he is seeking to reach. He may need to learn to function in a cultural norm much different from his own in order to effectively relate, such as Paul did (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). That does not mean he ceases to live by Biblical standards, but he is willing to step into a different cultural way of life to effectively communicate the gospel to those who need to hear. This may be as simple as the food he regularly eats, when he sleeps, and how he gets around town.

Biblical Foundations for Missions

1. Abraham – Genesis 12:1-3
2. Abraham tested by God – Genesis 22:18
3. The Great Commission – Matthew 28:16-20
4. God gives the Holy Spirit – Acts 1:8
5. God's promise fulfilled – Acts 2:4-11
6. The gospel shared in Samaria – Acts 8:4-5
7. The Ethiopian hears the gospel – Acts 8:26-27
8. Cornelius and Peter – Acts 10
9. The Antioch church sends Paul and Barnabas – Acts 13:1-3
10. God's mission given to the Church – Matthew 24:14

Six Critical Questions

about Missions Involvement for the Local Church

Building the Right Foundation – Luke 6:46-49

1. What is missions?

Matthew 24:14

Matthew 16:18

Revelation 7:9

2. Why do we do missions?

John 14:6, Acts 4:12

John 3:16-17

Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8

Romans 10:13-15

3. When should we do missions?

John 4:35, 42

4. Where should we do missions?

Acts 10

5. Who should do missions?

Acts 13:1-3

6. How do we do missions?

Mobilizing the Local Church

The Missional Church – Acts 2:36-47

Becoming a Healthy Missional Church

Introduction: The missional church must first be a healthy church. Church health does not depend on size or buildings, but on health in terms of biblical standards. A missional church is a healthy church that sees its task as making disciples of all peoples in their own community and beyond. First, we will look at the elements of the New Testament church, then honestly discuss how our own local church measures up to the New Testament model.

The book of Acts records the planting of churches across the known world. Even though many of these churches were planted by the Apostle Paul and his missionary team of church planters, the new churches faced many challenges as they dealt with the realities of day-to-day life. Some of the churches planted received letters from Paul as he helped them address their problems.

Many studies can be done to review the elements of church as established in the New Testament. For this discussion, we will look at the portion of Scripture that records what happened just as the New Testament church was being established (Acts 2:36-47). Although this is not an exhaustive study, this portion of Scripture will help us identify some of the elements in the early church and consider whether those elements are present in our own churches. (Also reference 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, for more understanding about the function of the local church.)

The Elements of a New Testament Church

1. Read Acts 2:36-47 and make a list verse by verse of what you observe happening in the early church.

- v 36 –
- v 37 –
- v 38 –
- v 39 –
- v 40 –
- v 41 –
- v 42 –
- v 43 –
- v 44 –
- v 45 –
- v 46 –
- v 47 –

2. Discuss the twelve characteristics of a healthy church, comparing your list from Acts 2 with the list below, and review corresponding Biblical references.
 - Biblical evangelism – Acts 2:38
 - Biblical discipleship – Acts 2:42, Matthew 28:19-20
 - Biblical preaching and teaching – Acts 2:42
 - Biblical leadership – Acts 2:42, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9
 - Biblical membership – Acts 2:46, 1 Corinthians 12
 - Biblical worship – Acts 2:47
 - Biblical fellowship – Acts 2:46
 - Biblical prayer – Acts 2:42
 - Biblical accountability and discipline – Acts 2:40, Matthew 18:15-17
 - Biblical giving – Acts 2:45
 - Biblical ordinances of baptism and Lord's Supper – Acts 2:38, 41; Matthew 26:26-29
 - Biblical mission – Matthew 28:16-20, Matthew 24:14

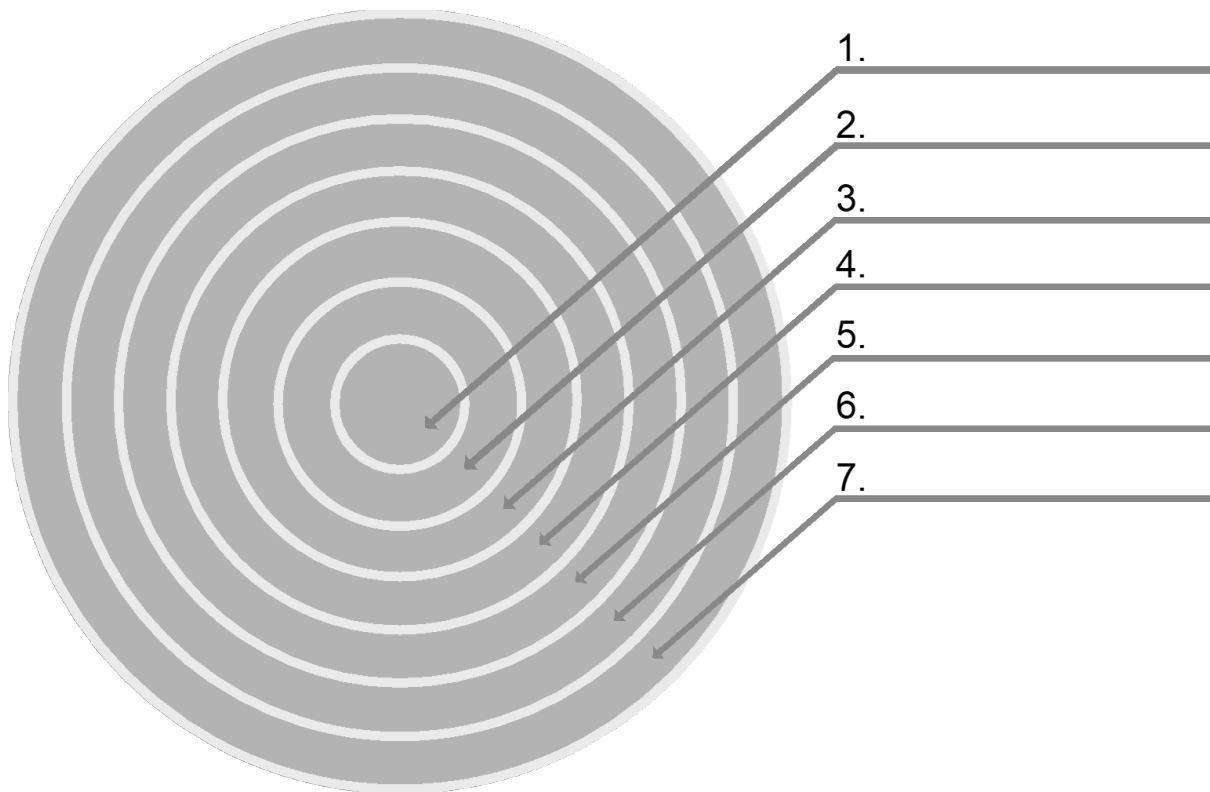
3. Draw a circle that represents your church. Inside the circle put the elements you feel are strengths of your church. Outside the circle put the elements you feel are weaknesses or are not present in your church. What actions can you take that will help you move those elements outside of the circle to inside the circle?

Bible Studies for Church and Missionaries

Lesson 1: The Call to Missions

The call to cross-cultural missions is more than one simple event; it is a progression of “callings” that God makes to His servants. It is helpful to look at this calling in terms of seven targeted steps, with progression from point one of the target to point seven.

Adapted with permission from *God's Call to Ministry*, a dissertation by Dr. Andrew W. Tuttle, 1987, California Graduate School of Theology.



1. **Called to salvation** in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, John 3:16-17, John 1:12), confirming they have responded in faith and repentance.
2. **Called to the ministry of reconciliation**, leading others to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).
3. **Called to service in the local church** (Romans 12:4, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 1 Corinthians 12:27-31).
4. **Called to cross-cultural missions** (Ephesians 4:11-12), answering the question: “Who is a Missionary?”
5. **Called to take the gospel to the unreached**, leaving home culture and family to cross cultural barriers for the sake of the Gospel (Romans 10:11-15, John 20:21, Acts 1:8).
6. **Affirmed by the local church** (Romans 10:11-15, Acts 13:1-3).

7. **Husband and wife together** and in harmony with the expression of their calling (Ephesians 5:21-33).

Summary: The call of God should be evident in the life of every believer, but that does not mean that every believer is called to leave family and home to be a cross-cultural missionary. Therefore, the calling to serve as a cross-cultural missionary should be carefully assessed by working through these seven points, recognizing the stage of life and other factors that may impact where the Lord might have the believers serve.

Every believer is called in the following basic categories:

1. Call to salvation: responding to the Lord's expression of grace in faith and repentance.
2. Call to mission: essentially called to be a disciple of Christ and a disciple maker.
3. Call to station: various stations of life require us to serve the Lord in terms of the realities of everyday life, such as being a parent, or maybe even being married or single.
4. Call to service: God has endowed each believer with gifts to serve the local body of believers – the local church. These gifts are not all the same, but one should know one's spiritual gifts and use those gifts in service to the local church.

Lesson 2: The Command of Cross-Cultural Missions – Acts 10

Part 1: God prepares Cornelius – Acts 10:1-8

1. Who is Cornelius? (vv 1-2)
2. How does God respond to Cornelius' prayer? (vv 3-6)
3. What did Cornelius do after his encounter with the angel? (vv 7-8)

Part 2: God prepares Peter – Acts 10:9-16

1. What do these verses tell us about Peter?
2. What was the problem with Peter eating the animals on the sheet?
3. Why did he see the same vision three times?

Part 3: Peter goes to see Cornelius in Caesarea – Acts 10:17-23

1. Peter senses the three men are from God and invites them to stay the night. (v 23)
2. Peter, along with some other believers, goes with the men on the next day. (v 23)
3. Cornelius worships Peter in error. (vv 25-26)
4. Cornelius and Peter explain their unusual experiences. (vv 28-33)

Part 4: Peter shares the gospel – Acts 10:34-43

1. Peter explains the new truth he just learned. (vv 34-35)
2. Peter shares about Jesus and that only through Him is there forgiveness of sin. (vv 35-43)

Part 5: The Holy Spirit confirms their conversion – Acts 10:44-48

1. The Holy Spirit comes upon them as a testimony to Peter and the others. (vv 44-46)
2. Peter determines that these new converts must be baptized. (v 47)
3. Peter stays there a few days, presumably to disciple these new believers. (v 48)

Conclusions

1. From Acts 10, what do we learn about cross-cultural missions?
2. From Acts 10, what do we learn about incarnational missions?
3. How does this chapter help you better prepare to minister cross-culturally?

Lesson 3: The Character of a Missionary – Romans 12:3-21

Review Romans 12:3-8.

In the church we are mutually dependent on each other, all functioning to build up the body of Christ.

Part A: Read verses 9-21. In the left column, write the commands we are to follow. In the right column, write the consequences of not following these commands.

Command to Follow

Consequences If We Fail

Example: *v 9 love without hypocrisy* *show partiality in relationships*

Part B: Read Philippians 2:1-5

1. How does the discussion in Romans 12 compare with chapter 2:1-5 of Paul's letter to the Philippians?
2. How did Peter live out this principle in his interaction with Cornelius in Acts 10?
3. Reflect on your own life. Are there any areas where you might be tempted to neglect the teaching of Romans 12:9-21?

Lesson 4: The Life of a Missionary – Matthew 8:18-27

Introduction: Sometimes people view the life of a Christian worker as an exotic adventure where everything works out just as planned. On the contrary, following Jesus, especially in becoming a cross-cultural missionary, can lead to some challenging experiences. In Matthew 8:18-27, Jesus issued a call for people to follow him. Many expressed a willingness to do so, but Jesus' interactions with them tested their commitment and motivation. We need to ask ourselves the same questions today.

Part 1: The Scribe and Things Familiar – Matthew 8:18-20

1. How does Jesus' response to the scribe cause us to question the scribe's willingness to sacrifice?
2. What are some of the implications of Jesus' statement beyond just where one might live?
3. Are there comforts or luxuries in your own life that you might have a hard time giving up if the Lord calls you to serve in a different place?

Part 2: The Disciple and His Family – Matthew 8:21-22

1. Was the request of this disciple reasonable?
2. Why did Jesus give such a blunt response to the question?
3. How could following the call of Jesus impact your family relationships?

Part 3: The Disciples and the Storm – Matthew 8:23-27

1. Why were the disciples so surprised by the storm?
2. What did the disciples do that was correct?
3. Why did Jesus challenge their faith in verse 26?
4. What lesson was Jesus trying to teach the disciples through this experience?


Lesson 5: The Work of a Missionary – 2 Timothy 2:1-3; Acts 18:18-27

Part 1: Paul's Instructions for Timothy – 2 Timothy 2:1-3

What is the foundation of Paul's strategy of establishing churches as he travels to unreached locations?

Part 2: Paul's Training of Aquila and Priscilla – Acts 18:18-28

1. What does the Scripture say? Briefly outline what happened in each section.

- Paul  the Move – v 18
- They arrive in Ephesus – v 19-20
- Paul visits other locations – vv 22-23
- Aquila and Priscilla face a problem, Apollos – vv 24-26
- The result of their efforts – vv 27-28

Part 3: Paul's Strategy in Action

1. What is the relationship between Paul's instructions in 2 Timothy 2:2 and what he did in Acts 18:18-27?
2. What are some lessons or applications that missionaries might learn from Paul's instructions and actions?
3. What is the difference between the work of a local church pastor and the work of a cross-cultural missionary?

Steps to Becoming a Missions-Sending Church

1. Equip all church members to serve the church by utilizing their spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11-12). Engaging members in service in the church is the first step in identifying potential missionaries.
2. Prepare the church by actively becoming an Acts 1:8 church, with a plan to do cross-cultural ministry at all four levels as challenged by Scripture.
3. Establish a decision-making group that will develop a thorough knowledge of missions and work with the church to develop a plan of action to involve all aspects of missions-sending as the Lord provides the opportunity.
4. Involve the entire church in the implementation of the plan, from the youngest children to the senior adults. The entire church can be involved.
5. Develop a plan for missions involvement that includes each element below:
 - Pray for specific lost people in the community and around the world.
 - Provide opportunities for cross-cultural ministry, locally and beyond, to the extent possible.
 - Develop a plan to raise funds for missions endeavors.
 - Use the experience and expertise of a missions-sending agency or missions-sending committee of the convention, especially in terms of prayer promotion.
 - Work closely with a missions-sending agency that can provide expertise in missionary assessment. Empower a small review team to assess the readiness of missionary candidates. This group will maintain the confidentiality of the missionary candidates but ensure there has been a thorough assessment for the benefit of not only the church, but also the candidates and the field.
 - When your church prepares to send long-term missionaries, develop a plan for their continued encouragement and support while they are away. This plan may include regular communications with church representatives, occasional visits and cooperating mission trips, and providing encouragement and assistance for family members, such as aging parents, not moving with them to the mission field.

Funding Missions

Developing a Plan

Major Topics to Consider

1. Recognize our dependence on God.

- Gifted for a purpose (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- Created for good works (Ephesians 2:10)
- God causes all growth (1 Corinthians 3:4-9)

2. Embed missions into the vision of the local church, regardless of church size.

- Missions is a ministry of the local church (Acts 1:8).
- Missions is part of the local church DNA, sending and supporting (Romans 10:13-15, Acts 13:1-3)

3. Keep missions closely connected with the local church leaders such as pastors and with church members.

- Promote prayer and giving together; they are each an important side of the same coin. We are to support the Lord's work (Matthew 6:20-21).
- Pastor must take the lead in missions as he does in other pastoral duties, such as preaching and ministry to church members, equipping the saints for ministry (Ephesians 4:12).
- Each individual member can accept the responsibility for missions in four distinct ways: (a) prayer, (b) giving systematically, (c) connecting with a missionary for prayer and encouragement, (d) committing one's children to the Lord's service (essentially investing in the next generation). *The missionary must build a personal connection with these supporters.*

4. Build a financial plan toward sustainability.

- The missionary is worth his wages and needs to have a measure of dependable income in order to focus on his/her work (1 Timothy 5:18).
- Missionaries must have thankful hearts (Philippians 4:10-20).
- Paul earned income for a time (Acts 18:3-4).
- Develop a plan to cover costs over time (Luke 14:28-30).
- Consider all the costs of doing missions.

5. Commit to transparency and accountability.

- Be trustworthy.
- Be transparent.
- Accept a system of accountability.

6. Diversify by developing multiple funding strategies and sources.

- Special offerings – Convention-/association-wide (possibly annual. Requires trust between the church and convention).
- Cooperative giving – Church budgets contribute to a fund for missions.
- Missionary adoption – A commitment to contribute financially on a regular basis, most likely monthly or every pay period.
- Project funding raised from individuals and the church – Goes beyond missionary support to a time-defined ministry endeavor, such as an evangelism push, a Scripture plan, or a pastor-training event.
- Missionary-earned income via local employment – Getting a job in the host cultural setting that will provide income, a visa, and access to the target population.
- Missionary-led business – Could also provide income, a visa, and access to the target population.

7. Funding plans should consider:

- Reproducibility
- Dependency
- Subsidy
- Sustainability

Cautions Regarding Outside Funding

The Implications of Money and Missions

1. The goal is indigenous, multiplying churches that do not depend on outside assistance.
 - Mutual relationships are positive, and we can get help from each other from time to time.
 - Relationships should not remain dependent for the long term.
2. Long-term leadership should be indigenous, with the goal to raise up leadership from the local body of believers.
 - Modern movements of the gospel are carried on the back of local champions and not outsiders, even if the movement was begun by an outsider.
3. Methods and strategies must be reproducible in the local context. Outside funding can violate this principle.
 - The missionary must use methodology, including pastor training and preparation, that can be reproduced in the long term in that setting, avoiding the temptation to become essential for the work.
 - There is an increased possibility that corruption, dissention, and lack of endeavor can set in if outside dollars are available.
 - Example: building a local church building in rural India using only local materials.
 - Example: training village pastors in the manner from which they will learn most and remain engaged in local ministry.
4. Outside influences and funding should be limited to these:
 - Sharing the gospel and teaching believers to do the same
 - Discipling new believers and teaching them to do the same
 - Starting multiplying churches and teaching them to do the same
 - Training local church leadership and teaching them to do the same (Acts 14:23, Acts 20:16-17)
 - Training them to accept their part in the Great Commission
 - Establishing patterns that can be sustainable and reproducible
5. Outside funding is rarely sustainable.
 - Could lead to inconsistent funding sources
 - Could lead to misperceptions of superiority/inferiority
6. We must encourage all believers to support the church and missions to the extent they are able financially, as well as in prayer and encouragement.
 - Relates better in the local context, prevents the possibility of locals thinking Christianity is only for foreigners.
 - Example: Rice offering in India
 - Example: The faith of a missionary (Mark 6:33-44 [in notebook]); recognizes that all resources are from the Father.

Missionary Care¹

1. Introduction

- Greatest resource: Holy Spirit
- Missionary force
- Senders
- Member care: the ongoing investment of resources by missions agencies, churches, and other organizations in the nurture and development of missionary personnel.

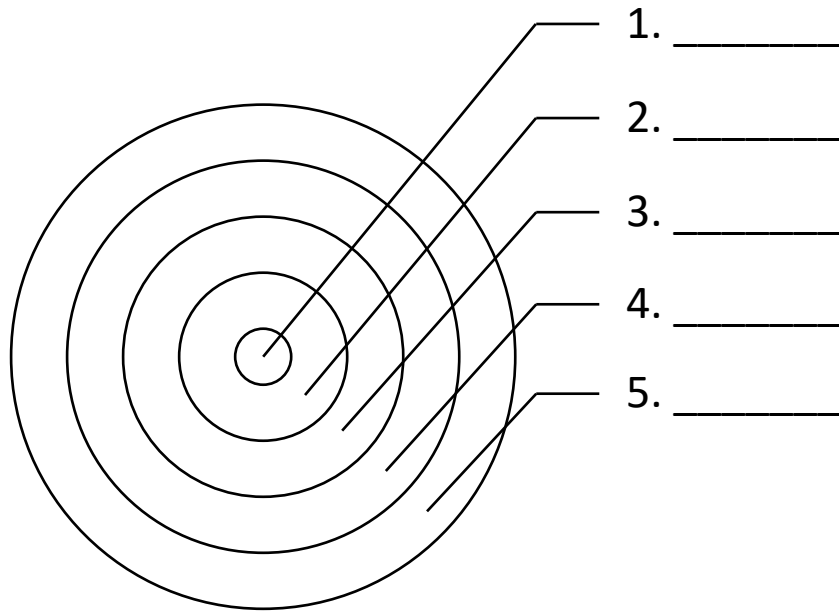
2. Biblical basis

- Jesus
 - He “called” (selected/screened) his disciples (Matthew 4:18-22).
 - He “appointed” or “chose” twelve (Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:13-16).
 - He wanted them to “be with him” and that “he might send them out ...” (Mark 3:13-19).
 - He gave authority (Matthew 10:1, Mark 6:7, Luke 9:1).
 - He gave instructions about strategy (Matthew 10:5-42, Mark 6:8-11, Luke 9:1-5).
 - He sent the 12 out (Matthew 10:5, Mark 6:7, Luke 9:2).
 - He debriefed (Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10).
 - He gave them rest (Mark 6:31-32, Luke 9:10).
 - He sent them to the nations (Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:6-9).

¹ Materials in this study are adapted from *Missionary Member Care: An Introduction*, by Ronald L. Koteskey, which is available as a free pdf at <http://www.missionarycare.com/>.

- The church in Acts
 - Saul and Barnabas sent out from Antioch (Acts 13: 1-3), returned, reported, and were encouraged (Acts 14: 26-28).
 - Barnabas and Paul split due to teaming issues (Acts 15: 36-41).
 - Paul suffered much on his journeys. List some hardships that Paul suffered as a missionary (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).
 - The church provided help through
 - Timothy (2 Timothy 4:9, Philippians 2:19-24)
 - Stephanas (1 Corinthians 16:15-18)
 - Titus (2 Corinthians 7:5-7)
 - Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-17)
 - Mark (2 Timothy 4:11)
 - Paul recognized his need for missionary member care, felt free to request it from people he knew and trusted, accepted it graciously when it was provided, and thanked both those who came to meet his need and those who made it possible for a member care visit.

Types of Missionary Care:



1. Missionary Care: When?

- Pre-field preparation
- On the field
- Returning home

2. Missionary Care: How?

- Develop a plan
- Clarify responsibilities in a covenant agreement

3. Barriers:

-
-
-

4. Keys to Success:

-
-
-

Member Care Activity

5. What does a cross-cultural missionary family need to survive and thrive on the field?

List all the needs of the missionary family (spiritual, emotional, physical, community, financial, etc.).

6. Who is the best partner to provide these needs?

Place each need under the heading you think should provide these needs:

CHURCH	AGENCY	FIELD TEAM	MISSIONARY	OTHER

Five Components of Missionary Assessment

*Sending the Right People
to the Right Place
at the Right Time*

Component 1: Christian and Church Identity

Who we are to BE, what we are to KNOW, and what we are to DO

1. **Who we are to BE:** Living out our testimony of inner Christian character
 - Although missionaries are not pastor, their lives should demonstrate the leadership characteristics outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9, recognizing that women may serve as missionaries, although not in the pastor/overseer role in the local church.
 - Be recognized as one of high character, well-known in the local church, and affirmed for missionary service.
 - Be known as one having healthy relationships with others, both inside and outside the church.
 - Their lives should be a testimony of being transformed by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1-2) allowing God to impact every aspect of their being.
2. **What we are to KNOW:** Biblical understanding and knowledge
 - Do they study the Word of God on a regular basis?
 - Do they have a clear, Biblical understanding of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper?
 - Do they have a clear and sound understanding of the Trinity; God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
 - Do they have a solid understanding of basic biblical doctrines such as doctrines of God, sin, salvation and the church as taught by the local churches and affirmed by the larger body of Christ, such as your sending body?

- Do they understand, affirm, and practice the specific biblical teachings that align them with churches that are sending them? (This COULD include spiritual gifts and use of tongues, use of alcohol and tobacco, eternal security of a believer, marriage and divorce, modesty, and dress, etc.)

3. **What we are to DO:** Clear Christian testimony and Spiritual Disciplines

- Have they followed in obedience the Lord's command for believer's baptism?
- Do they participate in the Lord's Supper in a regular, culturally appropriate manner?
- Do they practice and understand the obedience of sharing the gospel and discipling new believers in the context of the local church?
- Can they use Scripture to explain their own salvation?
- Are they active members of a local body of believers using their spiritual gifts in a way that demonstrates their belonging, commitment, and involvement in the life and ministries of the local church?
- Do they exhibit a life of consistent spiritual disciplines, such as a devotional life, prayer life, and involvement in both the local Christian community via the local church and engaging the lost with the gospel?
- Can they explain to others what they have studied and read in the Scriptures, heard from God in their devotional lives, and seen as God acts in the world around them?
- Have they demonstrated the ability to work constructively in a team environment?
- Do they give generously and handle their finances in a way that reflects their professed faith?

Component 2: Confirming the Missionary Call


1. Overview: The call of God should be evident in the life of every believer, but that does not mean that every believer is called to leave their family and home to be a cross-cultural missionary. Therefore, the calling to serve as a cross-cultural missionary should be carefully assessed.
2. Every believer has calling in the following basic categories:
 - **Call** to salvation: responding to the Lord's expression of grace in faith and repentance.
 - Call to mission: essentially called to be a disciple of Christ and a disciple maker.
 - Call to station: various stations of life require us to serve the Lord in terms of the realities of everyday life, such as being a parent, or maybe even being married or single.
 - Call to service: God has gifted each believer with gifts to serve the local body of believers – the local church. These gifts are not all the same, but one should know one's spiritual gifts and use those gifts in the service to the local church.
3. Church and mission leaders should help all candidates work through their calling to help assess the specific calling of the Lord in his or her life at this time. This includes the following:
 - Calling to salvation in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, John 3:16-17, John 1:12), confirming they have responded in faith and repentance.
 - Called to the ministry of reconciliation, leading others to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).
 - Called to service in the local church (Romans 12:4, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 1 Corinthians 12:27-31).
 - Called to cross-cultural missions (Ephesians 4:11-12), answering the question of "Who is a Missionary?"
 - Called to take the gospel to the unreached, leaving home culture and family to cross cultural barriers for the sake of the gospel (Romans 10:11-15, John 20:21, Acts 1:8).
 - Affirmed by the local church (Romans 10:11-15, Acts 13:1-3).
 - Husband and wife together and in harmony with the expression of their calling (Ephesians 5:21-33).

Component 3: Missionary Competencies and Qualifications

1. Are applicants actively engaged in ministry where they live?
 - Using their spiritual gifts in serving through the local church
 - Serving in the community
 - Demonstrated ability to initiate and lead new groups
 - Active in discipling new and other believers
2. Are applicants regular, verbal witnesses of the gospel to lost persons?
3. Have they demonstrated the ability to lead a lost person to faith in Jesus?
4. Do they share their faith on a regular basis?
5. Have they demonstrated the ability to persevere through the difficult times they will encounter on the mission field as they embrace another culture and learn a new language?
6. Have they demonstrated the skills necessary to do the specific missionary assignment required on the field of service, such as teaching, discipling, training pastors, theological education, etc.?
7. Who will determine which specific field jobs to fill and how assignments will be made? Will field strategy impact these decisions?
8. Have their credentials been evaluated regarding specific competencies and qualifications for the assignment such as an expertise in medicine, theology, education, engineering, etc.? How will the applicant be assessed for competency in these areas?
9. Do they have the credentials required to obtain a visa to live in the country where God has called them?

Component 4: Health and Wellness

Adequately assessing missionaries for wellness results in a wise stewardship of funds and workers.

1. Physical health helps determine how well a family will adapt to the mission field and fulfill their assignment (2 Timothy 4:20, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
2.  Some possible disqualifiers:
 - Type 1 diabetes
 - Bipolar disorder Type 1
 - Organ transplant (except corneal transplant)
 - Multiple sclerosis
 - Chronic renal failure
 - Ulcerative colitis
 - Autism spectrum disorder
 - Significant development delay (usually includes Down's syndrome)
 - HIV/AIDS
 - History of malignancy/cancer within the past five years
3. Physical limitations that can impact job placement, such as back conditions, asthma, and allergies.
4. Emotional and psychological health are equally important in missionary assessment. We have three capacities – mind, will, and emotions – that can be infected with lies and sin and hinder our effectiveness (John 8:32). Cross-cultural stress can reveal and worsen these inner illnesses. Therefore, it is important to screen for inner health.

Examples of inner illness:

- Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Impact of abuse
 - Eating disorders
 - Trauma from past, recurrent, or ongoing experiences
 - Same-sex attraction
5. Other effects of lies not related to emotional or psychological illness: (1 Timothy 3:2-9, Galatians 5:19-21)
 - Alcoholism
 - Tobacco use
 - Drug use
 - Pornography
 - Inappropriate sexual behavior

6. Marriage wellness

- Applicants confirm that Christ is the foundation of their marriage. Applicants give evidence of healthy marital communication (Ephesians 5:21-33).
- Applicants have been married for at least one year prior to final clearance.
- Applicants give affirmation they are meeting each other's physical (including sexual) and emotional needs (1 Corinthians 7:5).
- Applicants each give evidence of being united in the call to serve as missionaries.

7. Single identity

- Applicant gives evidence of having a healthy understanding of singleness.
- While possibly open to marriage within God's timing, the applicant is going to the mission field to fully serve the Lord as a kingdom worker, not to find a spouse.
- Applicant gives evidence of having worked through any past painful periods as a single (1 Corinthians 7:8-9, 32-35).

8. Children's developmental and educational assessments

- Are children on schedule regarding their development for their age or grade level?
- Are the children struggling in their home culture?
- How will children learn the written language of their mother tongue on the field? Is this important?
- How will children obtain and maintain an understanding of their passport country's culture?

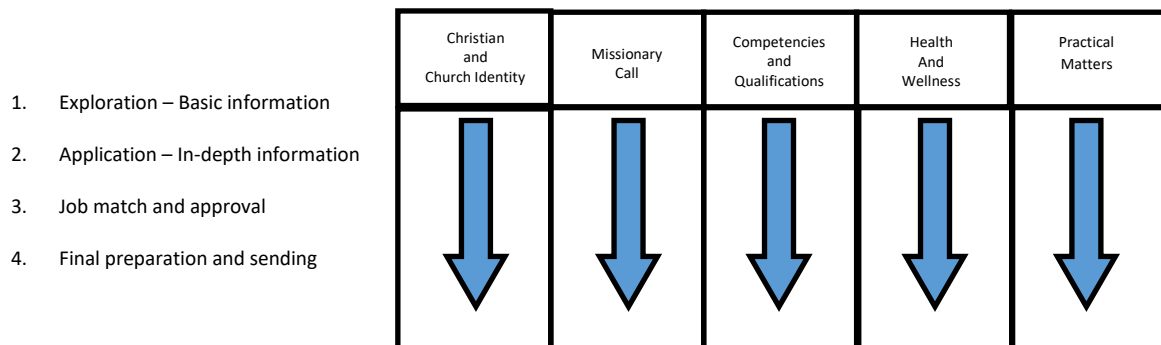
Component 5: Practical Preparation

1. How will the missionary be supported (1 Timothy 5:18)?
 - Full support by home church or sending agency?
 - Missionary to raise support from various sources?
 - Missionary to find local employment for access and support purposes?
 - Combination of these options?
2. Does the age of the applicant impact their potential assignment?
 - Language learning
 - Physical demands of the job
3. What is the missionary's current financial situation regarding debt, personal responsibilities, and family obligations?
4. Are there any personal or family obligations that must be considered, such as caring for aging parents or management of a business?
5. Citizenship or visa issues
 - Can the missionary candidate get a passport?
 - Do they have the necessary documents to leave the country and get a visa in the desired location?
 - Do they have a criminal record that could impact their ability to go as missionaries?
Can they provide a criminal background check?
6. Have the children been adequately assessed for this assignment?
 - Does the age of the applicants' children impact their potential assignment?
 - Are there any developmental or educational needs that must be addressed on the field?

- What educational options are available?
 - Public school?
 - Private school?
 - Home school?
 - How will these expenses be covered?
 - What cultural adaption issues should be considered for older children?
 - What is the spiritual condition of the children?
 - Have the children been involved in the family discussion about moving to another country?
 - Have you considered how the children will develop proficiency in their mother tongue?
 - Have you considered where the children might attend college and how you will prepare them?

Summary: Developing an Individualized Process

Sending the **Right People** to the **Right Place** at the **Right Time** requires that the missionary assessment process be completed over time, considering all five components of missionary candidate readiness (Luke 14:31-32). Utilizing the four phases of interaction with the missionary candidate family will significantly improve the assessment experience.



We cannot expect missionary candidates to be perfect, but we should see them growing in their walk with the Lord and seeking to allow Him to impact every aspect of their lives. A good measure of their spiritual strength is how they respond to honest, Christ-centered accountability, advice, and correction. These responses can gauge their readiness for the stresses of the cross-cultural mission field.

How do we graciously explore such deeply personal matters?

1. We must be trustworthy and respect confidentiality, as trust and confidence are built over time.
2. We must be redemptive in our conversations.

3. We must use a variety of sources for information.

- Written application forms
- Face-to-face interviews
- References by those who know them well
- Decisions made by those who can prayerfully consider all the data.

How will you collect this information?

Who will be responsible for collecting this information?

How will this information be guarded?

The Interview Process: How to Go Deeper

1. Spiritual life

- Salvation experience
 - Briefly tell me about your salvation experience, including your life before Christ and your baptism experience.
 - Tell me about your discipleship experience and name some people who have influenced your spiritual growth.
- Personal devotional life.
 - What spiritual disciplines do you currently practice?
 - Considering that you (and your family) may be the only believer(s) in your new city, how will you continue to grow spiritually on your own?
 - How do you include praying for the lost in your prayer life?
- Spiritual gifts
 - What are your spiritual gifts? How have they been confirmed by other believers?
 - How are you currently using them to edify your local church body?
 - Who are you currently discipling/mentoring?

2. Life experience issues

- Identify and explore the impact of traumatic or abusive experiences during childhood and adolescence.
 - Have you experienced the loss of a close family member?
 - How did you work through the grief?
 - Were you ever physically or sexually abused growing up?
 - How long did it continue? Describe the abuse.
- Identify and explore any periods of prolonged and significant depression.
 - Have you experienced times of depression in which it was hard to carry out day-to-day tasks?
 - Has a doctor prescribed medication for depression? How long have you taken the medication?
- Lifestyle
 - Discuss the applicant's use of alcohol as a beverage. (When is the last time you had an alcoholic beverage?)
 - Discuss the applicant's use of tobacco in any form. (When is the last time you used tobacco in any form?)
 - Discuss the applicants' commitment to sexual purity, whether single or married.
 - [If married] Have you remained faithful to your spouse alone?
 - [If single] Have you abstained from pre-marital sexual activity? If you have been involved with sexual activity, what type of activity has that been?

3. Family Issues

- Contentment as a single –
1-10 scale; 1 = not content, 10 = never think about it
- What three words describe you as a single? (Then ask why they chose those words.)
- Marital health – pay attention to non-verbal signs.
- Communication skills and transparency.
- When did you last have a disagreement? How was it resolved?
- What three words describe your wife? (Your husband?)
- What did your parents model for you that was positive that you have brought into your marriage?
- Did they model any hurtful behavior that you chose not to repeat in your marriage?

Case Study: Missionary/Church/Agency/Field Relationships

Main Street Church adopted the Mallakani people of a Southeast Asian country. Little information was available on the people group, but all indications were they had only a few believers and no churches or mission-sending agencies seeking to plant churches among them. The church began to pray for this people group and even sent a few teams to the area to learn about the local needs.

Bob and Jean Smith were a part of the church's missions effort. Following a vision trip to the country, they felt called to devote their lives to the Mallakani as cross-cultural church planters. Bob and Jean shared this calling with the church, and after a period of prayer and assessment, the church agreed to send and support them as their missionaries to this unreached people. The church had little experience in that area so they connected with a missions-sending agency that could provide a logistics infrastructure, strategy planning, and field support for the Smith family.

The Smiths learned the language well, then deployed to the area, living in the heart of the Mallakani people and working on a tourism platform visa provided by the mission-sending agency. Bob gave about eight hours a week to platform management in return for the visa. Things went slowly during their first year on the field and just about the time they began to gain momentum in the work among the Mallakani people, the agency lost some key personnel in a nearby country who were attached to the same platform.

The agency saw no solution but to inform the Smiths they would have to move to the nearby country so they could manage the platform. Many missionaries in the region depended on this platform for their visas. Due to Bob's knowledge of platform operations gained through experience plus his business background, he was the only one who could fill this role.

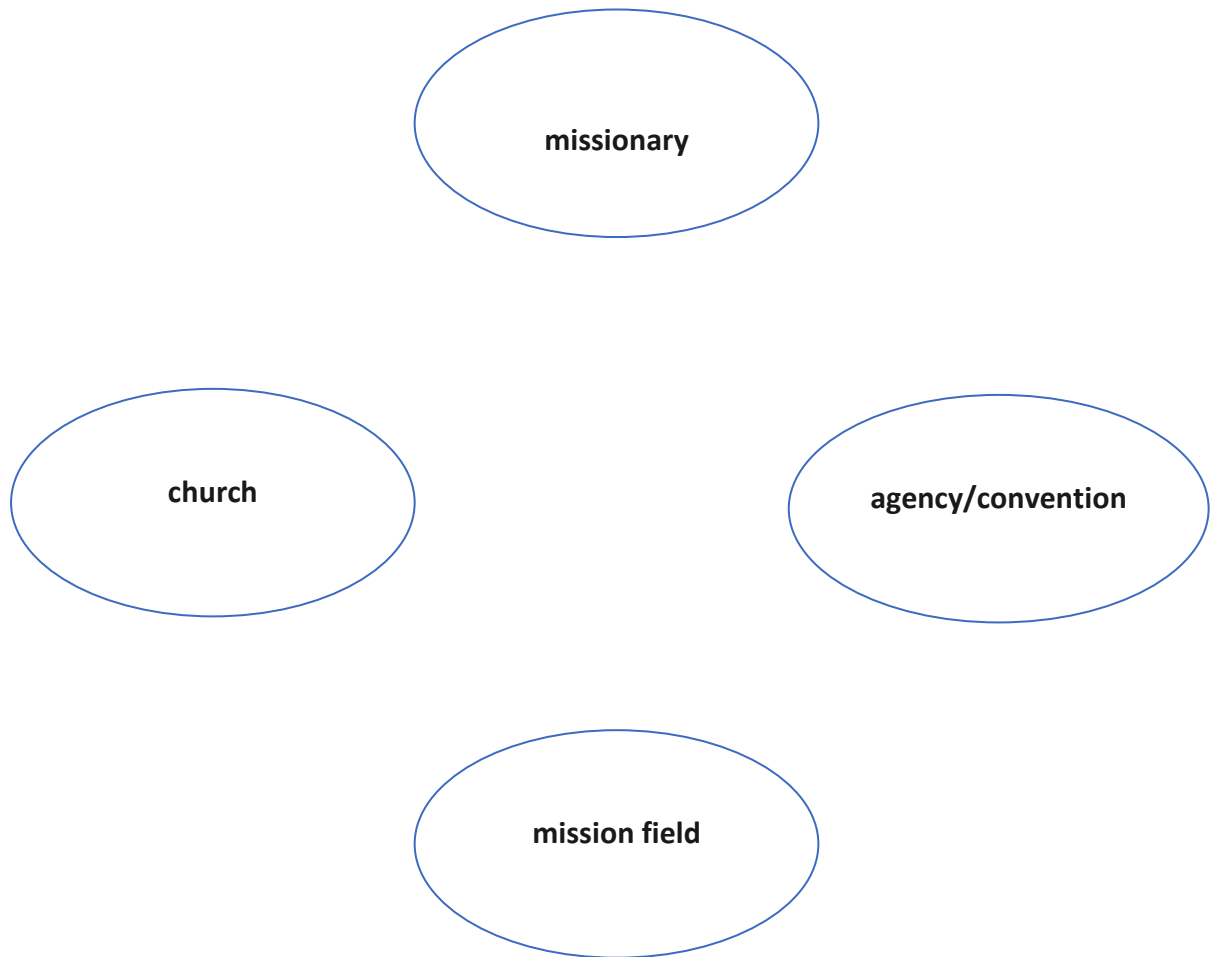
The Smiths were disillusioned with this abrupt change because their people group did not live in the neighboring country. The home church felt betrayed because they were not involved in this decision and were not given any opportunities to offer other remedies to the problem. The agency's view was that the Smiths must consider the greater good of the work, which sometimes means sacrifice.

The Smiths found themselves in the middle of a major disagreement between their sending church, which provided their financial support, and the field agency that provided the local infrastructure and visa. The church questioned whether they could continue supporting a missionary who was not focused on the church's adopted people.

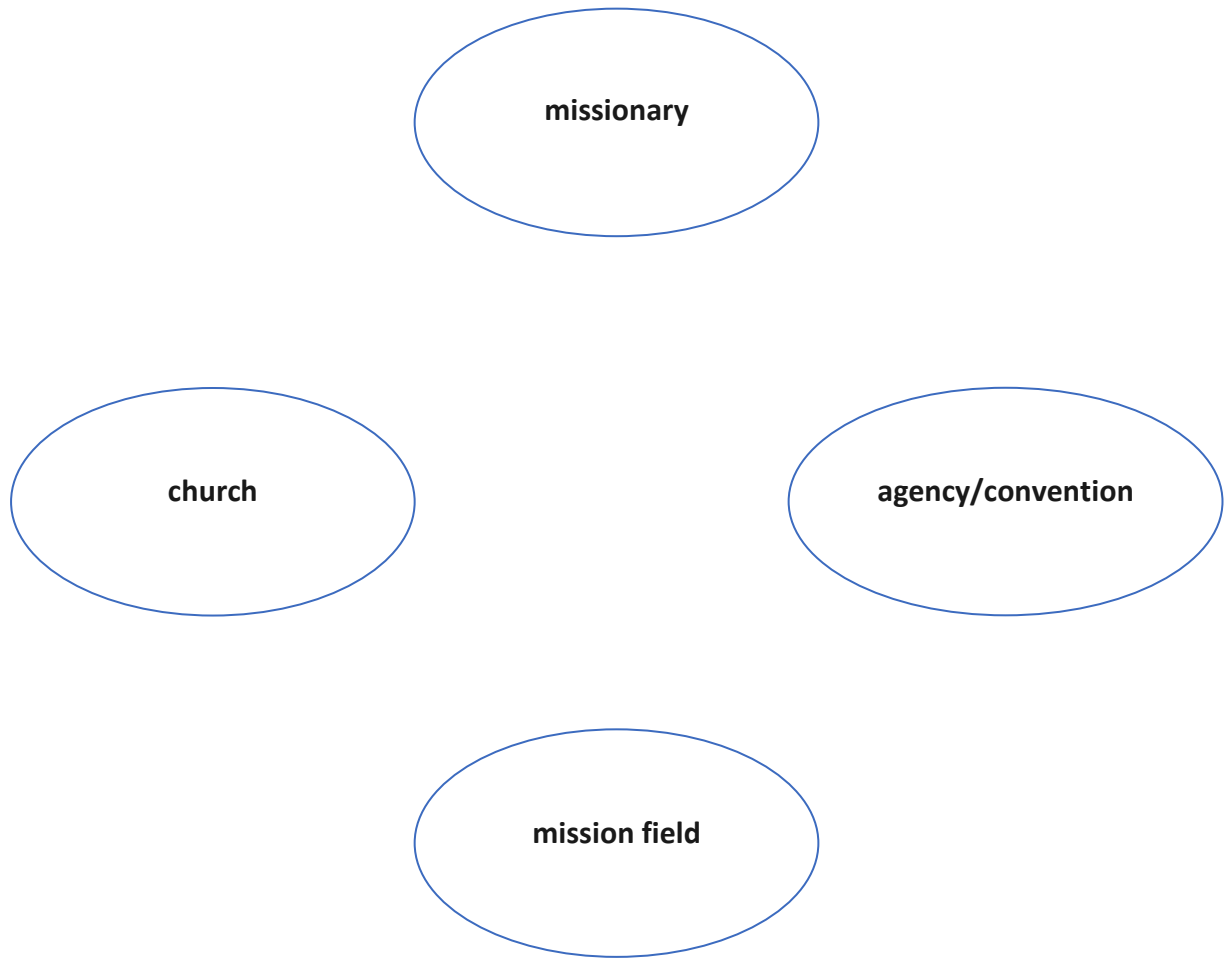
In the excitement of initially establishing this relationship, the church, the agency, and the missionary never worked out the structures and decision-making process if such a situation should arise. Amid the crisis, emotions were intense, time was short, and it was difficult to appropriately process the issues 5,000 miles away from church leadership.

Four Models for Missionary/Church/Agency/Field Relationships

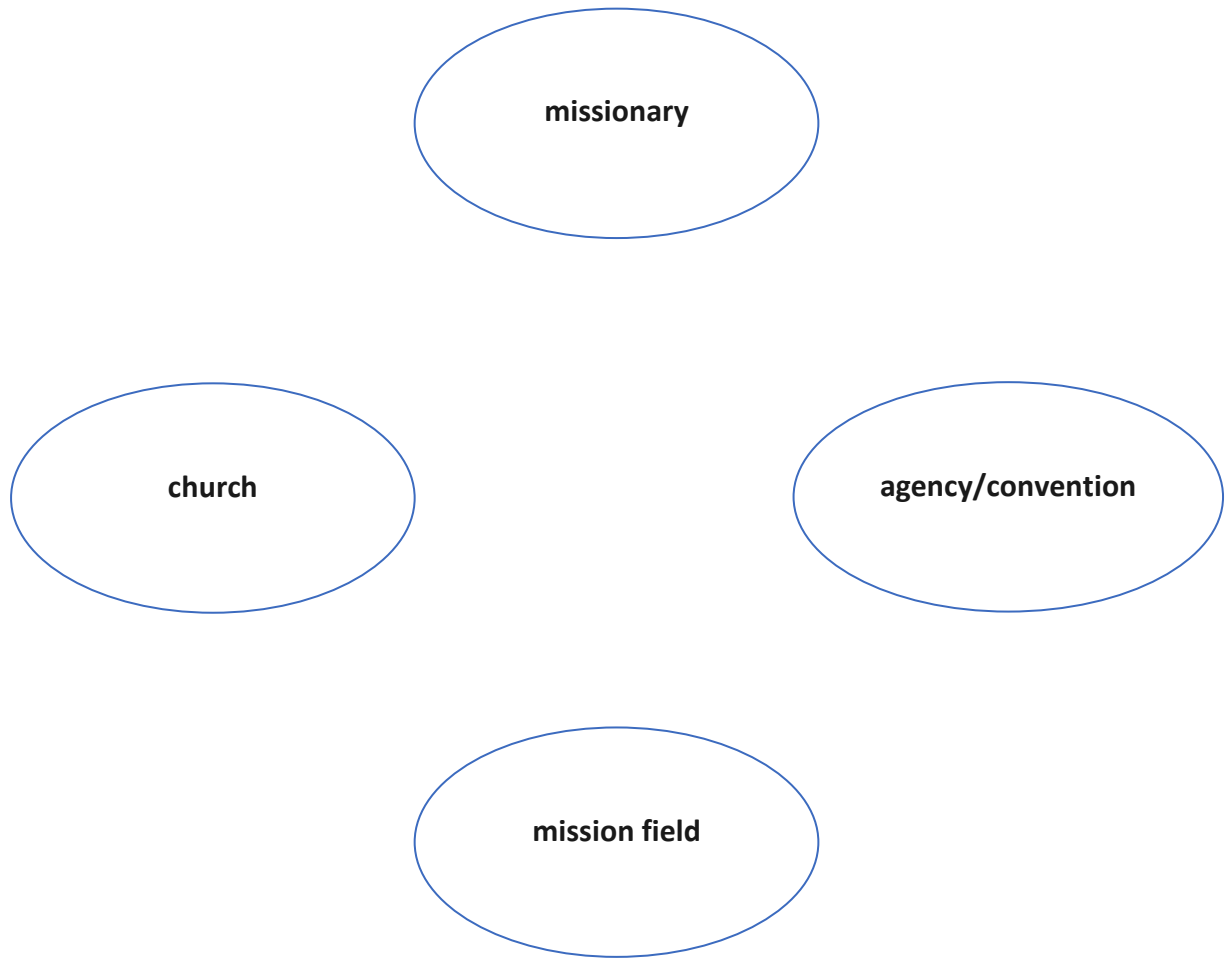
Model A



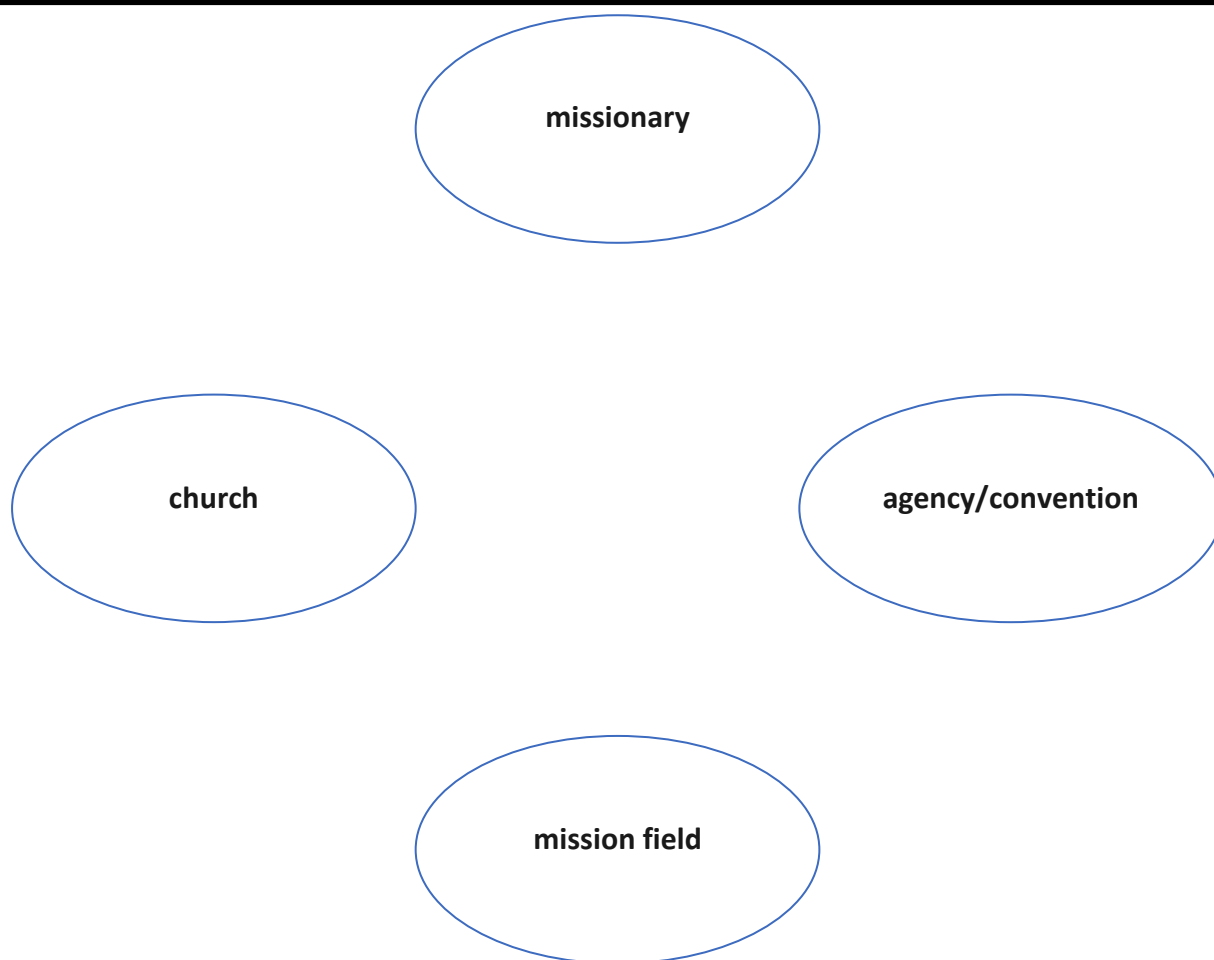
Model B



Model C

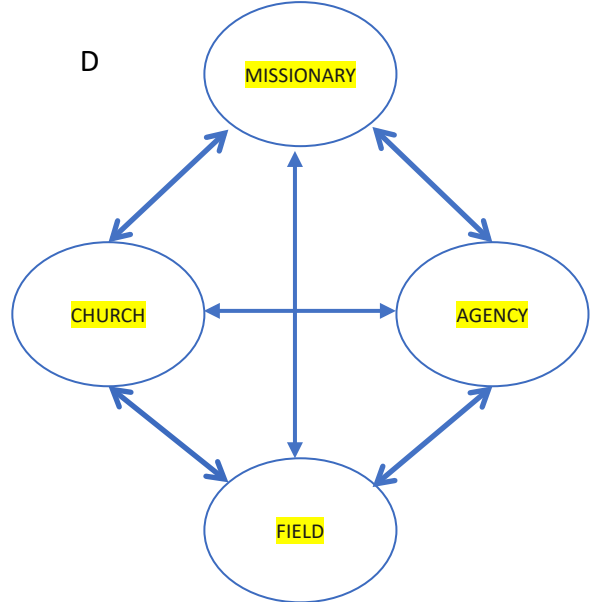
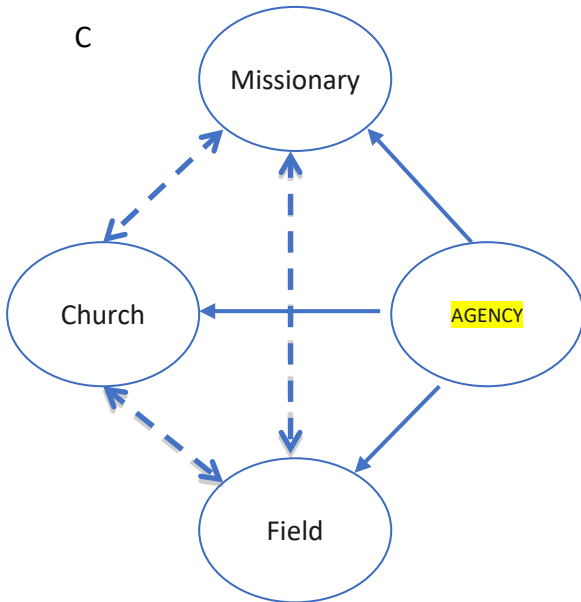
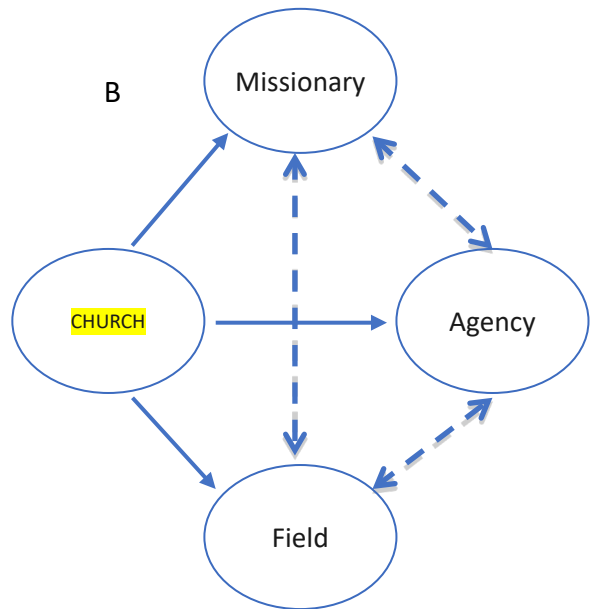
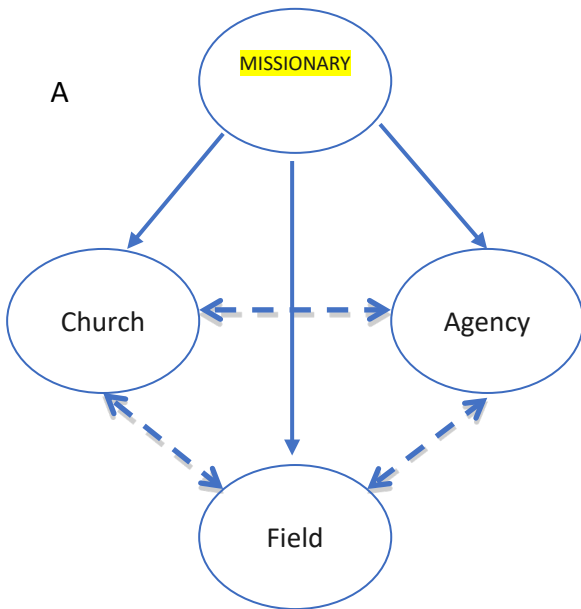


Model D



Model

The Four Models



Covenant Agreements

Three Key Components of a Covenant Agreement

1. We recognize that we are stronger together.
2. We have basic doctrinal agreement.
3. We establish and agree upon clear expectations for activity and interaction.

Team Covenant Agreements

The specifics of the team assignment will be established in writing and agreed upon by the team leader of the receiving team, the missionary, the sending agency, and the local sending church. This team agreement will include the specific role, location, length of term, local supervision plan, as well as requirements and expectations for the assignment. Any financial responsibilities and commitments will also be clearly established.

Details of Team Covenant Agreements

1. Specific role
2. Local supervision plan
3. Length of term on the field/length of agreement
4. Work role on the team
 - Responsibilities
 - Approximate hours per week
5. Training obligations/requirements
6. Language study expectations
7. Reporting process to team, sending church, and sending agency
8. Changes in work assignment

9. Financial arrangements

- Expectations
- Recommended support
- Provisions by the local team

10. Handling of misunderstanding/sin

- In accordance with Matthew 18
- Locally – church/agency will counsel missionary to deal first locally as possible
- Agency/partner mediation
- Removal from team
 - Steps
 - Communication

11. Other expectations and requirements

- Medical and evacuation insurance
- Vacation policy
- Children's schooling
- Housing
- Other

12. Debriefing by team leader at end of term of service

Organizational Structures

Organizational Structures

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Appendix

Eight Steps of the Missions Continuum

With his last words on earth, Jesus charged his church, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Christians should be encouraged and motivated by his promise of power, authority, and presence with believers as they endeavor to obey the Great Commission. However, despite our best efforts, large numbers of unreached peoples and places remain. As missionaries are being sent from everywhere to everywhere, young organizations are seeking the assistance of the IMB to enhance their missionary preparation and organizational structures. We must consider how to help lay the foundation to achieve the desired result: sustained and effective missionary presence and implementation of the missionary task.

During the last few years, the IMB Globalization Team has observed missions-sending initiatives from Asia to Africa and all points in between. Identifying common barriers to sending, we have developed eight steps to help local churches and agencies sustain missionary deployment. The *Eight Steps of the Missions Continuum* will guide churches, agencies, or networks to lay the necessary foundation to send missionaries to the field, so they have work that sustains and remains. We offer missions consultations, which help partners assess where they are on the continuum and develop plans to mature their missions-sending processes. Following is a brief summary of each of these eight steps.



Step One: Local Pastors – The pastor is the gatekeeper of the church. He sets vision before the church and is responsible for giving members opportunities to use their gifts in service to the Lord and His church. The pastor helps his church understand God’s heart for the nations and recognize this theme in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. If the pastor is not missional, then mobilizing the church or identifying potential missionaries in the church will be difficult. For a pastor to be mobilized, his fundamental concerns must be addressed. These concerns are often expressed as the loss of revenue and the loss of his best members to missions. Step one is helping the pastor see that the Lord will equip the church to achieve His mission, challenging him to love the things Christ loves. We help the pastor understand that the impact of the church is not just measured in attendance, offerings, and buildings, but also in equipping the saints for ministry and leading his church to accept their role in the Great Commission.



Step Two: Church Mobilization – The entire church must be mobilized for missions. Two ways in which all members can be involved are going and sending. Only a few will be called to go. The rest of the church is called to send – which includes prayer, giving, encouragement, and support. These tasks should be embedded in the fabric of the church and include every age group. Missions education is not an option in the church training program; it must be at the core because the gospel must be preached to all nations.



Step Three: Local Ministry – The local church can see its readiness for missions in the status of its local ministry. Members of the church should be using their spiritual gifts in service to the church. If the pastor is the only ministry-giver, his church members do not have the opportunity to minister to one another and the surrounding community. Basic discipleship for all ages is at the core of this task, which includes the study and application of Scripture. The pastor should understand the characteristics of a healthy church, then move his church to become healthier. If the pastor’s vision for his church is a healthy church, then examining the status of the church is an important early step to help the church embrace God’s mission for the nations.



Step Four: Raising Up Missionaries – A church can intentionally raise up missionaries for service. As the pastor casts the vision of the Great Commission and provides opportunities for service and ministry, the Lord will call out some to leave home and engage the lost in another location. The church can encourage those interested in exploring their gifts and their calling to missions. This is best accomplished through mentoring relationships and studying Scripture to understand the missions calling. One must also understand the missionary task, the requirements of missions, and what role might best match his or her preparation and gifting.



Step Five: Planning for Cross-Cultural Missions – Many churches and pastors feel limited in their potential to be involved in missions due to their size or economic limitations. However, even a small church can make a significant contribution to the missions enterprise. Each church must do what it can and what the Lord places on its members' hearts. If mission is at the core of the church's vision, the Lord will provide direction and resources. To make progress, the church must have a plan that creates visible action steps to invite and encourage full participation of senders and goers. A thorough plan is necessary for the church to send and sustain missionary presence.



Step Six: Selecting and Training Cross-Cultural Missionaries – A missional church must soon make decisions about whom to support and whom to send. The motto – Right People, Right Place, Right Time – is an excellent guide to effective missions sending. The missionary call must be carefully evaluated. Christian disciplines should be reviewed. Involvement in and support of the local church are important traits to be assessed, along with competencies and qualifications for service. The candidates' health and wellness are a key factor that must be considered. Lastly, several practical issues must be reviewed such as debt, children's schooling, and family obligations, among other limiting factors.



Step Seven: Developing Partners – No single church or agency possesses all the resources needed to accomplish missions alone. Both churches and agencies should recognize where they do not have expertise and develop partnerships to fill in the gaps. These partnerships can be in areas such as funding for missions involvement, assistance in missionary assessment, accomplishing a portion of the missionary task, addressing security challenges, or even providing the field supervision and training necessary for effective ministry. Missions agencies are often the best partners to fill these gaps. However, church-to-church partnerships, networks, or denominations may also provide resources that a church lacks. When considering a partnership, a careful plan and agreement are necessary to address issues such as decision-making, field supervision, and financial matters. Thinking through these issues will be important in avoiding conflict and inaction when a problem or unanticipated event arises.



Step Eight: The Mission Field – The goal for each step of the continuum is accomplishing the missionary task: entry, evangelism, discipleship, church planting, leadership development, and exit to partnership. Completing the missionary task also includes the mission field becoming the mission force, and seeing all churches, even those in pioneer areas, embrace their role in the Great Commission. The *Eight Steps* provides the foundational structure necessary to implement and sustain the missionary task.