

Missionary Partnership

A Brief Biblical Theology of
Missions, Deputation, and
Partnership

BEN DAVID SINCLAIR

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to the two men God used the most to
influence my heart and mind for missions.

Dr. Darrell Champlin (1932-2015)

&

Dr. David L. Cummins (1929-2009)

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CONTENTS

	Preface	1
	Introduction	3
1	A Biblical Theology of Missions	7
2	The Biblical Mandate of Partnership	45
3	A Brief History of Methods for Sending Baptist Missionaries	85
4	An Examination of Various Missionary Sending Models	91
5	Biblical Parameters for Sending Missionaries	129
6	Principles Designed to Improve the Sending Partnership	137
7	Strategies for Implementing a Partnership Model in Your Church	153
8	Appendix 1: A Proposed Missions Policy for Anywhere Baptist Church	163
9	Appendix 2: National Surveys of Independent Baptist Pastors, Missions Agencies, and Missionaries	173

PREFACE

Missionary Partnership provides encouragement and advice to churches and missionaries who are frustrated with the current process of sending missionaries or believe it is an inefficient process. Ben David Sinclair, DMin, conducted three national surveys of independent Baptist pastors, missionaries, and more than 40 independent Baptist missions agencies. Data representing 1,560 independent Baptist missionaries and their 95,160 supporters are included in this manual.

Sinclair desires to reduce the time missionaries spend on deputation and furlough while increasing the partnership and effectiveness of missionaries on the field. Many independent Baptist pastors want to improve their missions program but do not seem to know where to begin in revamping or restructuring the program they have.¹

This book has two objectives. The first objective is to help pastors and local churches by developing a biblical philosophy of missions. This philosophy will provide the principles necessary for creating a practical guide for improving the common independent Baptist mission program into a much more personal and practical sending partnership. As explained by Park Street Church, Boston,

Most of our missionaries have to maintain relationships with a large number of supporting churches, which are often spread out over a vast geographical area. Missiologists have long lamented the obvious inefficiency,

¹ Jeff Straub, "How to Have a Missions-Minded Church: The Pastor," Fellowship of Missions, accessed April 29, 2021, <http://fellowshipofmissions.org/how-to-have-a-missions-minded-church-the-pastor/>.

impracticality, and inadequacy of such a system of support.²

Sinclair asserts that improvements to sending missionaries do not require more churches or more money (although an increase of both would be great!). However, improvements will require adjustments in philosophy and changes in the way local churches view missions and missionaries.

The second objective of this book is to reassure missionaries that deputation is biblical. Receiving support from multiple local churches and reporting to those churches on a semi-regular basis is a biblical pattern, not a manmade invention. The development and implementation of a biblical and efficient partnership model will greatly encourage missionaries while noticeably improving their deputation, partnership, and furlough ministries.

This book is intentionally directed to pastors. In the words of Andrew Murray, "*To the pastor belongs the privilege and responsibility of the foreign missionary problem.*"³ Only pastors have the power to direct changes in the missions philosophy and methods of the local church. If a significant shift from a philosophy of financially *supporting* missionaries can be made to a biblical philosophy of wholesome *partnership* with missionaries, it is anticipated and predicted by the missions experts who have reviewed this text that both local churches and their missionary partners will benefit significantly.

² Park Street Church Boston, "Park Street Church Rationale For Missionary Support," Park Street Church, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://www.parkstreet.org/sites/default/files/pscrationaleforMissionay support.pdf>.

³ Andrew Murray, *The Key to the Missionary Problem* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2001), 99. The italics were present in the original text.

INTRODUCTION

When I was a boy, close friends of our family sold most of their possessions. They bought an old International school bus and transformed this vehicle into their new home on wheels. This “mobile home” was complete with beds, furniture, window curtains, an AC unit sticking out the window, and three precious, little daughters. I wondered why our friends were traveling all over the country in a bus. One day, my mother informed me that “God has called them to be missionaries. They are doing deputation.” She explained that deputation is what missionaries do to raise prayer and financial partners who will send them to the mission field. Little did I know that about twenty years after that conversation with my mother, my wife and I would sell most of our possessions and begin deputation with our infant son.

Like my friends in the previous paragraph, we traveled tens of thousands of miles and shared our burden in churches from coast to coast. We now have supporting churches stretching from Lynden, Washington, and Long Beach, California, on the West coast, to Sebec, Maine, and West Palm Beach, Florida, on the East coast. Not many Americans can say they have visited all fifty states, and fewer can boast that they have changed at least one diaper in a majority of them.

More than forty years have passed since I first heard that word “deputation.” Despite the expressions of concern made through the years by both pastors and missionaries, very little has been done to change or to improve the way

independent Baptists in America send missionaries.⁴ If little has changed for so many years, is it because the current independent Baptist sending model is perfect? Is there room for improvement?

In June of 2018, I sent 1,411 survey requests to independent Baptist pastors across the country. Less than four percent of the pastors who completed the survey believe that “the current independent Baptist deputation/furlough paradigm is effective as it is and cannot be improved.” *Sixty-five percent of the independent Baptist pastors who completed the survey believe that the current paradigm “could use significant improvements,” or that “it is a broken system and should be replaced by a completely new paradigm.”* Only 29 percent believe that the current sending model is “acceptable.”⁵

If our current sending model has such a poor approval rating according to these pastors, why has little been done to improve the system over the past several decades? Is deputation a biblical practice? Why does it take missionaries so long to get to the field? Can anything be done to improve the typical independent Baptist church missions program?

This manual is a sincere and humble effort to address some of these difficult questions. I passionately desire to improve the sending model of independent Baptist missionaries and, consequently, to expedite the furtherance of the Gospel for the glory of God.

I do not claim to be either an expert on missions or on sending missionaries. I have been on both ends of the deputation phone, however. After completing my undergraduate degree in missions from an outstanding

⁴ This citation is presented as proof that good suggestions have been presented for decades, with very little implementation or broad improvement. David L. Marshall, *Suggested Changes in Missionary Stewardship for the 1980's* (Kokomo, IN: Evangelical Baptist Missions, 1979).

⁵ See appendix 2, the survey for pastors, question 12.

missions Bible college, my wife and I were married and quickly got involved in the church and school ministries of our sending church. For more than two years, I was the missions director of our local church. I received weekly calls and messages from missionaries looking to present their work in our church. Most of the recommendations, scheduling, and decisions about missions fell to me. I knew our missions program very well. I also knew that many areas needed tremendous improvement. The problem was that I knew where I wanted to take our missions program, I just didn't know how to get there.

A church's missions policy must be founded on a biblical philosophy of missions. Since those days, I have spoken with pastors all over the United States. Some of these dear, faithful servants of God feel the same way I did during those years as the missions director of our church. Some pastors have admitted to me that their missions program is not where they would like it to be, but they are uncertain about how to improve it. More than 40 percent of the independent Baptist churches I surveyed do not have a congregationally-approved mission policy to follow.⁶

I pray that this book will be a help to many pastors, churches, and missionaries around the world. I pray that God will use His Word, the basis for this entire project, to kindle a passion for missions in the heart of every reader. I pray that this book will lead you and your church to develop a more efficient sending plan for participating in the Great Commission of Christ—all to the glory of God!

⁶ See appendix 2 and the survey for pastors, question 7.

CHAPTER 1

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS

In order to discuss a biblical theology of missions, the terms “biblical theology” and “missions” must be defined. A biblical theology is a synthesis and interpretation of a particular theme of the Bible. Theologian and author D. A. Carson explains that biblical theology “seeks to uncover and articulate the unity of all the biblical texts, taken together.”¹ Professor Stephen J. Wellum believes that biblical theology “as a discipline, not only provides the basis for understanding how texts in one part of Scripture relate to all other texts, but it also serves as the basis and underpinning for all theologizing.”² The Bible is the source of theology (study of God), and God is the source of missions.

The terms “missions” and “missionary” are not specifically found in the Scriptures. This has led to many definitions and opinions. The words missions and missionary come from the Latin word *missio*, which simply means “sent.” The Greek equivalent of this term is the word *apostolos*. The word *apostolos* (and its variations) is found 81 times in the Greek New Testament and is almost always translated “apostle.” An apostle is literally a “sent one.” A good look at the apostles of the New Testament is a good look at what missionaries should be and do. Of course, the original

¹ D. A. Carson, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 100.

² Stephen J. Wellum, “Editorial: Preaching and Teaching the Whole Counsel of God,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10 (2006): 2–3.

twelve apostles were given a unique office and sent with supernatural sign gifts that missionaries today are not given. However, their general ministry and mandate are the same.

In the King James Version the word *apostolos* is translated apostle in every one of the 81 instances, except in John 13:16, where it is translated “he that is sent” and in Philippians 2:25, where it is translated “messenger.” In Philippians 2:25, Paul refers to Epaphroditus as an “apostolon” of the church in Philippi. Perhaps the word is translated differently in these two instances to help distinguish between the twelve apostles of Christ (those twelve who saw Christ, who were chosen by Christ, and who held the unique office of apostle), and those general “sent ones,” or missionaries sent out by local churches ever since. The Greek word *apostolos* most frequently occurs in the gospels and in Acts. The vast majority of the time the word refers to the twelve apostles of Christ. However, there are some cases that are unclear, and there are six cases in the New Testament when the term *apostolos* is clearly not referring to the office of apostle, but rather, to a general missionary or sent one (including Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Epaphroditus, etc. in John 13:16, Acts 14:14, Romans 16:7, 2 Corinthians 8:23, Galatians 1:19, Philippians 2:25, and Hebrews 3:1).

Veteran missionary, professor, and writer J. Herbert Kane recognizes the unique “class” and superior office of the twelve apostles of Christ, but he also notes the similarity of their function and ministry to the others called apostles in the New Testament. Kane characterizes missionaries of today by stating they “have much in common with the ‘second-string’ apostles who were sent out by the various churches on teaching and preaching missions to all parts of the Roman Empire.”³

So what is missions? I define missions as *the sending forth of God-ordained servants who are willing to cross*

³ J. Herbert Kane, *Understanding Christian Missions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 28.

geographical, cultural, and language barriers to proclaim the good news of the special revelation, salvation, and sovereignty of the Lord to all peoples in all regions of the world. A missionary is a person sent to do this work. A specifically New Testament definition of missions would have a more narrow focus, which would include the making of disciples and the planting of churches. My definition is offered as a general, timeless definition. As I will prove later, missions is not a uniquely New Testament concept. Missions is a biblical concept.

Missions was practiced for thousands of years before Christ established His church or proclaimed the Great Commission. It is the purpose of God and a theme found in every book of the Bible. Twentieth-century scholar and author Harold Lindsell put it in these terms.

The Bible is a missionary book, and the source of its missionary zeal lies in the heart of God Himself. Jesus Christ is God's missionary to a lost and dying world, and the entire sacred canon is a description of God reaching down and reaching out toward sinful man for the purpose of redeeming him.⁴

Therefore, we begin our study of missions by looking into the Bible. Subsequently, the Bible points us to God, and God's great passion is missions. A proper view of missions begins with a proper view of God. Missions conferences, messages, and literature often focus primarily on the human need for world evangelism. World evangelism is an important part of missions. World evangelism is God's will, but world evangelism is the wrong starting point to begin constructing a proper philosophy of missions. World evangelism is not the primary, biblical motivation for missions. Why then should all Christians participate in world missions? Theologian Tom Wells succinctly states, "The only adequate answer is *God*."⁵ God is the primary,

⁴ Harold Lindsell, *Missionary Principles and Practices* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1955), 31.

⁵ Tom Wells, *A Vision For Missions* (Edinburgh, EH: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 7.

biblical motivation and impetus of missions. God desires to be glorified by all people around the world, and God commanded us to go. He is the reason why all Christians should participate in missions.

Missions did not begin with man, and missions is not a response to man's great social and eternal needs. Wells continues, "The Gospel is a call to know and worship God, and the primary conviction of the messenger must be that God is *worthy* to be known. The missionary vision must begin with the vision of God. Only then can the church truly respond to the command to 'declare his glory among the nations'."⁶

Missions began with God. Missions is God's design and program. The primary purpose of missions is the glory of God, not the salvation of men. Pastor and seminary president, David Doran, writes, "When the biblical mission is demanded and defined by man's needs and designed according to human wisdom, then mission ceases to be God's."⁷ A missions program that focuses solely on world evangelism is not a biblical program.⁸

Before Isaiah heard God saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and before Isaiah volunteered, "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8), there were two enormously significant things that happened. First, Isaiah had a vision of God that completely and permanently changed his life and ministry (Isaiah 6:1-4; 57:15). Second, Isaiah saw himself as "undone." Upon his confession, Isaiah's "iniquity is taken away," and his "sin purged" (Isaiah 6:5-7). Then, and *only* then, did the prophet hear and obey the call of

⁶ Ibid, 162.

⁷ David M. Doran, *The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Allen Park, MI: Student Global Impact, 2002), 49.

⁸ The same could be said about the Great Commission. The Great Commission is not solely evangelism. Matthew 28:18-20 specifically delineates that the Great Commission involves evangelism, baptism, and discipleship. A missionary or Christian who is solely involved in evangelism, to the exclusion of baptism and discipleship, is not fulfilling the Great Commission. Likewise, a missions program that focuses solely on evangelism is not a biblical missions program.

God. God did not change in chapter six. His will and His Word did not change. The great spiritual need of the people did not change. The only change was in Isaiah's views of God and himself.

When Isaiah had a proper view of God, he immediately volunteered to do what is important to God. When Isaiah was clean and close enough to hear the voice of God, he heard exactly what any Spirit-filled believer would “hear” in the Word of God today—“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us” (Isaiah 6:8)? Henry Martyn, missionary to India and Persia in the early nineteenth century, reputed to have said it this way: “The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become.”⁹

Isaiah's call is not a unique example. Throughout Scripture, a proper view of missions is always preceded and motivated by a proper view of God. Abram became a foreign missionary after a personal call and encounter with God (Genesis 12:1-4). He was not called during an emotional missionary plea presented by a man going to reach men. He was not motivated to leave his family and move to a foreign country after reading heart-stirring missions statistics from a missions periodical. He was called by God after a personal encounter with Him Who designed the program of missions, and Who commanded Abram to “go.”

Moses had an exciting beginning and a wonderful upbringing in Pharaoh's palace, but his personal efforts to deliver his people were man-centered, carnal, and resulted in murder and exile (Exodus 2:11-15). Moses' calling came after he hid and dwelt on “the backside of the desert” for forty years (Exodus 3:1). Moses experienced one of the most wonderful encounters with “I AM THAT I AM” recorded in the pages of Scripture. It was there, prostrate on the holy ground of Mount Horeb, in the presence of the burning bush, within the sound of God's mighty voice, that Moses

⁹ Although this famous statement has been long attributed to Henry Martyn by numerous reputable resources, this author was unable to locate the original source of the quote.

was called to be a missionary (Exodus 3:10). Moses was *a sent-forth, God-ordained servant who was willing to cross geographical, cultural, and language barriers to proclaim the good news of the special revelation, salvation, and sovereignty of the Lord to all peoples in all regions of the world* (including to both the children of Israel and the Egyptians).

The greatest missionary of the New Testament experienced God in a personal and wonderful way on the road to Damascus. Saul of Tarsus was confronted with the blinding glory and gospel of the Lord. He was subsequently converted and then straightway commissioned to be a missionary (Acts 9:15-16; 22:6-21). A proper view of missions begins with a proper view of God. I am not saying that every child of God is called to be a vocational foreign missionary. The Bible does teach, however, that *every* child of God who has a right relationship with his Father *will* be involved in missions around the world to the glory of God.

A proper view of God must be based on the inspired revelation of God—the Bible. In the Scriptures, God has given the church “a more sure word” of revelation today than even dreams, visions, or voices from a burning bush (2 Peter 1:19). A study of Scripture is the only way to develop a proper view of God and to understand His “eternal purpose” (Ephesians 3:1-12). A proper philosophy of missions, therefore, must be based on a biblical theology of missions.

A biblical theology of missions must begin with God and not man. Professor and missiologist, George W. Peters, wrote, “Too long America has propagated missions on the basis of philanthropy, Christian duty and responsibility, gospel necessity and church expansion.”¹⁰ Peters admits that these are all commendable emphases in missions, but they are not the primary or most important motivation. Peters proposes that “theology” will answer the greatest questions

¹⁰ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972), 12.

and provide the greatest motivation for missions.¹¹ Missions directors, pastors, missiologists, and missionaries cannot design biblical programs or produce sound methods for missions without a preeminent view of God. A proper view of God is necessary in developing a biblical theology of missions.

Missions professor and long-time medical missionary in China, Robert Glover, lamented in the 1940s that almost every book written on the subject of missions emphasized “sociology, psychology, and even ethics but left out theology.”¹² Any development of missionary philosophy or missionary methods should grow out of a biblical understanding of who God is. A biblical theology of missions is dependent on theology proper. The mission of God is missions for His glory (Romans 15:5-12). Doran asserts,

We must be willing to go against the grain of our man-centered world in order to ground our obedience to God in the highest motive possible – God's glory. I believe that the Scriptures are clear that God's glory is the ultimate goal of missions and that our pursuit of His glory is to be the driving force of missions.¹³

God and His glory should also be the foundation of our philosophies and methods. This motive is the reason I begin this work with “A Biblical Theology of Missions” rather than “Effective Methods for Missions.”

God is a Missionary God.

The character of God never changes. He is immutable (Hebrews 13:8). God is a missionary God, and He always has been. Some people have the erroneous idea that missions began in the New Testament. I believe such thinking is a huge mistake. “Before the foundation of the

¹¹ Ibid, 12-13.

¹² Robert Hall Glover, *The Bible Basis of Missions* (Los Angeles, CA: Bible House of Los Angeles, 1946), 7.

¹³ David M. Doran, *The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 50-51.

world” (Ephesians 1:3-6) and before God created Adam and Eve, God foreordained that a Missionary would die and rise from the dead to prepare the way of salvation for all of humanity (1 Peter 1:18-21).¹⁴ God's Old Testament and New Testament plan to carry the message of good news to the ends of the earth was a missionary plan designed by the missionary God.

Famous missionary to Africa, David Livingstone, said, “God had only one Son and he made that Son a missionary.”¹⁵ More profound and to the point is the reality that Jesus *is* God. Lindsell wrote, “Before God asked any man to be a missionary, He was in the Person of Jesus Christ a missionary.”¹⁶ God is a missionary God.

His Eternal Purpose is a Missionary Purpose.

Paul reveals the “eternal purpose” of God in Ephesians chapter three.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen (Ephesians 3:8-11, 21).

¹⁴ Remember my definition of missions above. "Missions is the sending forth of God-ordained servants who are willing to cross geographical, cultural, and language barriers to proclaim the good news of the special revelation, salvation, and sovereignty of the Lord to all peoples in all regions of the world."

¹⁵ "World Christian Quotes," Desiring God, accessed April 29, 2021, http://cdn.desiringgod.org/pdf/articles/20110128_mission_quotes.pdf.

¹⁶ Harold Lindsell, *Missionary Principles and Practices*, 31.

The eternal purpose of God is to glorify Himself “by Christ Jesus throughout all ages” (v. 21). In the beginning, God created men with the intent of revealing His greatness and wisdom to them, so that they might willingly glorify God as they grow in knowledge and comprehension of His infinite greatness. Throughout human history, God has been commanding and sending missionaries to “preach . . . the unsearchable riches of Christ” (v. 8). Obedient missionaries are necessary to God’s plan and eternal purpose.

Teacher and author Scott Aniol explains God’s eternal purpose vividly when he writes, “Why did God create man? Was he lacking anything? No. God was completely sufficient in Himself in eternity past. But in creating the universe, God decided to go public with his glory—to make the wonders of His character known.”¹⁷ God’s first command to Adam and Eve was to be fruitful and fill up the world with people (Genesis 1:28). Christ’s final command before His ascension was to take the Gospel to all peoples, in all places, during all ages. Why? Because God’s eternal purpose is to have a new world filled with a variety of people, made in His image, serving and glorifying Him forever.

When I was a freshman in Bible college, I took a course called “Introduction to Missions.” Veteran missionary Darrell Champlin taught this course. Over the next four years, Dr. Champlin was used by God to influence and develop my philosophy of missions more than any other man before or since. In that freshman course, we had to memorize and quote what Champlin called “The Eternal Purpose of God.” Champlin taught,

The eternal purpose of God is to call out from every kindred, tongue, people and nation, a multitude redeemed by the blood of His Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; over whom He will crown His Son, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords forever.

¹⁷ Scott Aniol, *Worship in Song: A Biblical Philosophy of Music and Worship* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2009), 3793, Kindle.

This is the passion of the heart of God that cannot be quenched, the obsession of His mind that cannot be denied, the vision of His eyes from eternity past into eternity future that will not dim, and the destination to which He has committed His omnipotent, immutable, eternal being; a destination that He will not abandon.¹⁸

How does God call out people from every nation on earth? How is it possible that people of every tribe and tongue throughout history will glorify God by Christ Jesus throughout all ages? God's method is Christ-empowered missions. The purpose is His eternal pleasure and glory (Revelation 4:11).

His Eternal Son is a Missionary Son.

God is a missionary God, and Jesus was sent as a missionary. As stated above, missions is *"the sending forth of God-ordained servants who are willing to cross geographical, cultural, and language barriers to proclaim the good news of the special revelation, salvation, and sovereignty of the Lord to all peoples in all regions of the world."* A missionary is a person sent to accomplish this mission. Therefore, by definition, Jesus was a missionary. John 20:21 and 1 John 4:9 reveal that Jesus was sent into the world by His Father, in the fullness of time, to be a missionary. In Hebrews 3:1, Christ Jesus is referred to as the "Apostle" (missionary) and "High Priest of our profession."

Jesus left the glory of heaven and crossed geographical, cultural and language barriers to proclaim special revelation, to provide salvation, and to demonstrate the sovereignty of the Lord. He then disciplined and sent His missionary apostles into all the world to preach this good news to all peoples until He returns (Galatians 4:4-6). The eternal Son of God was a missionary Son.

¹⁸ This quotation was confirmed in personal correspondence with Louise Champlin, Darrell Champlin's wife, on June 9, 2017.

His Eternal Spirit is a Missionary Spirit.

Not only is God a missionary God, and Jesus a missionary Son, but the Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit. Before the missionary Son of God was crucified, resurrected, and ascended to the right hand of His Father in heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to His followers (John 16:7). Jesus revealed that the primary mission of the Holy Spirit is to empower His disciples to reach the world. John 16:8 promises that “when [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

Nearly every chapter in the book of Acts demonstrates the missionary passion and purpose of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:8, Jesus charges His disciples, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” This verse is the outline for the rest of the book of Acts.

In the second chapter of Acts, the Holy Spirit fills the disciples of Jesus. They immediately obey the missionary mandate of Christ in the city of *Jerusalem* by miraculously speaking in the languages of “every nation under heaven.” Acts 2:4-5 thrillingly reports, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.”

In chapter four, Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit and immediately preaches to the rulers and elders of Israel (Acts 4:8). Later in the same chapter, praying believers were again “filled with the Holy Ghost.” Like every text that mentions the filling of the Holy Spirit, these Spirit-filled believers immediately “spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

By chapter eight, the Holy Spirit, through the persecuted church, takes the Gospel “abroad throughout the regions of *Judaea and Samaria*” (Acts 8:1).¹⁹ In chapter nine, Saul of Tarsus is converted and “filled with the Holy Ghost” (9:17). Just as everyone else who is filled with the Holy Spirit, he “straightway ... preached Christ” (Acts 9:20)! Peter also takes the Gospel to Gentiles in *Judaea* according to Acts chapter 10.

The remainder of the book of Acts chronicles the progress of the Gospel *unto the uttermost part of the earth*. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel has not only geographically reached the uttermost parts of the earth, but the Holy Spirit has ensured that the Gospel has been heard by Jews (Acts 4:10), Samaritans (Acts 8:25), and Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 10:34-48). Because of the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, people from “every nation under heaven” have heard the Gospel in their “own language” (Acts 2:5-6).²⁰ The responsibility of Christ's Great Commission is still compulsory for every believer. This work cannot be accomplished without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. God, the Holy Spirit, is a missionary Spirit.

The beautiful and succinct statement by Professor Stephen Seamands is an excellent summary of this section. Seamands wrote,

God is therefore in his very essence a missionary God. The Father is the first missionary, who goes out himself creating the world and sending the Son. The Son is the

¹⁹ I have added the italics to Judea and Samaria in this verse to highlight the fulfilling work of the Holy Spirit as outlined in Acts 1:8.

²⁰ The word *nation* in this verse is translated from the Greek word *ethnos*, from which we get the English word ethnic. Luke was not telling us that people from every country under heaven were present to hear the Gospel on that Day of Pentecost, but rather that listeners from every ethnic people-group on earth were present that day. It is tragic to me how many missiologists overlook this inspired record and claim that Jesus will not return until the Gospel reaches every people-group some day in the future. The return of Christ is imminent! There is nothing preventing the rapture of the church from taking place in this very moment of time. The return of Christ is certainly not dependent on the obedience and accomplishments of men.

second missionary, who redeems humanity and all creation. The Holy Spirit is the third missionary, who creates and empowers the church ... to go into the world.²¹

The fact that God is a missionary God is beyond debate.

God's Word is a Missionary Book.

God is a missionary God, and the Bible is a missionary book. Missiologist Ralph Winter put it this way: "The Bible is not the basis of missions; missions is the basis of the Bible."²² The theme of missions can be found running through every book of the Bible. God is a missionary God. He inspired a missionary book. From the beginning of time, He has been calling and sending believers to the ends of the earth to proclaim the name and glory of the Lord to all peoples, in all places, throughout all times.

The Bible consists of sixty-six books, but all Scripture was given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The message and themes of the Bible are consistent throughout Scripture because they reflect the heart of its single Author. God's use of human missionaries is His chosen method for accomplishing His eternal purpose.

Missions in the Old Testament

The Pentateuch. God begins human history by creating and commanding Adam and Eve to be fruitful, multiply, and fill up the world with people. Adam and Eve were created, commissioned, and "sent" by God to make global missions possible (Genesis 1:28; 3:23). God called Abram to continue the momentum of missions. God told him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's

²¹ Stephen Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 161.

²² "Missions Slogans and Notable Quotes from Missionaries," Southern Nazarene University, accessed April 29, 2021, <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/slogans.htm>.

house, unto a land that I will shew thee ... and thou shalt be a blessing ... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3). God sent Joseph to be a missionary in Egypt. Joseph concluded the book of Genesis by revealing God's purpose for taking him from his land of birth and for sending him to the foreign people of Egypt. Like all of His missionaries, God sent Joseph “to save much people alive” (Genesis 50:20).

After forty years as a man without a country, God called Moses to be a missionary prophet. God declared from the burning bush, “I will send thee unto Pharaoh ... Go, and gather the elders of Israel together and say unto them, The Lord God ... appeared unto me” (Exodus 3:16). This calling is the responsibility and message of a missionary. Moses was not to be the only missionary in Exodus. God states that He would smite the Egyptians with great plagues and free His people so that “my name may be declared throughout all the earth” (Exodus 9:16). Declaring the name of the Lord “throughout all the earth” requires a lot of missionaries.

The Israelites may have been xenophobic, but God was not and is not racist. Moses testified to Hobab the Midianite according to the book of Numbers. Moses told him, “We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel” (Numbers 10:29). Moses desired the entire world to hear and know of Jehovah and His glorious goodness.

Moses assured God's people, in the final book of the Pentateuch, that the obedience of His people and the statutes of the Lord would be heard and seen by all the nations (Deuteronomy 4:6). Seeing involves a public lifestyle; hearing demands a preaching missionary. God commands, “Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people . . .” (Deuteronomy 32:43).

The Books of History. Moses and Aaron were described as missionaries (“sent” to deliver God's Word) in Joshua 24:5.

Joshua sent two missionaries to Jericho (Joshua 2:1). They were called spies, but Rahab and her entire family were saved (both physically and spiritually) because these missionary spies were “sent” (Joshua 6:23; James 2:25). We later learn in the New Testament that Rahab became the great-great-grandmother of King David and one of at least two Gentile foremothers of Jesus Christ.

Deborah and Barak sang a song of missions to leaders of the world in Judges chapter five. “Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel” (Judges 5:3). By the inspiration of God, these judges wanted every nation in the world to know and worship Jehovah.

First Samuel 9:16 says that Saul was “sent” and “anointed” by the Lord. The next chapter says that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul, and he prophesied at the garrison of the Philistines (1 Samuel 10:5-6).

David closed 2 Samuel with a powerful missionary prayer. “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him”(2 Samuel 22:31). David knew that Jehovah was not for Israelites alone. Some of David's last words were a promise to witness to the unbelieving Gentiles of the world. He said, “Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name” (2 Samuel 22:50). David's heart for missions was revealed in both his prayers and his actions. Hiram, the king of Lebanon, blessed Jehovah in 1 Kings 5:7 as a result of David's witness to this Gentile king.

Based on the “report” of a missionary to Sheba, the Queen visited Israel to see if what she heard was true (1 Kings 10:6). She concluded her trip by testifying, “Blessed be the Lord” (1 Kings 10:9).

Elijah was a missionary to the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17). During the Syrian captivity, there was a faithful, nameless missionary described simply as “a little maid”

(2 Kings 5:2). Because of her witness, Naaman sought the man of God and was healed of his leprosy in the Jordan River. He subsequently proclaimed his faith in the Lord by saying, “Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel” (5:15). Children can be missionaries too! Elisha was sent by God to proclaim His Word to Hazael of Syria (8:7-15).

Because of the missionary witness of Jeremiah, and perhaps others, King Cyrus became a believer in Jehovah (2 Chronicles 36:22-23). Cyrus then became a witness to “all the kingdoms of the earth.” Cyrus sent missionaries across his vast kingdom to declare the exclusive deity of Jehovah.

Second Chronicles ends with a missions emphasis, and Ezra begins with nearly a word for word review of that same global, missions emphasis. Ezra was an outspoken missionary to Artaxerxes (Ezra 1:1-4).

The Poetic Books of Wisdom. George W. Peters has written,

Missionary preaching is supported in the Psalms by more than 175 references of a universalistic note relating to the nations of the world. Many of them bring hope of salvation to the nations . . . Indeed the Psalter is one of the greatest missionary books in the world.²³

One of the 175 references in Psalms promoting universal missions says,

O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people ... Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth (Psalms 96:1-3, 10).

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon “the preacher” (1:1, 2, 12; 7:27; 12:8, 9, 10) addressed a universal audience —“under the

²³ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 116.

sun” (repeated 29 times). This reoccurring phrase is a metonymy meaning “all the earth.” The proposition of his message is, “Fear God, and keep His commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Solomon was a missionary to the world. Hiram and the queen of Sheba have already been cited as scriptural examples of foreign missionary fruit during his reign.

The Major Prophets. According to the missionary prophet Isaiah, no person or place is left out of God’s eternal purpose. From the top of the highest mountain to the farthest remote island, let the Gospel of the Lord ring!

Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands (Isaiah 42:10-12).

In Isaiah 49, God describes the purpose of “the preserved of Israel.” God said, “I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6). God did not teach His people to invite the heathen to Israel. His mandate was to go with the message of salvation “unto the end of the earth.”

Jeremiah proclaimed God’s inspired words to not only Israel and Judah, but also to Egypt (Jeremiah 46:2-28), Philistia (Jeremiah 47:1-7), Moab (Jeremiah 48:1-47), Ammon (Jeremiah 49:1-6), Edom (Jeremiah 49:7-22), Syria—Damascus (Jeremiah 49:23-27), Kedar—Ishmaelites, Habor—Arabs (Jeremiah 49:28-33), Elam (Jeremiah 49:34-39), and Syria—Damascus (Jeremiah 49:32-27).

Daniel was a foreign missionary from his youth. He preached light and truth to the leaders of his captivity. He preached to Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, the Babylonians (Daniel 3:25-29). He preached to Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian (Daniel 5:11-29; 6:23-27). The

incredible thing is that these leaders listened and acknowledged the Lord as, “the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth” (Daniel 6:26-27). I believe Daniel was one of the greatest missionaries in history.

The Minor Prophets. God's eternal purpose and heart for missions are exposed in the minor prophets as well. In Hosea, God testifies, “I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God” (Hosea 2:23).

The famous prophecy of Joel that was fulfilled in Acts chapter two says,

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit (Joel 2:28-29).

Not only does this prophecy foreshadow the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all New Testament believers, but it also reveals the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit—to empower God's people to preach the Gospel throughout the world! Joel's prophecy reminded his listeners that Jehovah is not just for Israel. Joel preached, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered” (Joel 2:32).

Amos was a missionary called to preach and to, “Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt” (Amos 3:9).

Jonah may have been stubborn and rebellious, but without question, he was commanded to be a missionary. God said, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me” (Jonah 1:1-2). Nineveh is a powerful testimony to the impact of foreign

missions. It reveals the heart of God to save all people (Jonah 4:11). Without a missionary, hundreds of thousands of souls would have perished having never known of salvation through faith in the Lord.

The book of Micah is a missionary book with a universal message. Micah begins the book by identifying his global audience. "Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is" (Micah 1:2).

Habakkuk reveals God's purpose to reach the world for His glory. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

Over and over again, the minor prophets declare the eternal purpose of God. Zechariah was a missionary even though his audience did not realize it. In the Day of the Lord, people from "many nations" will be known as Jehovah's people. This fruit will be the result of global missions. "And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee" (Zechariah 2:11).

From the first to the last book of the Old Testament, we can see that God's eternal purpose of sending missionaries to all people is that they will submit to and glorify Him. The Lord beautifully and poetically describes the result of global missions in Malachi. "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 1:11).

God's passion for global missions and missionaries is emphasized throughout the Old Testament. The theme of missions has been traced through the Pentateuch, the Books of History, the Poetic Books of Wisdom, the Major

Prophets, and the Minor Prophets. The Bible is a missionary book and the Old Testament is proof of this fact.

Missions in the New Testament

The task of documenting missions in the Old Testament is a search for a theme that is running through every book. A New Testament search for missions is like looking for green in the grass or for blue in the sky. The New Testament is all about missions! The Gospels are accounts of the missionary Jesus and His earthly ministry. All four Gospels proclaim the Great Commission statement that demands global, universal missions. The book of Acts begins with the Great Commission and an outline for accomplishing that mission. It goes on to demonstrate how the world can be turned upside down for Jesus in one generation when Spirit-empowered missionaries obey that commission.

Missionaries wrote nearly every book of the New Testament. Every church epistle was written to a church started by a missionary, and those letters encourage their readers to be involved in missions. The book of Revelation concludes the New Testament with a final encouragement to be involved in missions and a picture of what the population of the new heaven and earth will look like because of global missions. Since missions is everywhere in the following books, it would be too overwhelming to cite all or even most examples. Therefore, this section will only cite some of the missionary highlights of the New Testament.

The Gospels. Jesus is often characterized as a minister to the Jews only. The book of Matthew, however, does not support this opinion. When Jesus began His public ministry, Matthew states that he went to the land “of the Gentiles” and to the “people which sat in darkness,” just as Isaiah prophesied.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and

shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 4:14-17).

Later, Matthew again referenced Isaiah when he explained the ministry of Jesus. He ended his explanation in Matthew twelve by promising, “And in his name shall the Gentiles trust” (Matthew 12:18). Jesus was not just a missionary to the Jews. Jesus came to reach all peoples.

Finally, the book of Matthew concludes with Jesus' delivery of the Great Commission to His disciples.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:18-20).

Matthew's Gospel begins by describing Jesus' purpose as a light unto the Gentiles and ends with Jesus commanding His followers to make disciples of all nations.

The most concise Great Commission record is in the Gospel of Mark. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

Jesus revealed His eternal purpose in the very first public message recorded by Luke. Jesus preached that Elijah was “sent” to a Gentile widow. Jesus said that Elisha healed no Jewish lepers in his day. Only the Gentile, Naaman, was cleansed. The people tried to kill Jesus for articulating God's love for all people, but He “went His way” (Luke 4:24-30).

Just like Matthew's Gospel, Luke's Gospel also records that Jesus began His ministry emphasizing missions and ended His recorded earthly ministry with the Great Commission.

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-47).

Early in Jesus' ministry, John recalls that "He must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4). Taking a route through Samaria was completely atypical of the Jews, but not for a Savior whose heart is given to missions. As Jesus witnessed to the woman at the well, His universal invitation can clearly be heard.

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:13-14).

The Great Commission, recorded by John, states that all of God's disciples are to be missionaries in the sense that they are sent by God to actively participate in his eternal, global purpose. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:19). Jesus was sent to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), and so is every Spirit-filled follower of Christ.

The Acts. The entire book of Acts is a missionary manual. Two important passages emphasizing this priority are the Great Commission and Paul's testimony of conversion and call. The Great Commission in Acts says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Paul's testimony of his conversion and call to ministry was, "And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21).

The Pauline Epistles. Most New Testament books begin with the theme of missions. Paul begins the book of Romans teaching that every believer receives grace to be obedient to

preach the gospel message “among all nations.” Notice the introduction of Romans.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1-6).

Every believer receives grace to be involved in missions. Paul confirms right from the salutation of 1 Corinthians that this inspired message is for people “in every place” (1 Corinthians 1:1-3). In his letter called 2 Corinthians, Paul expresses one of the great missionary mottos of the Bible. “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place” (2:14). God's purpose is global-glorification of Himself “in every place.” God's instruments are “us.”

Paul's missionary call is reviewed in the first chapter of Galatians. “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen” (1:15-16).

The eternal purpose of God and Paul's commitment to missions are eloquently presented in Ephesians 3:8-11.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Even when bound with chains, and confined to a cell, Paul's burden for missions to all places is seen in the first chapter of Philippians. "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places" (Philippians 1:12-13).

I love what Paul has to say about missions in the first chapter of Colossians. Paul writes,

I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:25-27).

Paul teaches in 1 Thessalonians that missions originated with God (3:11). Missions is motivated by love (3:12). Its target is "all men" (3:12), and it is a necessary component of sanctification (1 Thessalonians 3:13).

Every mature, growing Christian is involved in missions. It is not possible to be a "stablished" Christian while not being involved in missions. The more conformed we are to the image of our Lord, the more active in missions we will be.

The General Epistles. Pastor James' book is addressed "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). Once again, it was certainly not the will of the people to be dispersed around the world because of persecution, but it was God's design to send them "abroad." God's eternal purpose requires missions, and missions demands the sending of God's people to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Paul was sent by his local church (Acts 13:3). These believing Jews were scattered by persecution. All were sent

by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4), and they all became missionaries in a foreign land. The two examples of faith in James chapter two are noteworthy. James presents Abraham and Rahab as examples of living faith. Abraham was a missionary, and Rahab was the fruit of missionaries.

Peter writes his letters to believing Jews and tells them that they have the God-given mandate to show forth the light of the Gospel to all those in darkness, including “among the Gentiles.”

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light ... I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles (1 Peter 2:9-12).

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is 2 Peter 3:9. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Someone once said, “*All* means *all*, and that's *all all* means.” God desires all to be saved, not just Jews, or a select few, or just those of your nationality or kind. God wants everyone to know, love, serve, and worship Him. According to Peter, God has given us His inspired Word, not only to be saved and to know how to live but also to use it to be a shining light to this dark world (2 Peter 2:19). God's biblical method for bringing light to the lost is missions.

John wrote in his first epistle, “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Like Peter, John also proclaims that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the world, not just for the sins of those receiving John's correspondence. Jesus came for “the whole world.” If God's program of redemption is directed at the entire world, how can the world be reached? This global endeavor is called missions.

In second John, the missionary theme takes a cautionary tone. John has heard that “many deceivers are entered into the world” (2 John 1:7). These antichrist missionaries have been sent to propagate false doctrines (2 John 1:9-10). These antichrist missionaries are to be rejected without so much as a warm greeting (2 John 1:11). God desires all of His children to be “partakers” in missions, but we are to be careful to only support missionaries “walking in truth” (2 John 1:4).

John's third epistle returns to a positive missionary emphasis. He presents missionaries in this letter who should be supported.

Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles” (1:5-7).

These “strangers” who went forth “for His name's sake” are traveling missionaries. John teaches that faithful missionaries, who walk in truth, should be blessed by our hospitality and our support. The mandate to “bring forward on their journey” is a mandate to send and be involved in missions even from your home church or land. You may have never been called to be a foreign missionary, but the brief letter of third John does emphasize your responsibility to send faithful missionaries who are going to foreign lands with the Gospel.

Revelation. As with most of the books of the New Testament, one cannot even read through the first chapter without being confronted with the emphasis of missions. John was a missionary. He was exiled for doing missionary work, and while being persecuted for his missionary service, he continued with his missionary work in Patmos and beyond.

John provides a description of the fulfillment of God's global missionary plan in Revelation chapter five. “And they sung

a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Revelation 5:9). An invitation to this future assembly is offered to everyone. In the last chapter of the Bible, John makes one final, universal plea when he writes, “And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

After looking through the entire Bible with an eye for missions, I feel like Adoniram Judson, who once testified, “Why, how stupid, stupid I have been! Missions, why, the New Testament is all about missions!”²⁴ The only thing I would add to this assessment is that the Old Testament is all about missions too. I prefer to say, “Why, the entire Bible is all about missions!”

Someone may ask, “Why did you fill so many pages of this manual highlighting the theme of missions through the Bible?” I desire my readers to be overwhelmed and convinced that every chapter and verse of Scripture is found within the context of God's eternal purpose—missions to the glory of God. I am absolutely convinced that a person who is passionate about studying and knowing the Word of God will be passionate and zealous about missions. Perhaps one of the reasons why so few missionaries are called, why some churches have never sent a missionary out from their own membership, and why deputation is so long and difficult is because we have not been impacted and controlled by the emphasis of the triune God and His inspired Word—missions to the glory of God.

God's Church is a Missionary Body.

Not only is God a missionary God, and the Bible a missionary book, but the local church is designed to be a missionary body. The local church is mentioned about 100

²⁴ J. Mervin Hull, *Judson the Pioneer* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1923), 12-25.

times in the New Testament.²⁵ She was created and is being built by Christ (Matthew 16:18). She is called the “house of God” and “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). She is called the “wife” of Christ (Revelation 19:7) and is depicted as “the body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

As the body of Christ, the church has been given the mandate to reach the world. The church is the body that authorizes and sends forth missionaries (Acts 13:3). Missionaries are expected to go, to witness, to baptize and to make disciples. To accomplish this commission, local churches should be established that will go on to reproduce themselves. Paul and his missionary team followed this strategy, and it is still God's plan today. Veteran missionary to Africa and prolific author Harry R. Boer wrote,

One hardly knows where in Acts to look for a distinction between Church and missions. Restlessly the Spirit drives the Church to witness, and continually churches rise out of the witness. The Church is missionary Church. She is not missionary Church in the sense that she is “very much interested” in missions, or that she “does a great deal” for missions. In Acts, missions is not a hobby of the “evangelical section” of the Church. The Church as a whole is missionary in all her relationships.²⁶

Veteran missionary and seminary professor Paul A. Beals simply summarized, “By its very nature, the church is missionary.”²⁷

Some churches have the false impression that missions is one of the many programs of the church. Missions is not a program of the local church; missions is *the* program of the church. You can visit some church websites and find the “Missions Ministry,” the “Music Ministry,” and the “Nursery Ministry” all listed under the same drop-down “Ministries”

²⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament*, Volume 2 (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2001), 223.

²⁶ Harry R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 161-162.

²⁷ Paul A. Beals, *A People for His Name* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 49.

menu. While music and service in the nursery may both be essential ministries, they are not to be confused or equated with the mission or program of the church.

Missions is the program of the church. Ministries should grow out of the church's mission. Based on their situation, one church may begin a deaf ministry, and another church might develop a seniors' ministry. These ministries should grow out of the church's mission. Missions is not a ministry that should be tacked on to a list of activities in which the church should be involved. The church is a missionary body involved in many ministries that should all grow out of her Great Commission purpose for existence.

The Church is God's Instrument to Accomplish His Purpose.

Veteran Baptist missionary Melvin Beals unfolds the program declared by Christ in Acts 1:8 and Luke 24:47. Beals writes,

The spreading of the gospel divided the world into two areas—reached and unreached. The gospel witness was maintained in the reached areas by newly established local churches. The advance into the unreached areas was assisted by these new, growing churches. Jew and Gentile alike, in all nations, became the recipients of the gospel (Romans 1:16). This simple truth made up the bold and startling program of the Church of Jesus Christ.²⁸

Missionaries are called from local churches. Missionaries are sent out of local churches. Missionaries are sustained by local churches, and missions is propagated by local churches who reproduce themselves by establishing local churches around the world. John R. Mott stated that “the

²⁸ Melvin Beals, Chapter 1 “The Church's Place in World Evangelism” from *Managing Missions in the Local Church*, edited by Melbourne E. Cuthbert (Cherry Hill, NJ: Association of Baptists for World Evangelism Inc., 1987) 13-14.

primary work of the church is to make Jesus Christ known and obeyed and loved throughout the world.”²⁹

The role of the pastor is essential.

Hundreds of times every year, Dr. Lee Roberson used to say, “Everything rises or falls on leadership.”³⁰ He once wrote that the number one problem with independent churches and missions programs is leadership.³¹ One of the biblical titles of a pastor is the term “bishop” (1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7). A bishop is a superintendent or overseer of a local church.³² He is responsible for setting the course and direction of the local church and its missions philosophy.

Glover has correctly written that “It has long been our conviction that the key to the missionary problem lies peculiarly with the home pastors, since they hold the God-given office of leadership in the church, and are charged with the instruction, inspiration, and guidance of God's people in their life and service.”³³ If the missions philosophy and activity of the local church are functioning positively and pleasing to the Lord, major credit should be attributed to the pastor's leadership. If the direction of the church is not pleasing to the Lord, the blame should equally be attributed to the pastor's leadership.

The majority of the pastors I surveyed for this manual indicated that the current independent Baptist sending model needs either improvement or a complete overhaul. If

²⁹ John R. Mott, *The Pastor and Modern Missions: A Plea for Leadership in World Evangelism* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement, 1904), vii.

³⁰ Lee Roberson, *Double Breasted* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord, 1977), 57.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The Roman Catholic Church has redefined the title bishop, but according to the Scriptures, the terms pastor, elder, and bishop are interchangeable terms for the same office in the local church (Acts 20:17, 28).

³³ Robert Hall Glover, *The Bible Basis of Missions* (Los Angeles, CA: The Bible House of Los Angeles, 1946), 43.

something is going to change in how independent Baptists send their missionaries, the change must be initiated and accomplished by these same pastors. Again, Glover has written, “Christians as a rule do not go beyond their leaders, whether in knowledge, zeal, consecration, or sacrifice. But they are usually ready—at least a goodly proportion of them—to follow a leader.” He further writes, “The pastor more than any other individual . . . has the opportunity of influencing missionary recruiting, praying, and giving.” What a powerful responsibility! Recruiting, praying, and giving are influenced by the pastor, and nothing will ever change until the pastor accepts his responsibility and uses his influence to make transformations.

This manual is designed to help pastors make the needed changes and to improve the admitted weaknesses of the current missionary sending model. Humility to recognize the awesome responsibility of leading a church is the first prerequisite to positive change. Having a biblical philosophy of missions is the second prerequisite to positive change. This necessity is the reason this manual has filled so many pages unfolding and emphasizing a biblical philosophy of missions. Without a proper passion, vision, or philosophy, a pastor cannot possibly lead his people in the right direction. Stacy R. Warburton, professor of Missions, profoundly asserted,

If the missionary work of the churches is to be fully successful the leaders of the churches must come to understand the missionary purpose of the church ... Missions will not take its rightful place in the program of the local churches, and the missionary efforts of the churches and denominations will not achieve their full success, until pastors and other church leaders understand the primary work of their churches to be missions, of which everything else is a part and for which it is preparation ... Primarily the responsibility rests upon the pastor; his attitude, his ideals, his aims, his intellectual and spiritual horizon, his interpretation of the Gospel of Jesus and of the mission of the church, will

inevitably determine the interests and activities and achievements of his church.³⁴

The role of the pastor in promoting a biblical missionary philosophy and praxis cannot be overstated. More than one hundred years ago, South African pastor Andrew Murray wrote, "It is one thing for a minister to be an advocate and supporter of missions: it is another and very different thing for him to understand that missions are the chief end of the Church, and therefore the chief end for which *his congregation exists*."³⁵ Murray later wrote, "*To the pastor belongs the privilege and responsibility of the foreign missionary problem*."³⁶ I pray that every independent Baptist pastor will not only realize, but embrace the biblical priority of missions for their church. May we acknowledge our personal responsibility and participation in God's eternal purpose, and may we joyfully accept this privileged role to the glory of God and to the furtherance of His Gospel.

The role of prayer is essential.

Prayer is perhaps the most overlooked component of missions, and yet it is essential. Jesus spent 40 days praying and fasting in the wilderness before he began His earthy ministry in earnest. We often read in the gospel accounts that Jesus would rise early before day and spend time in prayer (Mark 1:35). In Matthew 9:36-38, after a long, full day of ministry, Jesus expressed His great burden for the lost multitudes: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no

³⁴ Stacy R. Warburton, *Making a Missionary Church*, quoted in Robert Hall Glover, *The Bible Basis of Missions* (Los Angeles, CA: The Bible House of Los Angeles, 1946), 44.

³⁵ The italics in these quotes are original with Murray. Andrew Murray, *The Key to the Missionary Problem* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2001), 15.

³⁶ Andrew Murray, *The Key to the Missionary Problem*, 99. I highly recommend that all pastors read this book. It is a "must read." Last furlough I gave every one of our supporting church pastors a copy of this powerful, timeless book.

shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray..." Jesus' solution to the missionary problem is summarized in one word: "pray."

Jesus did not ask the disciples to take up an offering. He did not ask James to prepare a stirring video presentation to move men to surrender their lives to missions. He didn't even tell them to get up and get going (although he gave them that commission later). There is, of course, nothing wrong with giving to missions or challenging others through audio/video presentations, but Jesus taught his disciples that God's eternal purpose can only be accomplished by supernatural means. The supernatural work of prayer is an essential part of this purpose.

Hudson Taylor understood this truth well. He is quoted as saying, "When we work, we work. When we pray, God works."³⁷ I find it very revealing that when Hudson Taylor wrote *A Retrospect: The Story Behind My Zeal for Missions*, he did not begin with his birth or upbringing. He began with "Chapter 1 The Power of Prayer."³⁸ From Taylor's perspective, his entire biography was a testimony to "the power of prayer."

Much too often, prayer is considered something lesser that Christians do to help support the *real* work of the ministry. I have heard people say things like, "Since I can't go, and I don't have means to give, I will just pray for missions." *Just* pray? Prayer is not the *least* work, and prayer should not be the *last* work. In John 14:12, Jesus said, "And greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Oswald Chambers boldly explains, "Prayer does not fit us for the greater

³⁷ Although this famous statement has been long attributed to J. Hudson Taylor by numerous reputable resources, this author was unable to locate the original source of the quote. Similar statements have also been attributed to Angus Buchan and Hans Von Staden.

³⁸ This edifying autobiography by J. Hudson Taylor is available for free on Amazon Kindle.

works; prayer is the greater work.”³⁹ This concept is foreign to the minds of many Christians, but prayer is an essential labor, and should be considered the highest work of missions!

The ascension of Christ is recorded in Acts chapter one. Before He left His disciples, he told them, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Jesus was reiterating to His disciples what He had already taught them. Effectively, he was saying, “I have a global mission for you, and you cannot do it without the supernatural enablement of the Holy Ghost. So, wait in Jerusalem until He comes.” The disciples returned to Jerusalem. The Bible says they began the greatest work of missions—they immediately began to pray (Acts 1:8-14). While these prayerful saints continued in Jerusalem, the Holy Ghost came and filled them all (Acts 2:1-4). The New Testament church was born, and this new body of Christ immediately commenced the physical activity of the Great Commission.

Every great missionary movement was born out of prayer. The great movement on the day of Pentecost was no exception. Australian missiologist David Clayton writes,

God acts in response to His people's prayers. [Jeremiah 33:3] ... Without prayer, nothing will happen. [John 15:5] ... History gives vivid examples of the priority of prayer ... In 1727, German Moravians began a prayer meeting that lasted 100 years. Revival swept through the churches, and hundreds of missionaries were sent out. In the [sic] 1782, the Nottingham Baptist Association in England began monthly concerts of prayer for evangelization. Soon, a member of this association of churches, William Carey, knelt before a map of the world he had drawn and poured out his soul for the world. He and supporters thus gave birth to the modern mission's movement. In 1802, the Pee

³⁹ Oswald Chambers, "Greater Works," *My Utmost for His Highest*, October 17, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://utmost.org/classic/greater-works-classic/>.

Dee Baptist Association in South Carolina, USA, began a similar monthly concert of prayer. Adoniram Judson and other American missionaries were sent in 1812 to Asia. In 1806, students at Williams College in Massachusetts, USA were caught in a rainstorm and took refuge in a convenient haystack. They used the time to pray for the lost and wound up on mission fields, igniting the “Student Volunteer Movement.”⁴⁰

Do you want to see a great missions movement in our day? —then pray (Jeremiah 33:3). Do you recognize that the harvest is plenteous and the laborers our few? —then pray for more laborers (Matthew 9:38). Do you desire to see your missionary partners furthering the Gospel around the world through your local church? —then pray for God's power in their lives and ministries (Philippians 1:12). Do you want to personally be more active in missionary lives and mission fields around the world? —then pray.

In Romans 15, Paul informs the church in Rome that he will be visiting them on his way to Spain (Romans 15:28). He informs them that they will provide and send him on his way. Paul boasts of “the fullness of the blessing of the gospel” (Romans 15:29). But even though he is confident of their material support, and even though he is sure of the power and sufficiency of the Gospel, he still makes one request of this church he has never met: “Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me” (Romans 15:30). Paul's greatest desire was not a more powerful message. He was not anxious about more financial support. The greatest missionary in history requested partners who would strive with him in prayer.

The greatest work in missions today is prayer. The most lacking work in missions today is prayer. We know that prayer is powerful. We know that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Pray for more missionaries to be sent out. Pray for the missionaries sent out of your church to be Spirit-filled and

⁴⁰ David Claydon, *A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call: Volume 1* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 377.

fruitful. Pray because prayer is your most effective way to personally participate in the Great Commission. I believe the power of your missions program is directly related to the measure of your prayers. If this is true, then no prayer equals no power. Little prayer equals little power. Much prayer equals much power!

The role of people is essential.

After emphasizing the supernatural aspect of prayer in missions, I was tempted to leave the role of people out of my outline. However, I believe the role of obedient people must also be emphasized. Jesus requested His followers to specifically pray for more laborers—people (Matthew 9:38).

Throughout history, God's eternal purpose to reach people has been designated to His people. One ancient theologian is credited with saying, "Without God we cannot, but without us God will not."⁴¹ There is no plan B. God could have commanded the angels to daily fly around in the sky preaching the Gospel, but He chose not to. God could have chosen talking stones or animals to proclaim His message around the world, but He did not (Luke 19:40; Numbers 22:28). God has chosen people. God has chosen to use you and me.

When the Father sent His Son to be a missionary to the world, He made Him a human being (Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:7). Having a missions-minded pastor is not enough. Praying daily for missions is not even enough. God has commanded, sent, and empowered His people to accomplish His eternal purpose. You are an essential component of God's eternal purpose.

⁴¹ Augustine of Hippo as quoted by Colonel Jostein Nielsen, "...Without Us God Will Not," The Salvation Army, December 5, 2018, <https://salvationarmyeeet.org/without-us-god-will-not/>. Just because I appreciate this quote does not mean I condone all of the teaching of Augustine.

The Church is to Send Missionaries as God Sent His Son.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples in their secure room. He told them, “ ... Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (John 20:21). Much more will be written on the concept of sending in the next chapter. The Father did not send His Son to behave independently or apart from His will and direction. Missionaries are to be sent as God the Father sent God the Son. Jesus explained this amazing concept in detail in His John 17 prayer. Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). How and why was Jesus sent? According to John 17, Jesus was sent by the Father to glorify God (verse 1), to offer eternal life (2), that people might know God and eternal life (3), to finish the work of God (4), to glorify Jesus (5), to manifest the Father (6), to confirm that everything Jesus offered came from His Father (7), to deliver the Father's words (8), to pray for those who receive God's words and to know that Jesus was sent by God (9). These are just a few directives for the church to know how and why she must send missionaries.

Missionaries are not tools that the local church hires to do the Great Commission. Missionaries are part of the church body. They are sent out of and through a local church to do the global mission of the church (Acts 13:3). As Jesus was sent from the Father to accomplish and do His perfect will, so missionaries are sent by and through the local church to do the mission and mandate of the church.

The Church Cannot Fail.

Randy Alcorn's book, *God's Promise of Happiness*, provides secular and scriptural evidence that indicates that “those who give generously and serve others are happy people.”⁴² The exciting thing about serving and giving through the

⁴² Randy Alcorn, *God's Promise of Happiness* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers Inc., 2015), 13.

local church is that the servant giver is investing in a guaranteed profitable and winning investment! Jesus said that He would build His church and that the church's advancement and victory are sure (Matthew 16:18). The stock market and all earthly investments come with uncertainty and risks. Investments in the church and her mission are sure investments with victorious results.

When believers understand the eternal purpose of God and the mission of the church, their service and generosity will lead to great joy. Joy is the natural fruit to those who make guaranteed investments. The divinely-driven mission of the church will be victorious. Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:57-58).

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL MANDATE OF PARTNERSHIP

Some churches equate missions-mindedness with financially supporting many missionaries.¹ While it is true that missions-minded people *will* support missionaries financially, sending or genuinely partnering with missionaries requires much more than finances. I believe that it would be possible for a local church to financially support 100 missionaries without a genuine partnership with any of them. Sending missionaries requires partnership. God did not command His church to *support* missionaries. He commanded us to *send* missionaries.

To be clear, I am intentionally making a distinction between the biblical word “send” (also described in this book as partnership) and the popular, inadequate word “support.” Every missionary should have just *one* home-sending church from which they are called, ordained, and to which they are directly accountable. I am attempting here to encourage churches to realize the significance of the biblical word partnership. A much more detailed explanation and definition of partnership (from the Greek word *propempō*) will be provided later in this chapter under the heading “Missionaries Need Local Church Partners.” Paul had just one home-sending church, but he had many church partners working together to *propempō* him.

¹ See appendix 2, survey for pastors, question 6.

Paul wrote to his prospective partner church in Rome (Romans 15:24),

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? (Romans 10:13-15)

Founder and president of Global Focus, Larry Reesor, has written, “We must move from the ‘support’ paradigm to the ‘partnership’ paradigm. Supporting others financially in order for them to do ministry on your behalf” is unacceptable.² Sending requires partnership, not just support.

Partnership with God

The first essential partnership in missions is the partnership with Christ. I have already demonstrated from Scripture that local churches must send missionaries. This supernatural mission can only be successful when there is an active partnership with God. Remember what Christ taught in Matthew 9:38: “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

We have stated that missions begins with God, but missions can only be *maintained* in partnership with God. Notice the ordination account and sending of the missionary team in Acts 13:1-4:

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted

² Larry Reesor, “A Fresh Perspective on Mobilizing the Church,” Mission Frontiers, January 1, 2000, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/a-fresh-perspective-on-mobilizing-the-church>.

and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Notice verse three states that the local church “sent them.” Notice also that verse four states that they were “sent forth by the Holy Ghost.” Missionaries need partnerships with churches and partnership with God Himself.

Missionaries are Ambassadors for Christ.

An ambassador is someone who is sent from his country to another country to represent the interests, agenda, and message of his home country and, specifically, its head of state. I mention the head of state because even though an ambassador represents a nation, his message and agenda are directly accountable to and mandated by the head of state who appointed him.

The missionary Paul refers to himself as an ambassador of Christ on two occasions (2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:20). In both cases, the sending and the proclamation of Christ's message are emphasized. Consider Ephesians 6:19 and 20: “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” J. Herbert Kane writes,

The King has given orders to His ambassadors. They are to go into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature, and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19). All men everywhere are required to repent and believe the gospel (Acts 17:30). Only by doing so can they be delivered from the dominion of darkness and be transferred to the kingdom of light (Co 1:13). Nothing short of world conquest is the ultimate goal, and the King has given assurance that one day the kingdoms of this world are to become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Re

11:15). There is no ambiguity about the plan, no uncertainty about the outcome. Jesus shall reign.³

Missionaries must daily abide in Christ, for he is the One they represent (John 15:1-8). He is the One who sent them, and it is His Gospel that they are sent to proclaim.

Missionaries Must Partner with Christ.

Not only are missionaries ambassadors of Christ, but they must also partner with the local churches that send them. It is so easy for ministers of the Gospel to walk in the flesh. Doing ministry by the strength of experience or talent is a grave mistake. Jesus describes ministry as a partnership. Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). If a missionary (or any servant of Christ) finds his service to Christ more like a heavy load and drudgery than a joy of soul, then he is probably not in biblical partnership with Christ. Jesus said that ministry is a joy (John 15:11). Jesus said that His “burden is light” when we are yoked together with Him (Matthew 11:30).

Partnership with Missionaries

Not only must missionaries partner with Christ, but there must also be a partnership between local churches and the missionaries they send. Sending is participation in the Great Commission. The Great Commission requires that every believer be *simultaneously* involved in reaching “both” the local harvest field and the foreign mission field (Acts 1:8).⁴ Since people cannot physically be in two places at once, some people do not understand how Christians can be involved in spreading the gospel “both” locally and abroad. There are two practical and irrefutable ways to

³ J. Herbert Kane, *Understanding Christian Missions*, 31.

⁴ See the survey for pastors, question 6.

minister locally and on the other side of the world at the same time. Both ways require partnership.

First, the Bible teaches that prayer is active labor. Paul wrote in Romans 15:30, “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” The Bible teaches that when believers earnestly pray for a missionary and his work, they are fighting and ministering together with that missionary, even if they are thousands of miles away.

Second, in Philippians 4:15-17, Paul writes to one of his faithful partnering churches and teaches them that when they send money to further the Gospel in a foreign land, they are laying up treasure to their heavenly account. Romans 10:15 also teaches that giving is a necessary component of the Great Commission. A widow who has never left the boundaries of her home state can have an active ministry in global missions through her prayers and giving.

I remember visiting a partnering church in Michigan a few years ago. After teaching a senior citizen's Sunday school class, a lady left the class with a huge smile on her face saying, “Thank you for that lesson. I never realized how active I actually am in missions from God's perspective.” This lady may have never traveled beyond her county limits, but the principles above encouraged her to continue to obey Acts 1:8. Every believer is responsible to be filled with the Spirit and to be witnesses of the Gospel, “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). One hundred percent obedience to the Great Commission is God's requirement. Going, giving, and praying are excellent ways of obeying this Great Commission.

We have already stated that God uses local churches to send missionaries. Let us now explore what that means in practical terms. The following practical section may very well be the most helpful part of this entire manual.

Missionaries need local church partners. An important, New Testament word study is appropriate at this juncture. The Greek word *propempō* (προπέμπω) is defined as “to assist someone in making a journey, send on one’s way with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc.”⁵ The word is found eight times in Scripture. In every case, the word is used of a local church *sending* a missionary or a missionary team. *Propempō* means much more than having a service or prayer of dedication the Sunday before the missionary leaves for his field. This word is translated “thou bring forward on their journey,” “conduct him forth,” and “brought on their way.”⁶ The concept includes much more than sending a monthly check. *Propempō* includes the idea of accompanying, partnering, and supporting along the way.

In Acts 15:3, the church in Antioch “brought on their way” (*propempō*) missionaries, Paul and Barnabas, to Jerusalem to defend the Gospel they were preaching among the Gentiles. In Acts 21:5, Luke testified that the church in Tyre “brought us on our way” (*propempō*) to Ptolemais, Caesarea, and beyond. *Propempō* is again used in Romans 15:24. In this amazing case, Paul is writing to the church in Rome. He has never been to this church, but he believes God has called him to minister in Spain. He writes, “Whenever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you.”⁷ Is this not exactly what independent Baptist missionaries do today? They contact

⁵ W. Arndt, F.W. Danker, and W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 873.

⁶ 3 John 1:6; 1 Corinthians 16:11; Acts 15:3

⁷ Since I am only studying practical principles in this section and not arguing history, it is not necessary to prove why I believe Paul was eventually sent to Spain with the church in Rome as one of his partners. However, for a brief convincing article that cites three reliable sources from the second century and two reliable sources from the fourth century, I recommend Otto F. A. Meinardus, “Paul’s Missionary Journey to Spain: Tradition and Folklore,” *The Biblical Archeologist* 41, no. 2 (January 1978): 61-63, accessed April 29, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3209500?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

and share their burden in churches they have never previously known, trusting by faith that some of those churches will *propempō* them to the field to which God has called them. These missionaries intend to go whether that particular church decides to partner with them or not.

In 1 Corinthians 16:6, Paul again trusts that the church in Corinth will *propempō* him to continue his missionary work. In 1 Corinthians 16:11, Paul is writing on behalf of the young fellow missionary Timothy. Today, pastors and notable leaders write recommendations on behalf of missionary appointees. Paul was requesting that the church in Corinth partner with or *propempō* Timothy on his missionary way.

In 2 Corinthians 1:16, Paul tells his partnering church that he is confident they will *propempō* him to Macedonia and later to Judaea. Paul anticipates that the Corinthians will partner with him on these two separate missions trips. Paul's epistle to Titus was not for his eyes only, but for "you all" in Crete (Titus 3:15). In this letter, Paul frankly commands the believers of Crete to *propempō* missionaries Zenas and Apollos "on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them" (Titus 3:13). The final example of *propempō* in the New Testament is found in 3 John 6. Here John assures the "beloved" that hosting and sending (*propempō*) missionaries is good work.

These eight texts uniformly teach that God expects and uses local churches to send or partner with missionaries. These passages also teach that multiple churches can cooperate in partnership with one missionary. Through the given examples of Paul, Timothy, and Apollos, the New Testament teaches that one local church can partner with multiple missionaries and that several local churches can partner with (or *propempō*) the same missionary. This practice is reflected among many independent Baptist churches today. Deputation and cooperation of independent, New Testament churches are *not* modern inventions. These truths are exemplified in the writings of

Luke (Acts), Paul (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Titus), and John (3 John).

Sending involves much more than finances. When Paul told Titus and the believers in Crete to send Apollos' team, he intended that they should support the team with more than money. The verse actually says that they should partner with them in such a diligent way that "nothing be wanting unto them" (Titus 3:13).

In Paul's prayer letter to his partner church in Philippi, the missionary cites at least *seven ways a local church can be involved in partnership* with their missionaries. Partners of missionaries should provide moral support (Philippians 1:3-5), prayer support (Philippians 1:19), reentry support (Philippians 1:21-2:2), communication support (Philippians 2:19), logistical support (Philippians 2:25), financial support (Philippians 4:15-19), and personnel support (Philippians 4:18).⁸

Partners Should Provide Moral Support.

Is it possible for a local church to be *missions*-minded but not *missionary*-minded? The Bible instructs believers to be actively involved in furthering the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth (missions-minded), but there is also an expectation in the term *propempō* that sending churches should accompany, partner, and support their *missionaries* in their foreign efforts (missionary-minded).

The first biblical attribute of a healthy partnership indicated in the epistle to the church in Philippi is the ministry of moral support. Paul wrote, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your

⁸ In his book *Serving as Senders Today*, Neal Pirolo expounds most of these ways churches should partner with and be involved in sending their missionaries (San Diego, CA: Emmaus Road International, 2012). Pirolo's book is highly recommended by this writer to everyone interested or involved in sending missionaries.

fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;" (Philippians 1:3-5). The word *fellowship* includes the ideas of cooperation and joint participation. My childhood pastor used to say that "fellowship is two fellows rowing together in the same ship."⁹ Paul does not give details here, but whatever fellowship the Philippian believers shared with Paul, their moral support was a motivating factor in his continuous joy.

Writing about four key reasons why missionaries quit, Lillian Hunsberger has listed a lack of moral support as the first reason on her list.¹⁰ She writes, "Many missionaries feel alone and even depressed while on the mission field, and that is when Satan can sneak in and get them to question the calling that they were so sure of before going on the field."¹¹

It is a sad mistake when pastors and churches exalt missionaries to a superhuman, super-Christian pedestal.¹² People begin to falsely assume that missionaries are so spiritual that they do not need encouragement or moral support. Some churches are even intimidated to ask how their missionaries are doing.¹³ Please do not assume that your missionaries are above discouragement and depression. Please do not assume that they are doing fine. Seek to know your missionaries as partners and intentionally make efforts to encourage them.

Most leadership evaluations would give Moses high marks, but the weight of ministry was so great at some points that

⁹ Dr. Bill Schroeder, circa 1989.

¹⁰ When referring to a "lack of support," Hunsberger specifically mentions a lack of both "moral" and "financial" support. Lillian Hunsberger, "4 Reasons Missionaries Quit and How BGU's Global Internship Helps Overcome Them," Bethany Global University, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://bethanygu.edu/blog/training/attrition-in-the-missions-field/>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² J. Herbert Kane, *Understanding Christian Missions*, 20-21.

¹³ It is the recommendation of this writer that both missionaries and pastors read the book by Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

Moses prayed that God would kill him and end his affliction (Numbers 11:15). Things were very different for Moses and his ministry, his attitude, and his effectiveness when he had moral supporters like Aaron (Exodus 4:14-16), Joshua, and Hur (Exodus 17:12).

Another missionary who exemplified the importance of moral support was Elijah. God used Elijah to preach the truth, raise the dead, and supernaturally spark a great revival. After miraculously praying down fire and rain from heaven in 1 Kings 18, Elijah ran for his life in chapter 19. While fleeing in fear, the Bible says he left his only moral support and servant in Beer-sheba (1 Kings 19:3). The very next verse says that he went out into the wilderness, sat down under a juniper tree, and “requested for himself that he might die.” How could fantastically successful missionaries like Moses and Elijah get so depressed that they wanted to die? One significant factor is that neither of them had moral supporters when they needed them.

How are your missionaries doing right now? What challenges are they facing in their families and ministries this week? What can you do today to be an encouragement and to help provide moral support to your missionaries today? Some churches shift the responsibility to provide moral support for their missionaries from themselves to mission agencies. Some think that their missionaries are so mature they probably don't need regular moral support. Are your missionaries more spiritual and more mature than Moses and Elijah?

Some churches have not considered this responsibility. When I surveyed independent Baptist pastors across America, I asked them, “How many times each year do you personally correspond with your missionaries?” I received answers like, “seldom,” “not enough,” “hardly ever,” “rarely,” and a couple were honest enough to admit “not at all.” One pastor wrote, “This question made me feel bad . . . I need to do better.” If you and your church support missionaries like the New Testament teaches, then you have the biblical

obligation and privilege to send your missionaries with faithful moral support.

Partners Should Provide Prayer Support.

Revisiting Paul's prayer letter to the church in Philippi, he wrote, "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:19). While there is much to consider in this verse, I want to highlight just two things. First, Paul recognizes that prayer support is an essential component of missionary partnership. Second, the supply and the power of the Holy Spirit are delivered "through your prayer." Spirit-empowered missionaries are dependent on passionate prayer partners.

Although I did not ask specific questions about prayer in my surveys, I did learn a couple of things indirectly through other questions. For example, when I asked, "How many missionaries does your church support?" Some pastors answered with an estimate revealing they were not sure how many missionaries they support. One pastor replied, "More than 100." How can a church effectively partner, fellowship, or pray for missionaries they do not know?

Evangelist Scott Pauley quotes Pastor Clarence Sexton's statement, "Nothing is dynamic until it is specific. Nothing is real until it is personal."¹⁴ Pauley further writes in his own words, "It is time for us to get specific and personal in our prayers."¹⁵ Pauley later writes, "A good prayer list contains more than names; it has definite needs."¹⁶ If "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16), then it is necessary for missionary partners to study, communicate, and know their missionaries to effectively pray for them.

¹⁴ Clarence Sexton, quoted by Scott Pauley in *Revival Praying* (Hickory, NC: Faithworks Media, 2020), 12-13.

¹⁵ Scott Pauley, *Revival Praying*, 13.

¹⁶ Ibid, 39.

During a missions conference some years ago, a pastor told me the story of how he had to revamp the missions program of his church when he first became the senior pastor. At the time of his arrival, the church had about 100 members and supported about 40 missionaries. The missions committee determined that they could continue to support only 10 missionaries. They reluctantly concluded they could no longer maintain the financial support of the others. The pastor told me what he ended up doing to make this difficult decision.

At the next congregational business meeting, the pastor gave every church member a sheet of paper with ten numbered blank lines. He informed the church of the situation and asked them to list the ten missionaries the church supported that they felt the closest to and prayed for the most, corresponded with the most, etc. He told them that those lists would be votes for who the church would keep and determine who the church would drop from the financial support roster.

The results were sad and revealing. The pastor told me that not a single person in the church could recall ten of the forty missionaries their church supported. This included the members of the missions committee. How can a church effectively provide prayer support for missionaries they do not know? The answer is obvious. Supporting churches cannot provide effectual, fervent prayer support for an estimated number of names on a list or for missionaries they barely know. Perhaps this true story is an extreme example, but perhaps it is more common than we care to admit.

Another example that leads me to believe that some churches need to be rekindled in their prayer support responsibility became evident to me a few years ago when I began using Mailchimp to disseminate our bi-monthly prayer letters. During our deputation ministry, we offered an email prayer letter signup sheet on our display table. We have done the same thing each furlough and have added each personal request to our address list. A few years ago, I

shifted our address list to the Mailchimp automation platform that sends our prayer letter to all 997 recipients with the click of one button. Mailchimp is a phenomenal improvement over the previous email services I used. There was just one huge disappointment with all of its advantages. Mailchimp allowed us to know who was opening our updates.

Because every single address was given to us personally, they were almost entirely accurate and delivered to the inbox of the appropriate email address. This was positive news. The discouraging feature of the Mailchimp report was to learn that more than half of our prayer letters are never opened.¹⁷ The emails were arriving in “inboxes” rather than “spam folders,” but they were still not being opened. Here I was thinking that almost a thousand people were praying for us every time I sent out an update. In reality, the majority of our updates and prayer requests were not even being read.

The lack of prayer among evangelical Christians is not limited to the sphere of missions alone. It is a general, universal problem. The Evangelical Alliance surveyed more than 17,000 evangelical Christians. The results indicated that less than one-third of evangelical Christians surveyed “set aside a substantial period of time each day to pray.”¹⁸ Is it any wonder that missionaries have a prayer support problem when the majority of evangelical Christians spend little to no time in prayer each day? (Much prayer, much power. Little prayer, little power. No prayer, no power.)

By the way, the partnership of prayer works both ways. According to Philippians 1:4, Paul joyfully prayed for his supporting church in Philippi. Missionaries have the joyful responsibility to pray for their partners also. Every Sunday

¹⁷ This assertion is based on the average open rate of the six updates I sent out last year (43%, 46%, 43%, 46%, 47%, 43% = a 45% average open rate).

¹⁸ Evangelical Alliance, “21st Century Evangelicals,” UK Data Archive, accessed April 29, 2021, http://doc.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doc/7786/mrdoc/pdf/7786_12_time_for_discipleship_report.pdf.

morning I remove my Sunday prayer list from my Bible cover. On that list is the name of every single partner we have. I pray for every supporting church and its pastor by name. If that pastor or someone in that church has communicated a request to me, it is brought before the throne of grace during that Sunday morning prayer time. Partners support each other in prayer.

On an October day in 1792, a small group of Baptist ministers met in the home of Pastor Andrew Fuller. As these ministers considered their responsibility to take the Gospel to India, John Ryland recorded the following testimony of Andrew Fuller.

Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men, who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine, which had never before been explored, [and] we had no one to guide us; and while we were thus deliberating, Carey, as it were, said “Well, I will go down, if you will hold the rope.” But before he went down . . . he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us, at the mouth of the pit, to this effect—that “while we lived, we should never let go of the rope.”¹⁹

It would be unthinkable for a miner to hand his partner a rope and expect him to lower himself into an unknown pit without holding or securing his rope for him. We would all agree that providing a rope without holding the rope for your partner would be immoral. When missionaries take the plunge into the “deep mine” of foreign missions, they do so only with the promise and the life-or-death expectation that their partnering churches will hold their rope with fervent and faithful prayers. In the realm of missions, it is just as immoral for churches to provide financial support (the rope) to send missionaries to the foreign field while neglecting to *hold* that rope with their earnest, knowledgeable, personal prayers.

¹⁹ Peter Morden, *Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Revival of Eighteenth Century Particular Baptist Life*, Studies in Baptist History and Thought 8 (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 136.

Partners Should Provide Reentry Support.

The importance of reentry support is perhaps the most underestimated and least talked about aspect of sending. I am not talking about airfare. I am not just talking about helping a missionary find a house or a vehicle when they return for a furlough, though these are truly important logistical needs.²⁰ I am primarily referring to the spiritual, mental, and emotional needs of missionaries returning after a stressful term on the field. Missionaries return to their country of birth to learn that it is no longer home. They may experience reverse culture shock in their sending nation. Some missionaries return with symptoms of what the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) calls Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).²¹

Many missionaries return to their sending country broken or ill-prepared for their reentry. In 2007, Frauke Schaefer of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University Medical Center led a study of missionaries serving in West Africa. The team learned that 70 percent of the missionaries had experienced three or more severe traumatic events in the past year.²²

²⁰ "Where will we live?" and "What will we drive?" are two of the biggest logistical questions missionaries ask themselves before they return for a furlough. Many missionaries today opt for shorter terms and shorter furloughs. For example, because of the frequent and brutal nature of malaria in our region of service, our mission board has strongly suggested that missionaries in West Africa take a furlough every two years. Finding a house to rent in the U.S. for just six months is very difficult (not to mention the cost of renting while still paying rent those months for the house on the field). This is where a fervent logistical supporter can be a big help. Mission houses are a great help for this concern and ministries like Baptist Missionary Transport Ministry (www.bmtm.org) and Righteous Rides (www.righteousrides.org) are ministries that can help missionaries rent a vehicle for a matter of months during a furlough.

²¹ Matthew J. Friedman, "PTSD History and Overview," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accessed April 29, 2021, https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/essentials/history_ptsd.asp.

²² Frauke Schaefer, "Traumatic Events and Posttraumatic Stress in Cross-Cultural Mission Assignments," U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, August 20, 2007, <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/traumaticstress.html>.

Not all people who experience trauma develop long-term effects. However, Cynthia B. Eriksson of Fuller Theological Seminary Graduate School of Psychology wrote her dissertation on "Trauma Exposure and PTSD Symptoms in International Relief and Development Personnel." After surveying recently returned staff from five international relief and development agencies, Eriksson reported that approximately 30 percent of foreign aid workers (like missionaries) return to the States with "significant symptoms of PTSD."²³ Thirty percent is a huge portion.

In comparison, a mental health study of more than six thousand returning soldiers and marines who participated in "major ground combat" or "hazardous security duty" was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. These doctors found that 15.6 to 17.1 percent of recently returned veterans from Iraq "met the screening criteria for major depression, generalized anxiety, or PTSD." The same was true for 11.2 percent of those returning from deployment in Afghanistan.²⁴

According to these three studies, missionaries serving in West Africa and international aid works returning from overseas service are statistically more likely to come home with PTSD than soldiers and marines returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Please understand that I am *not* trying to minimize or belittle the need of our returning veterans by sharing these figures. They need reentry support also! I am simply trying

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17721967.

²³ Cynthia B. Eriksson, Hendrika Vande Kemp, Richard Gorsuch, Stephen Hoke, David W. Foy, "Trauma Exposure and PTSD Symptoms in International Relief and Development Personnel," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 14, no. 1 (January 2001): 205-212, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1007804119319>.

²⁴ Charles W. Hoge, Carl A. Castro, Stephen C. Messer, Dennis McGurk, Dave I. Cotting, and Robert L. Koffman, "Combat Duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mental Health Problems, and Barriers to Care," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 351, (July 1, 2004): 13-22, <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa040603>.

to point out the often-overlooked need of our returning missionaries. Do you have policies and resources in place to evaluate and minister to your returning missionaries? Thankfully, there are some local churches, missions agencies, and ministries stepping up to equip local churches to minister to these wounded warriors of the Lord.²⁵

On October 30, 2018, I experienced the most traumatic episode of my life. My coworker, Charles Wesco, was shot and martyred beside me in my car.²⁶ In that same year, I was thrown from a motorcycle and struck by a taxi; I was inches from being run over and killed. Earlier in the same year, my 12-year-old daughter and I were driving home from outreach in town when we, unwittingly, came upon a confrontation between the military and rebel insurgents. The military fired several warning rounds within yards of our vehicle.

Every member of my family needed the Physician and Balm of Gilead by the time we were evacuated and returned to the United States (Jeremiah 8:22). I thank God for my pastor (who has experienced his own life traumas). He ministered to us and made sure our children were receiving the care they needed. I thank God for our field administrator, who was there at the airport when we landed. He allowed us to debrief and ministered to us in our broken condition in those first few critical days back in the States. He also followed up over the weeks and months following our reentry to check on our recovery. I thank God for family and friends who encouraged us in countless ways. I have since learned that our reentry support experience is not typical. I have learned that many independent Baptist missions agencies and sending

²⁵ A resource to consider for helping the reentry of missionary kids (MKs) is Interaction International directed by Michael Pollock (www.interactionintl.org).

²⁶ Charles' wife Stephanie was also in the vehicle when we were attacked. She describes the experience autobiographically in her book. Stephanie Wesco, *To Die Is Gain: Finding Abundant Life In Death* (U.S.A.: independently published, 2020).

churches do not have reentry ministries in place. Many sending churches are not even aware of the needs or statistics mentioned above.

I want to emphasize, at this point, that this world is not improving. My personal experiences and the statistics of hundreds of others above should not be written off as extreme or unconnected to churches and their missionaries around the world. Persecution, terrorism, and violence are on the rise around the world. Pastors and mission boards would be wise to implement crisis counseling and reentry protocols immediately, if they have not already done so. The Invictus Foundation, dedicated to healing the invisible wounds of war, has a motto that sending churches should take as a personal responsibility. Invictus asserts, "If we send them, we must mend them."²⁷

On top of ministering to missionaries with invisible wounds, reentry support should also be provided for all others returning after years on the mission field. Returning missionaries will face many changes. People have changed and have moved on with their lives. Sometimes, people, who the missionary considered to be best friends, have advanced in their careers to the place that they no longer have time or common interests anymore. Some family members may have passed away during the missionary's overseas term. Churches and mission boards can also change their doctrinal and associational positions, making the return difficult for missionaries. All of these factors and more contribute to what the U.S. State Department calls "reverse culture shock."²⁸

Besides facing many unexpected changes, missionaries face extra stress around the time of reentry. Some pastors and

²⁷ Peter J Whalen, "The Invictus Foundation is Proud to Announce Dr. Bridget Cantrell as its Chief Clinical Officer," Cision PR Newswire, August 15, 2018, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-invictus-foundation-is-proud-to-announce-dr-bridget-cantrell-as-its-chief-clinical-officer-300697051.html>.

²⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Reverse Culture Shock," accessed April 29, 2021, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c56075.htm>.

churches have the false notion that furlough means vacation. One surveyed pastor wrote, "I wish I could take a year-long vacation every four years like missionaries." This view of furlough reveals a huge misunderstanding about the ministry of furlough and the stress that accompanies it.

Months before a missionary returns to his country of origin for furlough, he must begin contacting pastors and scheduling meetings. All this correspondence is on top of his normal preaching, evangelism, discipleship, and Bible institute training. The missionary must also begin arranging and preparing national or missionary leadership for his absence. He must prepare all the travel arrangements, exit visas, and arrival logistics. Where will his family live? What will they drive? Traveling with children, home schooling, jetlag, changes in culture, changes in driving, changes in climate, etc., are all stress-producing factors that affect even the most experienced missionary. On one occasion, I left the Sub-Saharan field of Africa and arrived in Wisconsin the next day to discover that the local temperature was 100 degrees colder than the previous day when I boarded the plane.

Once the missionaries arrive in their sending country, their concern for the believers and churches they left on their field of ministry weighs heavily on their hearts and often requires many calls (sometimes in the middle of the night because of time difference) to iron out leadership and transition details. In 2 Corinthians 11:28, Paul describes the internal stress of caring for his planted churches as a "daily" burden on his heart. He wrote, "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Returning missionaries will not only face changes and stress, but other issues include a perceived or actual lack of interest by others, loneliness, financial stress, and a temptation to neglect their walk with the Lord. Much could be written about each of these issues. The important thing is that sending churches are aware of the issues and that

they have a policy in place to evaluate and minister to their missionaries when necessary.

Partners Should Provide Communication Support.

In Philippians 2:19, Paul wrote, “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.” It was very important to the missionary Paul to know how his supporting churches were doing. I am very thankful for the supporting churches we have who regularly send us updates of what is happening in their local church. These updates are very much like prayer letters from church partners to their missionaries. Several churches send us cards on our birthdays and at Christmas. This kind of consistent communication is “good comfort” to missionaries.

Not only must sending churches communicate with their missionaries, but missionaries must communicate with and update their sending churches. This parameter is essential. There is no scriptural account of Paul writing an epistle to his sending church in Antioch, but the New Testament epistles are preserved communications between Paul and many of his supporting churches. When considering Paul's sending church, the Bible does give instructive principles to follow.

Upon the completion of their first term (often called the first missionary journey), Paul's team returned to their sending church to “rehearse all that God had done with them” (Acts 14:27). A missionary's time in his passport country is often called “furlough” today. Not only did Paul and his team members communicate and report to the church, but the Bible goes on to reveal that “they abode long time” with the disciples in Antioch (Acts 14:28). This truth is significant. Communication and strong partnerships take a “long time” to develop.

A sending model that does not permit a significant amount of time for churches and their missionaries to get to know each other well and to strengthen the partnership between them is not a model patterned after Scripture. Paul's second furlough is similarly described in Acts 18:22-23. Luke writes, "[Paul] went down to Antioch. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples." Communication, fellowship, and genuine partnerships take time.

During discussions about missionary communication and updating, it has been debated whether or not missionaries should communicate their needs and plans to others. There is no doubt or question about Paul's parameters. The New Testament seems to clearly demonstrate that missionaries should communicate their plans and needs to their supporting churches. Honest communication is what friends and partners do. Paul told the church in Rome that he planned to take the Gospel to Spain. He did not hesitate; he simply told them that he trusted them to send him (Romans 15:24, 28). In 1 Corinthians, Paul tells the Corinthians that he needs a place to spend the winter and that their church should host him and provide for him (and later Timothy) to continue on his journey (1 Corinthians 16:6, 11).²⁹ Communication between missionaries and their sending churches is essential. Updating those churches

²⁹ Other examples of Paul boldly telling his plans and expecting supporting churches to provide for those needs include 2 Corinthians 1:16 and Titus 3:13.

with specific needs is not a demonstration of a lack of faith but rather a biblical missionary parameter.³⁰

Partners Should Provide Logistical Support.

Further examination of the inspired prayer letter called Philippians leads to the introduction of an important short-term missionary named Epaphroditus. I call him, “Mr. Logistics.” The Bible says that Epaphroditus brought a care package of “things” from Philippi to Paul (Philippians 4:18). The Bible does not tell us what was in the parcel, but it does refer to plural things, it is described as a sacrificial gift, and resulted in Paul testifying, “I have all, and abound: I am full.” The nineteenth-century theologian and scholar Adam Clarke surmised that this care package was “probably a supply of clothes and such like necessities, as well as of money.”³¹

Epaphroditus did not just deliver the cargo and then go home. The Bible indicates that he continued with Paul doing “work” and “service.” Epaphroditus is one of the most underrated missionaries and servants of the Lord in the Bible. Notice his incredible résumé. Paul describes him as,

³⁰ In his book *10 People Every Christian Should Know*, Warren W. Wiersbe makes an interesting observation about some different philosophies of raising missionary funds by faith. Wiersbe writes, “There is little question that Moody’s ministry in England assisted the progress of foreign missionaries in a tremendous way, and the China Inland Mission profited from this. Moody and Taylor, of course, would disagree on the matter of financing the Lord’s work. Both of them believed in prayer and trusting God, but Taylor refrained from asking anybody for support. ‘When our work becomes a begging work, it dies,’ said Taylor. Moody on the other hand, was bold in asking Christians for financial support and raising huge sums for Christian enterprises both in the United States and Great Britain. While he greatly admired men like Hudson Taylor and George Müller, Moody felt that his own ministries operated by faith just as much as did theirs. He also felt that sincere as they were, their emphasis on ‘making no appeals’ was in itself an appeal.” (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 51-52.

³¹ Adam Clarke, *A Commentary and Critical Notes by Adam Clarke*, vol. 2, The Epistles and Revelation (New York: Philips and Hunt, 1884), 284.

...my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger [*apóstolon*], and he that ministered to my wants ... hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me. (Philippians 2:25-30)

Epaphroditus is never described as a great preacher or even an eloquent soul winner. Epaphroditus is rather called a laborer, minister, and servant. He was so proficient in his service to Paul, that while Mr. Logistics was on the job, Paul could summarily write that “he ministered to my wants” (Philippians 2:25). If Paul had a logistical need, he could turn his request over to Epaphroditus and be sure that the “want” would be supplied. What a testimony!

Missionaries need more Mr. and Ms. Logistics today at home and on the field. There are many things that missionaries cannot do in their own effort and time, but things that must be accomplished if the Gospel is to be furthered around the world. For example, missionaries typically have scores of support checks coming in on a monthly basis. Most missionaries do not worry about the logistical task of processing, depositing, forwarding the money, and sending receipts because most missionaries have a mission agency or a secretary in their home church who takes care of this critical, time-consuming, logistical need. Do any of your missionaries spend hours or days each month taking care of financial logistics? Is this a logistical “want” that you could help supply for your missionaries? Figuring out taxes, not only at home but also in the country of service, often requires a logistical person willing to invest much time in research and file processing on behalf of missionaries.

Who will take care of the missionary’s aging parents? We all know missionaries who have resigned and left the field to care for ailing parents. This decision sounds like a noble cause, but what if there were local volunteers willing to take care of these parents, enabling called-and-equipped missionaries to remain on the field?

For more than ten years, my father has battled Parkinson's Disease. My parents are both in their 70s, and the daily challenges are sometimes more than they can handle on their own. I thank God for a local, supporting church that cares for many of the logistical needs my parents have. I thank God for Christian neighbors who care for my parents as their own family. I have admitted on several occasions that these dear volunteers enable me and my family to remain serving the Lord in Africa. They may not consider themselves missionaries (sent ones), but without a doubt, they are missionary senders through their logistical partnership with us.

Another huge logistical burden is the regular packing and shipping of material goods. Many missionaries in the majority world are unable to purchase personal products and ministry tools on their field. Such items must be packed and shipped (or delivered) by a modern-day Epaphroditus regularly. We know that when Paul's team left Philippi, they traveled to Thessalonica to begin their next church planting ministry (Acts 17). In Philippians 4:16, Paul reflects that the church in Philippi "sent once and again unto my necessity." This ministry of collecting, packing, and delivering necessary items to their missionary was an important aspect of this church's partnership ministry.³²

A dependable volunteer willing to partner with a missionary in this unsung logistical ministry would be a great asset to the cause of missions. Epaphroditus may not receive much recognition in modern Bible studies or Christian circles today, but all missionaries from Paul to this day are eternally grateful for the "fellow soldiers" who are willing to

³² Before a church ever sends anything to a missionary overseas, that church should confirm the shipping details and contents with the missionary (or his sending church or mission board director if the package is intended to be a surprise). Some countries demand ridiculous customs fees and other shipping stipulations that could make shipping some of the suggestions in this section prohibitive.

invest their lives in the logistical ministry of sending missionaries.

Partners Should Provide Financial Support.

Most missionaries do not like to talk about finances. Paul's inspired prayer letter to his partner church in Philippi is very instructive about his philosophy of financial support. His discussion about money was not an emphasis on his needs, but an emphasis on the reward the givers would receive as a result of their investment (Philippians 4:15). Both missionaries and supporting churches need to get a hold of this truth and emphasize it as Paul did.

Since the beginning of deputation, I have tried to maintain the investment emphasis rather than the "we need support" emphasis. My deputation practice was to mail a packet of information to a prospective church. I included a letter of introduction, reference letters from my pastor and mission board, a prayer card, and a gospel tract I had written and published.³³ This packet introduced who I was, where I was going, what I was planning to do, and the Gospel I was going to preach.³⁴ About a week after I mailed the packet, I

³³ Today missionaries can direct prospective partners to their website or online video presentations. YouTube did not exist and personal websites were almost unheard of when we did our pre-field ministry.

³⁴ I have noted earlier in this book that I believe the letter to the Romans was Paul's deputation packet to this prospective supporting church. The epistle to the Romans introduces Paul, the missionary ("apostle" = sent one) (Romans 1:1-7). It includes references to his ministry experience (Romans 15:16-22). Paul did not include a DVD presentation or prayer card, but he did include chapter sixteen, which is full of testimonies and witnesses of those who could attest to God's work through Paul's ministry team. Romans is heavy in doctrine, and Paul's soteriology is clearly outlined. The Romans would know for sure what kind of Gospel he would be preaching (That is the same reason I included our published gospel tract in our deputation packet). Finally, Paul made his direction and mission field clear. Paul was planning to take the Gospel to Spain, and his desire and expectation of support by the church in Rome was obvious when he wrote: "I trust . . . to be brought on my way thitherward by you . . . into Spain" (Romans 15:24-28).

would call the pastor of the church and ask if he had received my packet and had had time to look through it. If he said yes, I asked if he would like to schedule a meeting to present our work to his church. I never had to ask for money or support. The pastor knew what we were doing and where we wanted to serve. The question was not, “Do you want to support us?” The question in my mind was whether or not he wanted in on the ground floor of investing in God’s work in Cameroon.

Even today, when I am invited to a missions conference or a prospective church, I try not to think about financial support. I pray that God will use our family to be a blessing and to challenge this church about God’s global program called missions.

After more than twenty years in missions, some pastors still ask me if we need support. I view this as a rhetorical question. Of course, all missionaries (and all churches and ministries for that matter) could use more support. I much prefer it when a pastor sees what God is doing in Cameroon and decides, “I don’t care if your support level is at 50 percent or 100 percent, we want to invest and participate in what God is doing on your field. Our church has voted to begin supporting you next month.” None of the last three churches who voted to become our financial supporters asked me what our support level was. They simply saw God working in Cameroon and wanted to invest and partner with us there in God’s work. This is the testimony of a pastor who sees giving to missions the way Paul explained it in Philippians 4:15.

Sending missionaries is expensive; there is no way around this reality. According to the independent Baptist missionary agencies I surveyed, the average independent Baptist missionary family requires \$6,209.01 per month of support.³⁵ This amount includes both *personal* and *ministry* expenses. This figure is not a monthly salary. Money may be an uncomfortable subject for pastors and missionaries

³⁵ See appendix 2, the survey for missions agencies, question 2.

to discuss, but financial support is an essential part of sending missionaries.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? (Romans 10:13-15)

Partners Should Provide Personnel Support.

The final support responsibility I want to address for those who send missionaries is personnel support—the actual sending of people to support the missionary on the field. Earlier in this project, I explained the essential component of people in fulfilling the Great Commission. I must reiterate that missions in the New Testament was always done by a *team* of people.

The late missionary statesman, Dr. David Cummins, had a profound impact on my life as a young missionary during our pre-field ministry. He was the keynote speaker for several missions conferences we attended. I heard him say on multiple occasions that “Everywhere Paul ministered with a team of coworkers, a church was established. Only in Athens, where Paul preached and ministered alone, do we find no New Testament record of a church being established.”

Even short-term missionaries can play a vital role in supporting and encouraging missions and missionaries. Remember Epaphroditus? He not only delivered the care package and financial support from the church in Philippi, but he also stayed on the field for some time, at great danger to his health and life, to provide personnel support for Paul’s missionary team (Philippians 2:30). I thank God for the short term missionary groups who have sacrificed to

support and participate in God's work on the mission field.³⁶

I thank God for my pastor and his wife, who visited us and participated in discipling the men in the Bible institute and the women in a ladies' conference on the field. I thank God for a deacon and his wife from our sending church, who have visited us all five of our terms in Africa. This brother has become a mentor, an accountability partner, and a great encouragement to my family and me.

I believe every pastor should try to visit each of their missionary partners on the field. According to my surveys, the average independent Baptist pastor has visited just two of his supported missionaries.³⁷ Almost one-third of independent Baptist pastors have never visited one of their missionaries on their field.³⁸ This reality must be disappointing to many missionaries craving fellowship, partnership, and personnel support on the field. Let me add that some pastors have visited several of their missionaries. It seems that once a pastor sees how valuable their short-term trips can be, they begin to make a habit of it. It would be well worth the investment of local churches to cover the travel expenses of their pastor to regularly visit their missionary partners on the field.

Personnel support is a vital responsibility in sending missionaries. I encourage every church member to obey the Great Commission by not only witnessing at home and

³⁶ A word of caution is appropriate at this juncture. Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert have written an excellent book called *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013). I recommend that every missionary read this book in its entirety, and that every pastor or leader planning a short-term missions trip read and digest chapter seven. The title of chapter seven is "Doing Short-Term Missions without Doing Long-Term Harm." There is a real danger of short-term missionary teams doing more harm than good, especially larger groups. Short-term missionaries (and long-term missionaries) and groups should be well aware of these dangers and make sure their philosophies and plans produce not only short-term, but long-term benefits as well.

³⁷ See appendix 2, the survey for pastors, question 16.

³⁸ See appendix 2, the survey for pastors, question 16.

sending missionaries abroad, but I recommend that all who are able, take a short-term or long-term trip to a foreign field.

Missionaries are deputies of the local church.

Have you ever wondered why missionaries on deputation are often referred to as “missionary deputies?” Former deputation director of Baptist World Mission Ernest Pickering wrote, “A ‘deputy’ is one appointed to represent another person or group. Newly-appointed missionaries travel across the country, presenting the challenge of their field and seeking churches who will ‘deputize’ them or send them as their representatives to the field.”³⁹ Therefore, *deputation* is “the act of appointing a person or persons to represent or act for another or others.”⁴⁰ Notice, according to the definition, deputation is the act done by the one deputizing, not the deputy. Deputizing is done by local churches, not by missionaries. Let me be clear, a deputy does not *replace*; he *represents* the one or ones who deputized him to do the work. A missionary is not a distinct entity from his sending church, nor does a sending church pay the missionary to accomplish her Great Commission responsibility as her substitute.

Missionaries are deputies of the churches who send and partner with them. Missiologist Tom Julien has written, “In the church of Antioch, missions *grew out of* the local church, rather than being *graft onto* it.”⁴¹ The Great Commission demands, “Go ye into all the world” (Mark 16:15). Christ explained that the Holy Spirit would enable His church to be witnesses of Him “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). All local churches have been given the responsibility to reach the entire world. Christ’s strategy

³⁹ Baptist World Mission, *Missionary Manual*, (Decatur, AL: Baptist World Mission, 2017), 154.

⁴⁰ “Deputation,” Dictionary.com, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/deputation>.

⁴¹ Tom Julien, *Antioch Revisited* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2006), 24.

for reaching the world was not a geographically progressive mandate.

The Great Commission is a concurrent (“both”) or universal mandate. In other words, Christ did not tell his followers to first knock on every door and reach every family in Jerusalem before expanding their outreach efforts to Judaea and then Samaria, and only then further regions. No. The Great Commission is a simultaneous and global commission. Your local church has been given the responsibility to reach her Jerusalem while *at the same time* she should be sending deputies around the world reaching the Judaeas, and the Samarias, and the uttermost parts of the world. The Great Commission is not “Jerusalem first.” The Great Commission is “both in Jerusalem and . . .” The local church has obligations to reach all the world, all the time.

Through the amazing process of deputation, local churches have the opportunity to deputize missionaries, send those missionaries to the uttermost parts of the earth, while obediently fulfilling the Great Commission. What if pastors began looking at deputation as something the church does rather than something missionaries do for them? Tom Julien further writes, “Missions is not what the church does *for* the missionary but what the church does *through* the missionary.”⁴²

Missions is not to be viewed as *a* program of the church; missions is *the* program of the church. When a church grasps this philosophy, they will no longer support missionaries to replace them and their global responsibility; they will deputize and biblically partner with missionaries as a fulfillment of their own Great Commission responsibility. Churches will recognize that every member and ministry of their church is designed to further the Great Commission. Every church member must be involved in the Great Commission! “Deputizing” and sending missionaries, the way the Bible describes sending, is

⁴² Tom Julien, *Antioch Revisited*, 25.

participation and a necessary component of the Great Commission.

Missionaries need a biblical philosophy of deputation and furlough. Somewhere along the line of independent Baptist history, deputation has developed a bad reputation. For example, consider veteran missionary to Puerto Rico, Bill Pfaunmiller's comical description of deputation.

Deputation is an unknown period of time for calling, writing, and visiting an unknown number of pastors you do not know, driving on unfamiliar roads in unbelievable conditions at unearthly hours, staying with people you have not met, and eating foods you do not recognize, in order to convince unfamiliar churches to support a missionary they do not know to go to a field where he has not been, to do a work he has not done in a language he does not know, with funds he does not have.⁴³

More than one pastor has personally told me that they would love to do missionary work, but "I could never do deputation." One missionary (ironically on deputation) told me that "deputation is nothing but an unbiblical, man-centered, man-made, political game." Of the independent Baptist pastors surveyed for this project, more than eleven percent believe that the current deputation paradigm "is a broken system and should be replaced." Almost two percent more believe that "deputation is unbiblical and should not be done."⁴⁴ Is deputation biblical? Is the independent Baptist deputation system broken? Should it be abandoned for something else?

Deputation is biblical. The independent Baptist deputation system is neither broken nor should it be abandoned for something new or manmade. For more than a century, the current American form of deputation has been used to successfully send tens of thousands of missionaries around

⁴³ Bill Pfaunmiller, *Great Is Thy Faithfulness: Deputation Memories of Bill & Teresa Pfaunmiller* (Self-published, 2002), 5.

⁴⁴ See appendix 2, survey for pastors, question 12.

the world.⁴⁵ A broken system could not do this. I am *not* suggesting that the current independent Baptist method or ministry of deputation be abandoned or discarded. This entire project is an attempt *to improve the current system*. What I am trying to say is that to make the difficult decisions and to invest what needs to be invested in improving the current deputation paradigm, pastors and churches must be convinced that deputation is biblical.

In order for missionaries to endure the two- or three-year ministry of deputation with joy and power, they must be convinced that the deputation ministry is biblical. To emphasize the fact that deputizing is done by the local church (not by the missionary), and to emphasize the fact that deputation is ministry (not primarily a fundraising necessary evil), it may be helpful to more accurately refer to deputation as the missionary's "pre-field ministry."

Consider the following six biblical principles from the ministry and deputation process of the New Testament missionary Paul. You will notice that these six biblical principles are and should continue to be used in pre-field ministry today. 1) Paul was commissioned and sent by one specific home church. 2) Paul was deputized by multiple local churches.⁴⁶ 3) Paul took the initiative to contact churches about deputizing missionaries. 4) Paul expected churches to deputize and send him. 5) Paul recruited missionaries during his visits to established churches. 6) Paul updated and reported to the churches who deputized him.

1) Paul was commissioned and sent by one specific home church.

⁴⁵ David L. Cummins, "An Ideal in Missions," *World Witness* (Fall 2001): 1.

⁴⁶ Remember Pickering's definition above. "A 'deputy' is one appointed to represent another person or group. Newly-appointed missionaries travel across the country, presenting the challenge of their field and seeking churches who will 'deputize' them or send them as their representatives to the field."

The local church process of sending missionaries is recounted in Acts 13:2-4.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

As we are about to see, Paul had many supporting churches who chose to deputize him and to partner with him and his team as their missionaries. However, Paul had only one home church from which God called him, sent him, and to which Paul was directly accountable (Acts 14:26-28).

Paul's first furlough update to his home church is recounted in Acts 14:26-28.

And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

After Paul "continued in Antioch" and "tarried there a space" for his first furlough (Acts 15:33, 35), Paul was once again sent out by his home church in Antioch for his second term of overseas ministry (Acts 15:40).

According to the Scriptural example of Paul, missionaries may have partnerships with multiple local churches. Missionaries may be deputized by many churches, but they are primarily accountable to one home/sending church. That is the biblical pattern.

2) Paul was deputized by multiple local churches.

One of the biggest arguments I hear when I say deputation is biblical and supported by Scripture is that “Paul did not travel around visiting churches for several years before going out to do his missionary work.” Of course this is a true statement. Paul did not travel from church to church seeking partners *before* his first term because there were not *yet* many churches in existence capable of supporting missionaries. The key word here is “yet.”

As the Gospel spread and local churches began to multiply, the biblical record demonstrates that these new churches immediately began deputizing (*propempō* or sending and partnering) Paul and other missionaries. Multiple independent churches participating in the sending of missionaries is the biblical pattern from the beginning of New Testament missions. When there were just a couple of New Testament churches, they were both involved in sending missionaries (Jerusalem and Antioch). By the time there were multiple churches stretching across the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, many of these churches deputized Paul and other missionaries to expand their missionary work.⁴⁷

David Canedy, Deputation Director of Baptist World Mission, states, “Effective deputation not only requires a dedicated missionary but also equally dedicated churches.”⁴⁸ The Scriptures record that Paul had at least nine supporting churches. 1) The church in Antioch was his home/sending church and supported his team and him from the time he was first called to be a missionary (Acts

⁴⁷ Another common argument against pre-field ministry is the theory that claims Paul and his team did tentmaking work everywhere they went. This opinion will be thoroughly addressed under the “The Tentmaking Model” of Chapter 4.

⁴⁸ David Canedy, “Global Focus Series: Understanding Deputation,” Baptist World Mission, accessed August 30, 2020, <https://www.baptistworldmission.org/global-focus-series/>.

13:3; 15:3).⁴⁹ 2) The church in Ephesus was one of Paul's partnering churches (Acts 20:38).⁵⁰ 3) The church in Tyre was a supporting church (Acts 21:5).⁵¹ 4-6) Scripture reveals that Paul's missionary team established three churches in Macedonia during his second term (in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea). These "churches of Macedonia" were highly praised as generous givers, despite their "deep poverty." Not only did these three churches give to the project offering Paul collected for the saints in Jerusalem, but Paul also testified that they participated in the "fellowship" of his ministry (2 Corinthians 8:1-4).⁵² The Macedonian church in Philippi is specifically commended for sending personal support, care packages, and personnel to Paul on multiple occasions (Philippians 4:14).⁵³ 7) The church in Corinth was a partnering church (1 Corinthians 16:6;⁵⁴ 2 Corinthians 1:16).⁵⁵ It appears that they

⁴⁹ Acts 13:3, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 15:3 "And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren."

⁵⁰ Acts 20:38, "Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they [*propempō*] him unto the ship."

⁵¹ Acts 21:5, "And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way [*propempō*], with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."

⁵² 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

⁵³ Philippians 4:15-18, "Now ye Philippians . . . sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God."

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 16:6, "And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may [*propempō*] me on my journey whithersoever I go."

⁵⁵ 2 Corinthians 1:16, "And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way [*propempō*] toward Judaea."

supported Paul on at least two recorded occasions. 8) I believe we can safely assume that the church in Crete (under Titus' leadership) followed Paul's instructions to support the members of his missionary team (Zenas and Apollos in Titus 3:13).⁵⁶

There may be overlap with the reference in 2 Corinthians 11:8, but in this verse, Paul refers to multiple churches that supported him during his church-planting ministry in Corinth.⁵⁷ These "other churches" may have been some of the eight mentioned above, or they may have included others not cited in the Bible. 9) The supporting church in Rome is especially interesting in our comparison with contemporary deputation. Unlike the eight or more churches listed above, Paul had never been to Rome when he wrote his inspired, introductory letter to them. Those who argue that missionaries should never cold-call churches to try to share their ministry with hopes of developing a sending partnership have not considered Paul's appeal to the believers in Rome (Romans 15:24 and 28).⁵⁸ Paul wrote to this prospective church clearly trusting that they were going to partner with him in the work of missions. Paul plainly stated that he desired them to become a partner with him to further the Gospel to Spain.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Titus 3:13, "[*Propempō*] Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them."

⁵⁷ 2 Corinthians 11:8, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service."

⁵⁸ Romans 15:24, "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. Romans 15:28, "When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain."

⁵⁹ Scholar and long-time professor of New Testament, Douglas J. Moo, wrote in his massive commentary on Romans, "Most scholars, whatever weight they give to other circumstances, think that one of Paul's purposes in writing to the Romans was to prepare for his mission to Spain . . . In fact, Paul alludes to his hopes for such support in 15:24, using the verb *propempō*, which connotes 'help on the way with material support.' We may then view Romans as Paul's 'letter of introduction' to a church that he hopes to add to his list of 'sponsors.'" Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 17.

The modern pattern of multiple independent churches supporting the same or multiple missionaries is neither a modern nor manmade invention. This pattern is solidly based on biblical precedent.

3) Paul took the initiative to contact churches about deputizing himself and others.

Most of the Scriptures examined immediately above support this principle. For example, Paul contacted Titus and the church in Crete to instruct them to support missionaries Zenas and Apollos (Titus 3:12-13). Paul also contacted the church in Rome and expressed his confident faith that they would support and send him as a missionary to Spain (Romans 15:24, 28).

Some Christians believe that calling churches about potential partnership is a lack of faith. No, Paul was a man of faith who was led by the Spirit of God to contact churches about partnering with him to fulfill God's call in his life. Biblically, the ministry of deputation may include the missionary taking the initiative to make contact with potential churches who may be desirous of deputizing him as one of their missionary representatives. I pray that confidence in this principle will encourage missionaries to make those calls and contacts to potential churches by faith. Cold-calling a potential sending church you have never been to is not a modern concept. Missionaries today can confidently do the same because Scripture sets the precedent for deputation.

4) Paul expected churches to deputize and send him.

Paul did not contact churches and beg them for money. Paul did not sit in Antioch and wait for a certain amount of money to build up in his bank account before obeying and going. Paul informed local churches of God's call in his life, and by faith, he expected churches to be used of God as instruments to accomplish the sending part of the Great Commission. Paul explained the practical steps of furthering the Gospel in Romans 10:14-15. He wrote, "How

then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"

While missionaries must maintain the humility that is so necessary to experience the grace of God, missionaries do not need to grovel and beg when it comes to presenting God's call to others. Missionaries should not be shy about telling churches, "God has called me to Africa. Many are dying without knowing the One who can save them. Would you be willing to depute and send me to further the Gospel to the glory of God?"

Missions is God's program for reaching the world, and deputation (sending) is His method for furthering that program. Romans 10:15a "And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" Paul was not shy about expecting churches to sponsor and send him to fulfill God's program, and missionaries on deputation today should not be either (Romans 15: 24, 28; 1 Corinthians 16:6, 11; 2 Corinthians 1:16). "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company" (Romans 15:24). "And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go" (1 Corinthians 16:6). "And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea" (2 Corinthians 1:16).

5) Paul recruited missionaries during his visits to established churches.

Deputation is *not* primarily about money. Deputation is ministry. When God calls someone to do something, He always provides. The famous missionary J. Hudson Taylor wrote, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's

supplies.”⁶⁰ If a missionary truly believes by faith that God is going to send Him in His perfect time, then the missionary can be confident that God will provide sending churches according to His will. In the meantime, what is the missionary supposed to be doing during his pre-field ministry? One of the greatest fruits of the pre-field ministry process (in contrast to denominational or other forms of sending missionaries) is the regular opportunity missionaries have to recruit and to challenge local churches with the Great Commission mandate.

As Paul traveled from one local church to another “confirming the churches” (Acts 15:41), he did not just share an update of the ministry and preach a few words of discipleship. One of his consistent practices was to recruit missionaries wherever he went. Consider the following examples. In Lystra, Paul recruited Timothy, who became a missionary to Ephesus (Acts 16:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:6). In Corinth, Paul recruited the refugees Aquila and Priscilla. This couple traveled with Paul to Syria and Ephesus. Eventually, they traveled as far as Rome in their service to the Lord (Romans 16:3). Apollos was recruited and was mightily used in Corinth. Titus was recruited by Paul, traveled with his missionary team and was eventually sent to Corinth and Crete. The list could continue on and on with names like Gaius and Aristarchus from Macedonia, Secundus from Thessalonica, Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia, etc. Pre-field ministry is biblical, and one of its many beneficial fruits is the recruitment of many more missionaries for the harvest field.

6) Paul updated and reported to the churches who deputized him.

Upon the completion of their first term, Paul's team returned to their sending church in Antioch to “rehearse all

⁶⁰ Howard and Mrs. Taylor, *Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission: The Growth of a Work of God* (London, England: The Religious Tract Society, 1921), 623, Kindle.

that God had done with them” (Acts 14:27).⁶¹ A missionary's time in his sending country is often called “furlough” today. Not only did Paul and his team members communicate and report to the church, but the Bible goes on to reveal that “they abode long time” with the disciples in Antioch (Acts 14:28). This chronology is significant. Communication and strong partnerships take a “long time” to develop. A sending model that does not permit a significant amount of time for churches and their missionaries to get to know each other well and to strengthen the partnership between them is not a biblical model. Paul's second furlough is similarly described in Acts 18:22-23. Luke writes, “[Paul] went down to Antioch. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.” Communication, fellowship, and genuine partnerships take time.

Not only did Paul and his team report to their home/sending church, but they also took time to report to their other church partners (1 Corinthians 16:7). Furlough is not a time for missionaries to sit around doing nothing. Biblically, furlough is a time of ministry designed to update sending churches, to recruit more laborers, and to strengthen the disciples of Christ. Since the average missionary is serving at ninety percent of his budget (see survey for missions agencies, question 5), furlough is usually a time for missionaries to present their work in new churches who prayerfully will consider deputizing them. I often laugh in myself when I hear people talking about furlough being a time of rest and relaxation. No, furlough is a time of ministry and reinforcement. Sometimes I refer to furlough as deputation 2.0.

⁶¹ Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

CHAPTER 3

A BRIEF HISTORY OF METHODS FOR SENDING BAPTIST MISSIONARIES

To provide a theoretical and historical framework for this manual, this section will supply a brief history of methods Baptists have used for sending missionaries. The nomenclature “Baptist Church” has only been in use since the early 1600s. I believed that a brief history of how Baptists have been sending missionaries the past four hundred years may be helpful in understanding and improving the current independent Baptist missionary-sending paradigm.

To understand world conditions prior to the seventeenth century, missionary statesman and Baptist historian David L. Cummins wrote in *A Brief History of Baptist Missions* that

Baptist forebearers were never part of the sacral church ... By the seventh century, the Bishop of Rome had gained complete control, and true believers were hidden for private worship in the caves and valleys of Piedmont, and all across Europe. These experienced great privations and persecutions even unto multitudinous martyrdoms.¹

Most true believers were more concerned with survival than they were with foreign missions under the Roman Catholic Church and under many pagan rulers throughout church history. John Foxe's history of church martyrs, from the time of Christ until the late sixteenth century, is a classic

¹ David Cummins, *A Brief History of Baptist Missions* (Jacksonville, FL: Victory Press, 1998), 5.

record of how true believers have been abused and killed for their convictions and faith in Jesus Christ.² Primary Anabaptists and other Baptist forebearers, who lived during the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were treated no better than their predecessors.³ Anabaptists were rejected and persecuted to death by both Roman Catholics and the Protestants.⁴

Foreign missions really began to develop in the eighteenth century. Baptist missionary William Carey has been called the “father of modern missions.” He was a charter member of the very first Baptist missionary society, and the society’s first foreign missionary to India. The Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Amongst the Heathen was formed on October 2, 1792, in Kettering, England. Intermittent gifts and annual subscriptions financed the society.⁵

Adoniram Judson was a Congregationalist sent from America to be a missionary in India. During the nearly four-month voyage, Judson and his wife became Baptists by conviction through their personal studies of the Scriptures. Shortly after their arrival in Calcutta, the Judsons were biblically baptized by immersion on September 6, 1812, and resigned from the Congregational mission board.⁶ Two months later, fellow American Congregational coworker

² John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1981).

³ I believe that Primary or "Biblical Anabaptists" (as they are called by Earle E. Cairns in *Christianity through the Centuries* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 296.), such as Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, George Blaurock, Michael Sattler, Baltesar Hubmaier, and Menno Simons, were neither Roman Catholics nor Protestants, and should not be confused or lumped together with Chiliastic Anabaptists, Mystical Radicals, or Rationalistic Radicals. Some modern historians have lumped all of these anabaptistic groups together into one bad lump. Such a characterization is inaccurate and unfair.

⁴ Nathan Deatruck, "Baptists and the Protestant Reformation," *The Messenger* by Baptist World Mission (Winter 2018): 1, 3.

⁵ J. H. Evans, ed., *The Baptist Magazine for 1842* (London: Holston and Stoneman, 1842), 35.

⁶ David L. Cummins, *A Brief History*, 24.

Luther Rice also became a Baptist. He too submitted to believer's baptism and was immersed in the waters of India.

Immediately, Judson and Rice found themselves unrecognized and unsupported by any mission agency. Rice was forced to return to America, where he began raising awareness and support for the first Baptist mission board in the United States. Rice and other prominent Baptists believed that a convention should be established for the express purpose of furthering the cause of Baptist missions.

In April of 1814, the General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions was formed in the city of Philadelphia.⁷ The convention met every three years and became known as the Triennial Convention. This convention was the first nationwide, Baptist missions agency established in the United States. Baptists from around the country began sending funds. Approved missionary applicants were immediately appointed and often sailed for their field of service within weeks of their appointment. Cummins emphatically states that "No deputation was necessary. The *Triennial Convention* [sic] served as a clearing house for all Baptist churches, and thus as funds were available, missionaries were instantly sent."⁸

The divisive and wicked issue of slavery not only led to a division of the country, but it also led to the breaking up of the Triennial Convention. On April 29, 1840, the American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention was formed in New York.⁹ On May 8, 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention was

⁷ Thomas Smith and John O. Choules, *The Origin and History of Missions* (Boston: S. Walker, 1832), 408.

⁸ David L. Cummins, *A Brief History*, 29.

⁹ American Baptist Historical Society, "Anti-Slavery Convention Opens Hidden Controversy," American Baptist Historical Society Archives, April 29, 2017, <http://abhsarchives.org/5226-2/>.

formed in Augusta, Georgia, and along with it, the Foreign Mission Board.¹⁰

By the close of the nineteenth century, liberalism had begun to permeate nearly all American and European conventions and missionary societies. The consciences of many Baptists would no longer permit them to support conventions that were sending apostate missionaries around the world.

It was during the closing decades of the nineteenth century that conservative, interdenominational “faith missions” began to emerge.¹¹ At the beginning of the twentieth century, both the newly formed Northern Baptist Convention (1907) and the freshly renamed American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (1910) were infiltrated with liberal leadership.¹² These leaders refused requests by some of their members who suggested that missionaries should be required to sign a doctrinal statement containing the fundamentals of the faith.¹³

The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy of the early twentieth century resulted in the birth of the Fundamental Fellowship in June of 1920 and the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) in 1932.¹⁴ According to Cummins, “The focal point of the entire battle between fundamentalists and the liberals developed over the issue of foreign missions!”¹⁵ Since the 1920s, many independent

¹⁰ Robert A. Baker, “Southern Baptist Beginnings,” Baptist History & Heritage Society, 1979, accessed April 29, 2021, <http://www.baptisthistory.org/baptistorigins/southernbaptistbeginnings.html>.

¹¹ For example, China Inland Mission (1865), Evangelical Alliance Mission (1890), Sudan Interior Mission (1893), and Africa Inland Mission (1895).

¹² The American Baptist Convention was the new name for the original Triennial Convention.

¹³ H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 758-759.

¹⁴ Eventually the Fundamental Fellowship became known as the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International. Most recently it was again renamed as Foundations Baptist Fellowship International (FBFI).

¹⁵ David L. Cummins, *A Brief History*, 44.

Baptist mission boards have emerged.¹⁶ The interdenominational “faith missions” were still functioning by the second half of the century, but they were not Baptist and “almost without exception, the leadership of the so-called ‘faith missions’ had succumbed to the New Evangelical drift as characterized by ecumenical evangelism.”¹⁷

It is difficult to accurately estimate how many local church agencies, Baptist clearinghouses, and independent Baptist mission boards are active today. The number of missionaries these boards are servicing around the world is also hard to calculate. Independent Baptist pastor and author Tom Brennan has estimated the number of independent Baptist missionaries to be in excess of five thousand.¹⁸ Missionary statesmen and President/General Director Emeritus of Baptist International Missions, Inc. (BIMI), Don Sisk, estimates that “today, independent Baptists have approximately ten thousand missionaries preaching the Gospel all over the world.”¹⁹

These new, independent Baptist mission boards require something of the missionaries that the old societies and conventions did not. Independent Baptist missionaries of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries must participate in the biblical ministry of deputation. Cummins writes,

Deputation began of necessity among Baptists when the fundamental-modernistic division took place in the old

¹⁶ GARBC-approved, fundamental, Baptist missions originally included Baptist Mid-Missions (1920), the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (1927), and the Evangelical Baptist Mission (1928). Other independent Baptist mission boards that sprung up in the mid-twentieth century include the Baptist Bible Fellowship International (1950), Baptist International Missions Inc. (1960), the Maranatha Baptist Mission (1961), the World Conservative Baptist Mission—now called Baptist World Mission (1961), the Macedonia World Baptist Mission (1967), and the World Wide New Testament Baptist Mission (1971).

¹⁷ David L. Cummins, *A Brief History*, 67.

¹⁸ Tom Brennan, *Schizophrenic: A Diagnosis of the Independent Baptist Movement* (Chicago: Xulon Press, 2016), 93.

¹⁹ Don Sisk, "History of Missions," Lancaster Baptist Church, January 16, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEucBzFODfw>.

Northern Baptist Convention. No longer did fundamental local churches simply submit regular missionary stipends to be doled out to missionaries appointed by the convention's mission agency. At that juncture, it became necessary for fundamental Baptist missionaries to present their needs to local churches. Wonderfully, when churches became acquainted with missionaries, personalized giving produced added prayer support. A new burden for the cause of missions blossomed within local churches.²⁰

Perhaps nothing has done more to motivate local churches to see their responsibility and to get involved in the Great Commission than the Spirit-empowered ministries of deputation and furlough. Missionaries doing pre-field ministry and furlough have been used by God in a mighty way to recruit more missionary givers, prayers, partners, and goers than just about any other human element or method.

This brief history of sending Baptist missionaries provides a context and explanation for the necessity of pre-field ministry among twenty-first-century independent Baptist missionaries. We have noted earlier that deputation is biblical. We have highlighted six principles of deputation from the ministry of the missionary Paul. We have considered the history of how Baptists have been sending missionaries around the world for the past four centuries. The following chapter of this manual will present and evaluate several sending models that have been used to send missionaries.

²⁰ David L. Cummins, "An Ideal in Missions," *World Witness* (Fall 2001): 2.

CHAPTER 4

AN EXAMINATION OF VARIOUS MISSIONARY SENDING MODELS

The following chapter evaluates the five most popular missionary-sending models. One major, published example promoting each model is presented and then reviewed. Later, an evaluation of each model will be offered. The positives and negatives of each model will then be presented along with an ideal twenty-first century sending model.

A Popular Independent Baptist Model

There are several variations and helpful books available and written by independent Baptist writers to explain the independent Baptist missionary-sending model. I have chosen to use the book coauthored by Austin Gardner and Tony Howeth as a sample representation. Gardner was a missionary in Peru for many years and the founder of Vision Baptist Mission. Howeth was the deputation director of Macedonia World Baptist Missions, Inc., and then became a pastor.

Please notice that the title of this section is “A Popular Independent Baptist Model” rather than “*The Independent Baptist Model*.” Within the circle of those who call themselves independent Baptist, there is obviously a wide spectrum of philosophies and practices. The following depiction of deputation would not be approved of by all independent Baptists. Nevertheless, it is definitely a popular model among many independent Baptists.

The Deputation Manual for Missionaries is possibly the most widely recommended book about pre-field ministry among independent Baptist missionaries preparing to begin or presently involved in pre-field ministry.¹ A five-star rating on Amazon, at the time of this writing, highlights its favorability.² Howeth correctly asserts that deputation is “not about money; it is about ministry.”³ Gardner explains that the book intends to teach missionaries how to find pre-field ministry “a time of great spiritual blessing.”⁴

In the book, *deputation* is defined by J. L. Ewen as “the process of selecting missionaries who will be sent as their ‘substitutes or agents’ to preach the Gospel on the foreign field.”⁵ I appreciate that the responsibility of deputation is placed on the churches who must select and partner with missionaries, but I strongly reject the opinion that missionaries are “substitutes.” As I have stated earlier, missionaries are partners, deputies, and representatives, but they do not substitute or replace the local church’s role in the Great Commission. The missionary is an extension of the local church, not a substitute.

This book is full of scripture quotations and is thoroughly biblical. These men are like coaches who exhort, rebuke, and instruct missionaries in pre-field ministry and how to raise their support in two years or less.⁶ Under the

¹ W. Austin Gardner and Tony Howeth, *The Deputation Manual for Missionaries* (Alpharetta, GA: Our Generation Publishing, 2014).

² There are 34 reviews available on Amazon averaging 5 out of 5 stars. Amazon, “The Deputation Manual for Missionaries,” amazon.com, accessed April 26, 2021, https://smile.amazon.com/Deputation-Manual-Missionaries-Austin-Gardner-ebook/dp/B002RAQL7M/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1518125817&sr=8-2&keywords=deputation+manual+for+missionaries.

³ Gardner and Howeth, *The Deputation Manual*, 328, Kindle.

⁴ Ibid, 57, Kindle.

⁵ Ibid, 82, Kindle. In personal correspondence with Austin Gardner, May 17, 2021, he writes, “I think substitute as I use it is more like deputy as you use it. They both mean I am not going but am sending someone. I believe and preach everywhere that every church should be evangelizing the world.”

⁶ Gardner and Howeth, *The Deputation Manual*, 1386, Kindle.

independent Baptist missionary model, missionaries are called of God and sent out by their local church. Independent Baptist missionaries usually apply to a mission board.⁷ They then go out to share their burden and calling with hundreds of like-minded churches in hopes of developing partners who will join them in fulfilling the Great Commission in their God-called corner of the harvest field.

According to Gardner and Howeth, independent Baptist missionaries who follow their manual should raise “at least \$7,000 to \$10,000 in monthly support over the course of two years of deputation.”⁸ They assert that the average independent Baptist missionary must present his ministry in “between 200 and 300 churches to raise his support.”⁹ To accomplish this goal, Gardner and Howeth insist that a missionary should “spend at least eight to ten hours on the phone each day.”¹⁰ Their deputation formula unfolds like this: “Talk to 1,000 pastors, and you will get into 300 churches. Get into 300 churches, and you will get 100 churches to support you.”¹¹ Following this formula strictly,

⁷ An independent Baptist mission board “is a means of assisting local churches in obeying the great commission . . . recommending applicants to local churches . . . providing training for deputation and missionary service . . . providing the appointee with church contacts . . . managing the finances of the missionary while on the field, and a measure of accountability.” Baptist World Mission, “Why a Missionary Board?” Baptist World Mission, accessed April 29, 2021, <http://www.baptistworldmission.org/why-a-missionary-board/>.

⁸ Gardner and Howeth, *The Deputation Manual*, 70, Kindle. It should be noted that the amount of seven to ten thousand dollars per month referred to in this quote is excessive. According to the independent Baptist missions agencies I surveyed (representing 1,560 missionaries), the average independent Baptist missionary family has a \$6,209 budget. See appendix 2, survey of missions agencies, question 2.

⁹ Gardner and Howeth, *The Deputation Manual*, 759, Kindle. According to the missionaries I surveyed for this book, the average independent Baptist missionary said they visited and presented their calling in about 170 churches during deputation. See appendix 2, survey for missionaries, question 2.

¹⁰ Ibid, 788, Kindle.

¹¹ Ibid, 693, Kindle.

a missionary can expect to be on deputation for about two years and travel over one hundred thousand miles.¹²

The key to successful deputation, according to Gardner and Howeth, is “to be in as many churches as possible.”¹³ They recommend scheduling or dropping into at least thirteen meetings per month. They recommend that missionaries “never” attend their sending church during deputation. Even if the missionary is home and has a break in his schedule, Gardner and Howeth recommend that the missionary family “drop in and visit other churches.”¹⁴ In the same line of emphasis, they also recommend that missionaries try not to get “tied up” in a week-long missions conference.¹⁵ They reason that these conferences should be avoided in order to schedule as many meetings as possible.

The book does mention the importance of a missionary’s spiritual walk. The authors write, “Call on God before you call on any church. You must begin every day of deputation by calling on God first . . . You must maintain a close relationship with the Lord and be right spiritually if you are going to be successful in His service.”¹⁶ Later, missionaries are encouraged to “Pray that God will help you as you share your burden for the field. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you in all you say and do. Read your Bible and allow God to speak to you before you speak to others.”¹⁷ This is great advice.

The deputation formula of Gardner and Howeth is tried and true. The book is full of very practical principles for both missionaries and pastors. Financially, the independent

¹² Ibid, 765, Kindle. Based on the 2019 *per diem* rates provided by the U.S. government (58 cents per mile), the cost of traveling 100,000 miles could be about \$58,000. According to these statistics, independent Baptist missionaries can expect to pay about \$58,000 in travel expenses during their deputation travels before even considering all other deputation expenses including hotels, meals, etc.

¹³ Ibid, 850, Kindle.

¹⁴ Ibid, 1332, Kindle.

¹⁵ Ibid, 850, Kindle.

¹⁶ Gardner and Howeth, *The Deputation Manual*, 278, Kindle.

¹⁷ Ibid, 286, Kindle.

Baptist sending model presented by Gardner and Howeth “works.” With that said, I believe there is an overemphasis on methods and statistics. Having goals and following methods can be practical, but my purpose in writing this book is to study the biblical principles of *partnership* rather than just listing methods that will help one raise his financial support and get to the field as soon as possible.

Gardner and Howeth’s book trains independent Baptist missionaries to get as many supporters as quickly as possible. I believe missionaries should be more concerned with developing ministry *partners* than with being considered a “substitute” of supporting churches. There is little possibility or opportunity for a genuine partnership or long-term friendship to develop with a pastor or his church in one meeting or during a one-hour service. This “drop in” and rush on pattern is a great weakness of this popular independent Baptist sending model.

The Deputation Manual for Missionaries is a very helpful book, and is saturated with biblical principles. Overall, this independent Baptist sending model works, but the deputation aspect is financially inefficient compared to other models.

Adam Crabtree, the executive director of Beacon International Baptist Mission, has studied the deputation expenses of missionaries from three independent Baptist mission agencies. He calculated that “It costs a missionary family \$225,000 to complete 2.5 years of deputation and move to the field.”¹⁸

The independent Baptist model does get missionaries to the field and has done so for more than a century. However, when it comes to biblically *sending* missionaries and developing ministry partnerships, this common independent Baptist model is deficient. In its current form, this model simply does not allow enough time to develop a lasting relationship or partnership.

¹⁸ Adam Crabtree, personal correspondence, December 21, 2018.

The Denominational Board Model

A second sending model to be examined is the denominational board model. The Southern Baptist Convention uses the Cooperative Program to educate and to send their 5,097 domestic and 3,663 overseas missionaries.¹⁹ *One Sacred Effort: The Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists* is a Southern Baptist Convention seminary textbook that helps explain and promote the Cooperative Program to Southern Baptist Convention students and pastors.²⁰

The book begins by clarifying the uniqueness and biblical distinctiveness of Baptists. Authors and convention leaders Chad Owen Brand and David E. Hankins go on to biblically demonstrate that “God has equipped us, has given us the tools and organizational focus that we need to carry out the task of glorifying him through the proclamation of the gospel to the ends of the earth.”²¹ The authors successfully argue that this task can only be accomplished through cooperation and that the New Testament is full of examples of churches and individuals cooperating for the advancement of God's kingdom.

My favorite example was the mention of Paul collecting offerings from many local churches to help the church in Jerusalem survive after the famine and persecution. This biblical example was a one-time, voluntary, emergency, relief effort. Without question, Paul's collection for the saints in Jerusalem was a genuine example of cooperation and Christian unity, but it was not an example of a convention forming to accomplish an annual or perpetual program.

¹⁹ Southern Baptist Convention, "Fast Facts About the SBC," Southern Baptist Convention, accessed April 11, 2020, <http://www.sbc.net/BecomingSouthernBaptist/FastFacts.asp>.

²⁰ Chad Owen Brand and David E. Hankins, *One Sacred Effort: The Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005).

²¹ Brand and Hankins, *One Sacred Effort*, 51.

The New Testament never hints at anything like an organized association or convention of churches cooperating. Brand and Hankins prove that cooperation and unity among believers are biblical, but they fail to demonstrate that a convention is the best implementation of that biblical principle. All of the models studied in this project utilize the biblical principle of cooperation among local churches (resources, personnel, etc.). The Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program is an example of cooperation among believers, but it is not the only model that uses cooperation to send missionaries, nor did the book prove that it was the best model of cooperation. The biblical principles of the autonomy of the local church and the cooperation of believers are *not* mutually exclusive. Likewise, cooperation among local churches does not require the formation of a convention or denomination.

The Cooperative Program is made up of 47,456 cooperating Southern Baptist Churches.²² These churches individually decide what amount or percentage of their church giving will go toward the Cooperative Program. The average church in the Southern Baptist Convention gives about 10 percent of its total giving to the Cooperative Program.²³ These churches send a check each month to their state convention office.²⁴ The state convention then decides what percentage of Cooperative Program giving stays to provide for state convention programs and what percentage will be sent to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. The state conventions use the majority of Cooperative Program funds. The state conventions send about 36 percent of the Cooperative Program funds to the Southern Baptist Convention.²⁵ The book breaks down the Cooperative Program allocations of the Southern Baptist Convention as follows:

²² Southern Baptist Convention, "Fast Facts About the SBC," Southern Baptist Convention, accessed April 11, 2020, <http://www.sbc.net/BecomingSouthernBaptist/FastFacts.asp>.

²³ Brand and Hankins, *One Sacred Effort*, 111.

²⁴ Brand and Hankins, *One Sacred Effort*, 117.

²⁵ Ibid, 112.

For the years since 1997, the SBC portion of the allocation has maintained a uniform percentage distribution among the entities. The International Mission Board allocation is 50 percent, the North American Mission Board allocation is 22.79 percent, the Theological Education allocation (for the six seminaries and the Historical Library and Archives) is 21.64 percent, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Archives is 1.49 percent, the GuideStone Financial Resources (for ministerial relief) allocation is 0.76 percent, and the SBC Operating Budget allocation is 3.32 percent.

Using round numbers, when a typical church member in a Southern Baptist Convention church places one hundred dollars in the Sunday morning offering plate, about ten dollars go to the state convention. The state convention sends three of those dollars to the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention allocates one dollar and eighty cents to the International Mission Board. Therefore, approximately one dollar and eighty cents out of every undesignated one hundred dollars given in the offering of a typical Southern Baptist Church is used to send Southern Baptist missionaries to the foreign mission field. That's less than two percent. An annual Christmas offering covers the biggest percentage of the International Mission Board budget. This offering is called the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. This annual Southern Baptist Convention missions offering covers "about 55 percent" of the International Mission Board's budget.²⁶

The last two chapters of Brand and Hankins' book transparently discuss "Tensions, Trends, and Troubles" of the Cooperative Program, as well as some thoughtful suggestions to improve the Cooperative Program in the twenty-first century. These troubling trends have all proven significant since the publishing of their book. In fact, since its publication, the foreign missionary force of the International Mission Board (the mission board of the

²⁶ Brand and Hankins, *One Sacred Effort*, 141.

Southern Baptist Convention) has gone from “approaching 5,300”²⁷ in 2005 to “3,663” in 2020.²⁸

Some of the benefits for missionaries sent by the Cooperative Program, according to Brand and Hankins, are that “seminarians can finish school and begin their ministries without an undue burden of 'educational' debt,” and that missionaries have a “constant stream of support” from day one.²⁹ They go on to explain, “Year in and year out, the missionaries are supported. They don't have to . . . spend months of their time trying to get commitments.”³⁰ Not having to do deputation or furlough meetings may sound like a dream come true to some independent Baptists missionaries. However, this model allows for almost no development of ministry partnerships and intimate prayer partners.

The denominational board model is worse in the area of partnership than the independent Baptist model presented earlier. In many instances, the thousands of missionaries sent by the Southern Baptist Convention become nothing more than names on a very long prayer list.³¹ Many Southern Baptist church members admit that they have never actually met a foreign missionary in person. This criticism of “indirect giving” is acknowledged by the authors. They write,

Many churches and individuals desire to have immediate connection to the ministry or mission they are funding. Because the ministries supported by the Cooperative Program have grown large and are far-flung geographically, the criticism has come that the churches

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Southern Baptist Convention, “Fast Facts About the SBC,” Southern Baptist Convention, accessed April 11, 2020, <http://www.sbc.net/BecomingSouthernBaptist/FastFacts.asp>.

²⁹ Brand and Hankins, *One Sacred Effort*, 208.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ WMU, “Missionary Prayer Calendar,” accessed November 6, 2019, <http://wmu.com/?q=article/students-challengers-youth-mission/student-resource-team/missionary-prayer-calendar>.

have lost touch with the people who carry out the mission.³²

This criticism is a valid and serious problem with the denominational sending model. In the words of the famous Southern Baptist missionary to China, Lottie Moon, “I pray that no missionary will ever be as lonely as I have been.”³³ Lottie Moon and denominational missionaries around the world never had to do pre-field ministry to raise their support, but they also missed out on the thousands of personal connections and hundreds of friendships developed during the biblical ministries of deputation and furlough.

The recruitment factor is another huge weakness of the denominational board model. We noted earlier that recruitment was a large part of Paul’s ministry from church to church. We observed that the independent Baptist model of deputation and furlough ministries tend to motivate church members to pray more, give more, and send more. The statistics comparing the giving and going of independent Baptists with Southern Baptists is stark. *In round numbers, the Southern Baptist Convention has almost twice as many church members and sends about half as many foreign missionaries as independent Baptists.*³⁴ How can two Baptist models have such a disparity in their missionary ranks? Many factors play a part. However, I

³² Brand and Hankins, *One Sacred Effort*, 172.

³³ Michael Sills, *The Missionary Call: Find Your Place in God's Plan For the World*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2008), 190.

³⁴ There are nearly fifteen million Southern Baptist Convention church members (<http://www.sbc.net/BecomingSouthernBaptist/FastFacts.asp>). There are about eight million independent Baptists in the U.S. according to the Pew Research Center (<https://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/appendix-b-classification-of-protestant-denominations/>). The Southern Baptist Convention is presently supporting 3,663 overseas missionaries (<http://www.sbc.net/BecomingSouthernBaptist/FastFacts.asp>). It is more difficult to calculate the exact number of independent missionaries (there is no IB.net website), but the average number among the experts I quoted above is approximately 7,500 foreign independent Baptist missionaries. Don Sisk of BIMI estimates that there are “approximately 10,000” independent Baptist missionaries serving around the world (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEucBzFODfw>).

believe this vast difference between independent Baptist and Southern Baptist missionary numbers is largely a result of their philosophical differences about pre-field and furlough ministries.

I cannot support the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention because of what the book only briefly addresses as the apprehension of some “conservative” members who “were concerned the entities receiving the funds were not being faithful to historic Baptist theology and principles.”³⁵ The more important question is, “Are *all* of the missionaries and educational institutions receiving funds from the Cooperative Program faithful to *biblical* theology and principles?”

In 2015, the Southern Baptist Convention eliminated the ban on missionaries who speak in tongues, have been divorced, or who have not been biblically baptized.³⁶ More recently, a growing network of conservative Southern Baptists published a press release stating, “A significant number of Southern Baptists are concerned about the apparent emphasis on social justice, Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and the redefining of biblical gender roles” [including the debate about women preachers].³⁷

Many pastors and missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention embrace Calvinism.³⁸ Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, gave a lecture at the 2006 Southern Baptist Convention Pastor's

³⁵ Brand and Hankins, *One Sacred Effort*, 163.

³⁶ Bob Smietana, “International Mission Board Drops Ban on Speaking in Tongues,” *Christianity Today*, May 14, 2015, accessed February 2018, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/may-web-only/imb-ban-speaking-in-tongues-baptism-baptist-missionary.html?share=bqQ3pNgEzJ%2bNdPopMm8yFqoU7In1mksK>.

³⁷ Conservative Baptist Network, “Pastors, laymen launch Conservative Baptist Network Press Release,” February 14, 2020, accessed April 29, 2021, <https://conservativebaptistnetwork.com/press-release/>.

³⁸ John Revell, “Calvinism ~ Southern Baptist Perspectives,” *SBC Life: Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention*, October 2010 issue, accessed February, 12, 2018, <http://www.sbclife.net/Articles/2010/10/sla13>.

Conference entitled, “Why all Southern Baptists Are Calvinists.”³⁹ My intention here is not to argue against speaking in tongues, Critical Race Theory, and Calvinism. However, a local church or pastor who repudiates these positions cannot, in good conscience, intentionally send money to missionaries promulgating these ideas around the world.

In a denominational support model, local churches do not get to choose which missionaries their money supports. If a missionary is approved by the denomination or convention, the money from the local churches supports that missionary whether his supporting churches agree with his teachings or not. The missionaries in this model are screened and approved by the staff of the denomination, not by the local churches providing the money. The tendency to drift theologically and the lack of individual accountability are grave concerns that cannot be easily treated in the denominational board model.

The Faith Mission Model

A third sending model to be considered is called the faith mission model. James Hudson Taylor is given much credit for this model. While many of the faith mission model's basic principles are drawn from Scripture, credit must also be given to August H. Francke and George Müller. The testimonies and examples of these German men of faith had a profound impact on Taylor's life and sending philosophy. The prolific author and Baptist missionary Arthur T. Pierson wrote, “It has been said that to the example of A. H. Francké, in Halle, or George Müller in Bristol, may be more or less directly traced every form of 'faith work,' prevalent since.”⁴⁰

³⁹ Brandon Smith, "Albert Mohler: Why All Southern Baptists are Calvinists," July 13, 2010, accessed February, 12, 2018, <http://sbcvoices.com/albert-mohler-why-all-southern-baptists-are-calvinists/>.

⁴⁰ Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer-Hearing God*, (Laconia Publishers, 2016), 4406, Kindle.

Beginning in 1696, August H. Francke established orphanages for two thousand children in Prussia.⁴¹ For the next thirty years, until his death, Francke testified of God's daily provision and education for the helpless orphans.⁴² He did not pursue funds from men but made the needs of the orphanage known only to God. More than a century later, Müller read Francke's testimony and decided to follow Francke's example of faith. Müller stated that the primary reason for establishing the orphanages was "that God may be glorified, should He be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in Him; and that thus the faith of His children may be strengthened."⁴³ Meeting the spiritual and physical needs of the orphans was actually his second and third given reasons. Müller's primary motive for investing his long life in the faith-based orphanage ministry was to glorify God by strengthening the faith of all Christians. His motive was accomplished through the faithful testimony of God's daily provision for helpless orphans through the service of a poor man and His rich God.

These important details prepared the setting for what became known as the Faith Mission Model. *Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission: The Growth of a Work of God* was authored by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor.⁴⁴ This two-volume account of the beginning and development of the China Inland Mission will help readers understand the distinctions of the faith mission model.

The Taylors' first term in China was six years. They were originally sent through the Chinese Evangelization Society, but they resigned from this mission before they concluded

⁴¹ Pierson, *George Müller*, 1207, Kindle.

⁴² A.H. Franke, *Faith's Work Perfected; or, Francke's Orphan House at Halle*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Scholarly Publishing Office, 2005).

⁴³ George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealing with George Müller, Written by Himself, Jehovah Magnified. Addresses by George Müller Complete and Unabridged*, 2 vols. (Muskegon, MI: Dust and Ashes, 2003), 1:103.

⁴⁴ Howard and Mrs. Taylor, *Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission: The Growth of a Work of God* (London, England: The Religious Tract Society, 1921).

their first term. During his first furlough, the interest and the number of volunteers for China were growing. Taylor keenly felt an overwhelming, personal responsibility to do something to facilitate this growing movement.

On June 25, 1865, Taylor was on vacation at Brighton. He was spiritually and physically “in agony” as he walked the beach that morning.⁴⁵ In body, he was terribly ill. In mind and spirit, he was carrying the overwhelming burdens of recruiting laborers for China and the heavy weight of responsibility he felt for sending them. “God-consciousness began to take the place of unbelief” during that walk with God in Brighton.⁴⁶ Taylor realized, “Why if we are obeying the Lord, the responsibility rests with Him, not with us!”⁴⁷ This new mentality changed everything and laid the foundation for the principles of the China Inland Mission. Taylor determined that neither recruitment nor the sending of missionaries was his responsibility. It was God’s commission, and God would bear full responsibility for its accomplishment. Taylor declared,

Than the greatness of the need, one thing only is greater—the fact of God: His resources, purpose, faithfulness, His commands and promises. “All power is given unto Me . . . go ye therefore.” That is enough; that alone could be enough. The need is great, immensely great; but God is greater, infinitely greater. And this God the writer knows, has proved, trusts. Hence it follows that the principles of the new Mission are simply an adjustment of these two considerations—the need to be met and God. He stands behind the work He called into being.⁴⁸

That same month of June 1865, the China Inland Mission was “called into being.” The name was chosen, and a modest bank account bearing the name was opened.

⁴⁵ Taylor, *Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission*, 465, Kindle.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 470, Kindle.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 472, Kindle.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 585, Kindle.

The China Inland Mission was unique in its leadership, its financing, and its interdenominational composition. First, unlike most missions agencies throughout history, the China Inland Mission was not led by a board or a committee. “The entire direction of the Mission was to be in the hands of its founder, himself the most experienced of its members, who like a General [sic] on active service would be with his forces in the field.”⁴⁹ Eventually, committees were set up in both China and England, but the book does not seem to indicate that these committees were designed to give leadership or direction. Taylor ran the entire mission and made every significant, non-time-sensitive decision whether he was in China or on furlough.

Second, the financing of the China Inland Mission and the faith mission model is different from all other sending models. Taylor strictly prohibited soliciting funds. Mission members were not allowed to ask for money—ever. Monthly commitments were discouraged, and the collection of offerings during meetings where he preached about China was against policy.⁵⁰ Taylor desired that every gift given to the mission be determined by prayer and offered with the reinforcement of fervent prayer. These were the protocols of the China Inland Mission during Taylor's life.

As previously noted, George Müller was instrumental in helping Taylor come to his convictions about finances (as well as his resignation from the Chinese Evangelization Society).⁵¹ One significant distinction between the philosophy of Müller and Taylor was the communication of needs. Müller would actually delay the publication of a financial report in order not to infer that his ministry had a need. Sometimes Müller did not even tell his wife about financial needs. His conviction was to take all financial needs to God in prayer alone. In slight contrast, Taylor was not hesitant to mention in his periodic prayer letters (called “Occasional Paper of the Mission”), how much was needed to accomplish a particular project. For example, the two

⁴⁹ Ibid, 633, Kindle.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 773, Kindle.

⁵¹ Ibid, 890, 2378, 2633, 3891, Kindle.

thousand pounds lacking to provide passage for sixteen missionaries ready to leave for China was specifically mentioned in the China Inland Mission's first occasional paper.⁵² While the specific need was mentioned in print, a request for people to send money was never included.

One rock-solid financial conviction that both Müller and Taylor agreed upon was the absolute commitment never to go into debt or to create a “guarantee fund.”⁵³ One of the universal tenets of the faith mission model is the conviction never to go into debt for any reason.

Third, the China Inland Mission was intentionally interdenominational. The only qualifying requirements for China Inland Mission members were their belief in the inspiration of the Bible, a demonstration of faith in God, and faithful adherence to the “fundamentals of our faith” (without delineating what the fundamentals were).⁵⁴ The perceived unity among denominations at the expense of doctrine was a serious flaw of the China Inland Mission.⁵⁵ Very little is mentioned in Taylor’s autobiographical work about the tensions that existed among the different denominational members of the China Inland Mission, but Taylor insisted that the unifying motivation of evangelism could trump all other differences of opinion.⁵⁶ It should also be noted that regions of China and stations within those regions were divided by denominational positions. Taylor wrote,

Those already associated with me represent all the leading denominations of our native land—Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist and Paedobaptist. Besides these, two are or have been connected with the “Brethren” so called. It is intended that those whose view

⁵² Ibid, 819, Kindle.

⁵³ Ibid, 621, Kindle.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 616 and 9811, Kindle.

⁵⁵ The original China Inland Mission policy manual did not even contain a doctrinal statement. Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford, England: Regnum Books, 1995), 180.

⁵⁶ Taylor, *Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission*, 613, Kindle.

of discipline correspond shall work together, and thus all difficulty on that score will be avoided. Each one is perfectly at liberty to teach his own views on these minor points to his own converts; the one great object we have in view being to bring heathen from darkness to light, from power of Satan to God.⁵⁷

This view may sound noble and possible, but “the one great object” of believers should be the glory of God, not the salvation of men. Today, the denominations listed above preach different gospels (some preach gospels of faith plus works). Unity in Christ's church is a biblical mandate. However, overlooking and ignoring false doctrine is not biblical (Revelation 2:14-16). Though there are many positive aspects and biblical principles to be learned from the faith mission model, unqualified ecumenicalism is not one of them. There are many variations of Baptist faith mission agencies today. Ecumenical support is not a necessary distinctive of this model. Churches could use the faith mission model to send missionaries without necessarily getting involved interdenominationally.

A final significant characteristic about the faith mission model, not mentioned in Taylor's autobiography, is the policy of shared or communal funds. Harold Lindsell writes about the China Inland Mission (Taylor), the Sudan Interior Mission (Bingham), the Latin American Mission (Strachan), and the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (Studd).⁵⁸ Of these faith missions, Lindsell writes,

. . . a common policy of sharing characterizes them. Thus month by month as the monies come in, the missionaries share proportionately so that some do not have more than others or some suffer severe hardships while their colleagues are living off the fat of the land in comparison to those who have little.⁵⁹

The weakness of this communal characteristic is what Lindsell refers to as the “recurring tragedy” of insufficient

⁵⁷ Ibid, 9807, Kindle.

⁵⁸ Harold Lindsell, *Missionary Principles and Practices*, 110-114.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 114.

funds, and the tendency for missionaries to find themselves “stranded” from time to time waiting for an increase in funds for travel, life, and ministry.

The Individual Support Model

A fourth model to consider is the individual support model. This model targets individuals, such as friends, church members, and Christian businessmen, rather than local churches for the raising of a missionary's support. This model is a growing trend among evangelical missionaries.

People Raising: A Practical Guide to Raising Funds is a highly acclaimed book authored by William P. Dillon.⁶⁰ This book includes some good biblical principles that will be helpful to ministers of all sorts—even if one does not agree with the targeting of individuals for support.⁶¹

Dillon's book has three main sections. The first six chapters teach how to develop a proper “attitude” or philosophy of raising funds. The second section (chapters 7-19) is called “Cultivating the Essential Skills for Raising Funds.” The third and final section guides the fundraising minister in how to implement Dillon's plan (chapters 20-24).

Dillon's philosophy of raising funds for ministry is biblical, balanced, and sound. He addresses many lies and false assumptions about deputation and raising funds. His philosophy is simple. Dillon firmly asserts that “raising funds is ministry.”⁶²

Dillon's philosophy of raising funds begins with the necessity of having a strategy. After surveying more than one hundred missions organizations, Dillon observed that

⁶⁰ The flyleaf of the book includes the praises of about twenty world renowned ministry directors, presidents, and CEOs who highly recommend this book.

⁶¹ William P. Dillon, *People Raising: A Practical Guide to Raising Funds* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2012). Another book that promotes primarily raising funds from individuals is *The God Ask* by Steve Shadrach (Fayetteville, AR: CMM Press, 2017).

⁶² Ibid, 54.

“very few had effective strategies.”⁶³ Perhaps one reason there is so much fear in deputation is that missions agencies and local churches are not preparing and teaching a clear strategy for deputation. When a missionary views deputation as ministry rather than panhandling, he can begin to see the many benefits to deputation.⁶⁴

Chapters 2 through 6 develop one of the best biblical philosophies of raising funds I have ever read. Dillon starts by presenting both Old Testament (Elijah–1 Kings 17:8-16) and New Testament (the disciples–Matthew 10:5-15, and Paul–2 Corinthians 1:15-16) examples of requesting support or help from others. He goes on to present the three distinct models of fundraising epitomized by George Müller (prayer alone), Hudson Taylor (pray and inform others of the needs), and D. L. Moody (pray, inform, and ask for finances).⁶⁵

Dillon provides two profound conclusions. First, sharing needs is biblical. The book states, “For the sake of the gospel it is appropriate to share our specific needs with those who can help us. Thus support raising [sic] systems do not detract from trusting God as a source of the supply of our need.”⁶⁶ The second powerful conclusion is that “there is no right or wrong model, and there is no single model. But I advise you not to build your philosophy out of convenience but to be willing to move out of your comfort

⁶³ Ibid, 11.

⁶⁴ Dillon offers many benefits to raising support in chapter one. These benefits include the raising of much prayer support, the strengthening of the missionary's faith, the development of God's vision for missions in the body of Christ, opportunities to witness all over the country, and others.

⁶⁵ William P. Dillon, *People Raising*, 33. It may also be noted here that based on the examples provided earlier in this project, the apostle Paul most closely aligned with D. L. Moody's model of fundraising. Paul often asked for prayer. He regularly informed his supporting churches of specific needs, but he also consistently asked and expected that his supporting churches would provide for and meet those needs (Romans 15:24; 1 Corinthians 16:6, 11; 2 Corinthians 1:16; Titus 3:15).

⁶⁶ The quote is found on pages 24-25 of *People Raising*, but it was originally taken from SIM material. *Serving In Missions* (Charlotte, NC: SIM).

zone.”⁶⁷ It is evident that Müller, Taylor, and Moody all had different philosophies of fundraising, but God used and blessed all three of these men in phenomenal ways for His glory.

Dillon provides plenty of examples of people who will not follow God's leading into missions because they refuse to do deputation. These sad testimonies are based on the selfish assumption that deputation is about me. It is not. Deputation “is ministry.”⁶⁸

The philosophy of ministry presented in the first section of this book is saturated with Scripture, and I highly recommend it. The second section of the book, however, has a very different emphasis. It contains almost no Scripture (just a couple references about being thankful in step 8), and there is an obvious shift from the goal of “ministry” to “effectiveness is the goal.”⁶⁹ This shift is undeniable and disappointing. In the first section, Dillon asserts that “a plan starts with the conviction that God already has chosen the people to support you or your ministry.”⁷⁰ This quotation seems to contradict the entire strategy section of the book, which is filled with sales-pitch terms and instructions such as “the ask,” “techniques,” “the power of the pause,” and “wording is everything.”⁷¹

The premise of Dillon's book is that “people give to people they know, trust, and care for.”⁷² He refers to the “old paradigm” of deputation from church to church as “time-consuming,” “expensive,” and “ineffective.”⁷³ His explanation for the inefficiency of traditional deputation is the fact that most of the churches that missionaries call and visit are made up of people who do not know, trust, or care for the missionary. If we are honest, it is nearly

⁶⁷ William P. Dillon, *People Raising*, 35.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 54.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 92.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 57.

⁷¹ Ibid, 96, 203, 124.

⁷² Ibid, 57.

⁷³ Ibid, 153-154.

impossible for a missionary to introduce himself to a church in one service and leave that service with a church full of people who know, trust, and care for him and his family.

In contrast to calling pastors and churches who do not know the missionary, Dillon's twelve-step strategy encourages missionaries and ministry fundraisers to pursue people who already know, trust, and care for them.

Step 1 is to “begin with your home church.” The missionary is encouraged to pursue funding from the pastor or the chairman of church funding projects. Next, “individual supporters within the church” should be solicited, according to Dillon.⁷⁴

Steps 2 and 3 teach how to select, catalog, and prioritize prospects. Dillon teaches that missionaries should analyze their prospects and determine how much they plan to ask of each prospect before making the first appointment. Dillon recommends asking for at least one hundred dollars per month from each individual prospect.⁷⁵ Step 4 teaches how to effectively “get the word out” about one's call and ministry.⁷⁶

Steps 4 through 7 teach how to “make appointments,” “conduct the visits,” and “track funds.”⁷⁷ Step 8 emphasizes the importance of always saying thank you immediately and in writing.⁷⁸

Steps 9 through 12 explain how to conduct a phone appointment (if one's friend lives too far away to meet in person), how to expand one's contacts, and how to “work” one's donors for more funds (“like a farmer” must work his field for a better yield).⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Ibid, 63-70.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 71-90.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 91-94.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 95-140.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 141-148.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 149-180.

The first section of Dillon's book is worth reading. It will certainly provide a biblical perspective of pre-field ministry that is often overlooked. The second section of the book is pure opinion and personal philosophy. It may be pragmatic and "effective," but it cannot be considered biblically based, in my opinion. The final section of the book is a good balance and review.

Chapter 23 emphasizes the importance and role of prayer in deputation. The encouragement to "acknowledge that God is the one who will prompt listeners to become supporters of your work, and trust Him for the outcome" is excellent advice.⁸⁰ Once again, however, it seems to completely contradict the emphasis Dillon placed on the fundraiser and his "techniques" spelled out in the twelve steps of the middle section of the book. The final chapter concludes with the admonition to "work your plan as if it all depends on you, but knowing that in reality it all depends on Him."⁸¹

I believe that Dillon's biblical philosophy of fundraising has merit and should be considered. Dillon proves that asking people for help who know, trust and care for the minister of Christ is biblical. The *methods* used by Dillon, however, do not always reflect the examples provided by Paul, the missionary, in the book of Acts. Dismissing deputation to local churches as outdated and "ineffective" is simply not biblical. God's ordained institution for fulfilling the Great Commission in the New Testament is the church. Paul had many supporting churches, but the New Testament does not offer a single example of any missionary soliciting funds from an individual.⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid, 211.

⁸¹ Ibid, 222.

⁸² Paul had several partnering churches, and clearly solicited support from many of them (Antioch – Acts 15:3; Ephesus – Acts 20:38; Tyre – Acts 21:5; Macedonian churches – 1 Corinthians 16:6; Corinth – 2 Corinthians 1:16; Philippi – Philippians 4:16; Crete – Titus 3:13; Rome – Romans 15:24; and "other churches" – 2 Corinthians 11:8).

According to missions administrators I spoke with in research for this project (both evangelical and fundamentalist), a common flaw of the individual support model is a weak relationship between the missionary and his sending church. Some missionaries who follow this model do not even have a sending/home church or a missions agency. They sometimes channel their support through a clearinghouse or an agency they personally direct. This lack of accountability is an easy setup for a dangerous pitfall. If the missionary does have a sending church and he makes a decision contrary to his biblical accountability (his sending church), the missionary knows in the back of his mind that he can simply leave the church and still function at only a minimal loss of support. He has no accountability to his individual supporters. This arrangement is dangerous and unbiblical.

The Tentmaking Model

A fifth model is the tentmaking model. The simplest definition of tentmaking is “a self-supporting missionary.”⁸³ There are two extreme opinions about this view. On one end of the spectrum, some believe that all missionaries should support themselves entirely by their own labor.⁸⁴ The other extreme insists that missionaries should never work to support themselves, but are entitled to the support of others alone to provide for their needs. I do not believe that either of these extremes is biblically defensible.

The label for this model comes from a single biblical reference to “tentmakers” in Acts 18:1-3.

After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila . . . with his wife Priscilla . . . And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

⁸³ J. Christy Wilson Jr., *Today's Tentmakers* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 16.

⁸⁴ This was the view of Zinzendorf and the Moravians. J. E. Hutton, *A History of Moravian Missions*, (London, E. C.: Moravian Publication Office, 1922), 176.

Even though this is the only place tentmaking is mentioned in the entire Bible, some people have constructed an entire philosophy of ministry from this single verse. Pastor and author John Piper has claimed,

You could say Paul's traveling band of men was a traveling band of merchants who worked when they had to, making and repairing and selling tents. And when they had enough money to live on, they preached the gospel and taught the new Christians what it meant to follow Jesus.⁸⁵

This characterization of Paul's missionary team is pure imagination and found nowhere in Scripture.

While we may not know the vocations of all of the other members of Paul's missionary team, we are certainly not told that they were a bunch of ragtag merchants who set up shop mending tents whenever they needed some cash.⁸⁶

In this manual, I have cited by name at least nine churches that Paul thanked or expected to give him sending support. The Bible specifically records three places where Paul seems to have done manual labor. The locations were Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9), Corinth (Acts 18:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 11:8-9), and Ephesus (Acts 20:34-35).⁸⁷

Why did Paul labor in these places when he was an apostle and had multiple supporting churches? Thankfully, the Bible provides two reasons. Second Thessalonians 3:7-9 states,

For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be

⁸⁵ John Piper, "Tentmakers' in Minneapolis," *Desiring God*, September 4, 1988, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/tentmakers-in-minneapolis>.

⁸⁶ For example, we do know that Luke (the writer of the book of Acts) was a physician (Colossians 4:14). Barnabas was a land owner (Acts 4:36-37), etc.

⁸⁷ Arguing that all missionaries should be tentmakers is very difficult in light of 1 Corinthians 9:1-18.

chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

The primary reason was to be “an ensample unto you to follow” (2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9). The second given reason was that Paul refused to be “chargeable” or a burden to anyone. This second reason is accompanied by the phrase “not because we have not power.” It wasn’t that Paul was struggling to make ends meet; verses seven and nine both state that Paul labored as an example to follow.

What about when Paul lived in Corinth (the actual location of the “tentmakers” proof-text)? Second Corinthians 11:7-9 are clarifying verses.

. . . I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

Paul says nothing about making tents to pay the bills when he writes back to the Corinthians. Rather, he specifically states that his “wages” came from his supporting churches in Macedonia. Paul may or may not have made tents to supplement his income while ministering in Corinth, but the Scriptures are clear that he received wages from “other churches” while he was living in Corinth.

Before God called me to be a missionary, I had done professional work as a house painter, landscaper, and barber. On both my foreign field of service and in the States during furloughs, I have painted the houses of widows. I have cut hair for opportunities of evangelism and discipleship, and I have cut the grass of churches in both Africa and America. While I have done all of this work with my own hands, I have never done this work to supplement my income. I have done all of this so-called secular work to be an example and to open doors for ministry, not to pay the bills. I believe the very same *may* have been true of Paul.

Those who say that Paul was a tentmaking missionary on every missionary journey and that he worked to supplement his income in every city where he ministered can only infer this opinion. It is simply not taught in the Scriptures.

Dogmatic proponents of the tentmaking model also ignore the missionary example of Jesus. Nowhere does the Bible teach that Jesus was a tentmaking missionary or that he temporarily set up a carpentry shop from time to time to supplement his income. In fact, the Bible specifically states that believers supported Jesus “of their substance” so that He could focus on His full-time ministry.

And it came to pass afterward, that [Jesus] went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him . . . and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance (Luke 8:1-3).

We should take care not to be dogmatic where the Scriptures are not dogmatic. No matter where one falls on the tentmaking opinion spectrum, Paul *did* state that one of his reasons for working with his hands was to be an example.

The Moravians took this principle quite literally in the early eighteenth century. Led by Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf, the Moravians were taught that, “The first duty of every missionary was to earn his own living. By earning his own living he could not only save the church funds, but also teach the natives the dignity of labour.”⁸⁸ The results of this model were astounding. One out of every five members of the church was sent out as a foreign missionary!⁸⁹ By the time Baptist Missionary William Carey (often called the Father of Modern Missions) was sent to Asia in 1793, the Moravians had already sent more than three hundred missionaries into all of the populated continents of the world.⁹⁰ All of these missionaries were supposed to be self-supporting missionaries.

⁸⁸ J. E. Hutton, *A History of Moravian Missions*, 176.

⁸⁹ Neal Pirolo, *Serving as Senders Today*, 2984, Kindle.

⁹⁰ J. E. Hutton, *A History of Moravian Missions*, 201.

The Moravian passion for missions was commendable, but not all of their endeavors were successful by human standards.⁹¹ Without consistent support from a sending church, many of these missionaries suffered from diseases of malnutrition, and some literally starved to death.

Another weakness of the tentmaking model was reported after twenty-six years of “complete failure” in Bengal. Historian and author J. E. Hutton said that the number one reason for this “failure” was “because the missionaries had to earn their own living, and had, therefore, little time for preaching.”⁹² Nevertheless, the tentmaking model was successfully used by some Moravians and has been successfully used by many missionaries throughout the centuries.

More recently, Patrick Lai wrote *Tentmaking: The Life and Work of Business as Missions*.⁹³ Lai and his family served as “regular” missionaries for four years. After seeing the great need in closed-access nations, where traditional missionaries could not go, Lai and his family became tentmaking missionaries for nearly two decades.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Despite the thousands saved and disciplined around the world through Moravian missionaries, these gains did not come without many setbacks. Several Moravian missionaries were driven from their field by hostile monarchs. Three were imprisoned for five years having been accused of being spies, and one great scholar was imprisoned in another country for three years with no accusation of a crime. Nine were killed the moment they debarked in Guinea, Africa. Several teams were driven home by irate local religious leaders (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, etc.) Two Moravian medical doctors were attacked by highway men near Bagdad, and one ended up dying in Egypt. Some could never acquire legal permission from the local authorities. Some suffered shipwreck in the Red Sea. Some were tortured and whipped in East Africa. Some were expelled by Muslims in the Middle East, and forty died in Danish Tranquebar (in modern India). J. E. Hutton, *A History of Moravian Missions*, 175.

⁹² J. E. Hutton, *A History of Moravian Missions*, 175.

⁹³ Patrick Lai, *Tentmaking: The Life and Work of Business as Missions* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2005).

⁹⁴ Professor Steve Rundle, of BIOLA University, wrote, “Patrick and his wife are two of the most experienced and effective tentmakers today. This long-awaited book is the clearest and most comprehensive treatment of the subject to date.” Patrick Lai, *Tentmaking*, 16, Kindle.

In preparation and research for his book, Lai interviewed more than 450 tentmakers.⁹⁵ His premise is that the world has drastically changed in the past century. “Over 80 percent of unreached peoples, those people groups without a church, are living in countries that do not grant missionary visas.”⁹⁶ It is, therefore, necessary that mission agencies and missionaries “retool,” according to Lai.⁹⁷ The church must get creative in her efforts to fulfill the Great Commission in all nations. Lai believes that tentmaking is a solution to so-called closed-access nations. He writes, “Countries that are closed to missionaries are still open for business.”⁹⁸

Lai does not like to define tentmaking missionaries as “missionaries who are financially self-supporting.” This widely accepted definition puts the defining emphasis on money, and it is simply not usually the case. According to Lai's research, only six percent of tentmakers earn enough to be self-supporting.⁹⁹

Tentmakers are not identified as a missionary in their host country, but *missions* is their primary calling. Lai quotes Greg Livingstone, director emeritus of Frontiers, who suggested that “there are three types of tentmakers: *job takers*, *job makers*, and *job fakers*.”¹⁰⁰ Again, Lai does not like this narrow, economic definition. He believes that “calling, identity, source of income, and having a measurable ministry” are all essential components of

⁹⁵ Patrick Lai, *Tentmaking*, 126, Kindle.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 483, Kindle.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 178, Kindle.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 498, Kindle.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 1155, Kindle.

¹⁰⁰ “*Job takers* work for national or international companies. As these tent makers hold jobs that nationals might have had, they are viewed as workers who take jobs. *Job makers* are workers who set up their own businesses, offer social services for nationals, or open schools. All of these strategies may employ nationals or enhance educational opportunities for nationals, thus creating new jobs. *Job fakers* find some legal way to get a resident visa that keeps them free enough to be fully involved in the proclamation and discipleship of new believers. *Job fakers*, like regular missionaries, are supported by their home churches.” Patrick Lai, *Tentmaking*, 348, Kindle.

tentmaking.¹⁰¹ He believes that “the objective of tentmaking is to put Jesus in front of those who have never had an opportunity to hear the truth about Him.”¹⁰² He goes on to write, “Tentmaking is using daily-life strategies to tell people about Jesus. The models and methods vary, but the goal is to glorify Jesus among the unreached.”¹⁰³

Some tentmakers are employees of multi-national corporations. Some are English teachers. Some are medical doctors, and some create non-governmental organizations to provide social services, all while providing the message of Christ as their primary intention. According to Lai, a tentmaker is simply a missionary with a secular job.

Lai estimates that there are presently more than ten thousand active tentmakers. For security reasons, the number is impossible to calculate accurately. He writes, “We know that within the past decade tentmakers have gathered over two hundred fellowships of new believers, and started at least 157 new churches among the least-reached peoples of the world.”¹⁰⁴

Lai admits that tentmakers are “not as effective in planting churches as regular missionaries.”¹⁰⁵ His argument is not that all missionaries should become tentmakers. His assertion is that the Great Commission is for all people, and that “both regular missionaries and tentmakers are biblical models and are urgently needed if the task of world evangelization is to be completed.”¹⁰⁶

Lai’s book defines tentmaking, explains five types of tentmaking, and instructs servants of Christ how to be tentmaking missionaries. Lai writes, “The great number of workers required, the difficulty of financially supporting these workers, and the increasing amount of countries that

¹⁰¹ Patrick Lai, *Tentmaking*, 342, Kindle.

¹⁰² Ibid, 216, Kindle.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 219, Kindle.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 286, Kindle.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 291, Kindle.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 292, Kindle.

restrict the entry of regular missionaries are three important reasons tentmakers are needed.”¹⁰⁷

I was greatly impressed by Lai’s book and its representation of the tentmaking model. Lai’s philosophy is sound. His tentmaking principles of training are practical. The number of countries that welcome “regular missionaries” will probably continue to decline until the return of Christ. The number of creative-access (or so-called “closed”) countries are increasing rapidly with the spread of Islam and the growth of religious intolerance around the world.

The tentmaking model may not be the most effective or ideal model, but it is definitely something about which independent Baptists should be informed. Independent Baptist tentmaker John Nasett taught English in China for 24 years.¹⁰⁸ Nasett has written a self-published book testifying how God used him and his family to plant two churches as tentmaking missionaries in China.¹⁰⁹

Independent Baptists should not dismiss the viability of tentmaking. It does not often work as a purely self-supporting method, but it may be a way to partially support a missionary who is sent by his local church and has some other local church partners. Tentmaking may also be an option for missionaries who desire to minister in countries that do not allow or provide visas to traditional missionaries.

An Ideal Independent Baptist Model

When I was a Bible college student, an independent Baptist seminary president came to our college to teach a block course and to preach in chapel. One evening, the visiting president showed a promotional video and invited the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 297, Kindle.

¹⁰⁸ Dori Dahl, “Nasetts Return After 24 Years Teaching In China,” Cambridge News and Deerfield Independent, August 31, 2014, http://www.hngnews.com/cambridge_deerfield/news/local/article_dc5a9130-2ef7-11e4-80d4-0017a43b2370.html.

¹⁰⁹ John Nasett, *Did You Really Make That Cake?: Indigenous Principles Applied in 21st Century China* (Self Published and Printed, 2018).

preacher boys to consider attending his seminary after our undergraduate training.

As a missions major, I was particularly impressed with an idea the speaker shared with our group. He explained that there were several likeminded churches near his city that were willing to support graduates of his seminary for a significant percentage of their needed support. He said that a seminary student could theoretically visit each of these churches in the area during weekends and evening missions conferences. The churches were all local, so no classes or work would be missed.

The president said that if a man were called to missions and decided to attend his seminary, he would do his best to see that that the missionary graduated with one hundred percent of his needed support. This idea of independent Baptist churches working together in one geographical location to support likeminded missionaries with a significant percentage of their needed support was a revolutionary thought to my mind! The Lord did not lead me to this president's seminary, but I never forgot the practical idea of a regional, loosely associated group of independent Baptist churches working together to send missionaries to the foreign field in a timely and efficient manner.

I have since learned, through personal research, that missiologists and church leaders have been suggesting similar ideas for the past forty years. In his monumental work, *A People for His Name: A Church-Based Missions Strategy*, missions professor Paul A. Beals describes a group of five churches in the Detroit area that formed "The Suburban Detroit Missions Consortium" back in the 1980s. These churches were not all independent Baptist churches, but they were likeminded local churches that worked together for more than twenty years.¹¹⁰ Beals wrote,

The goal of these five churches is to support fully missionaries under mission agencies recognized by all of

¹¹⁰ Covenant Community Church, "A Brief History of Covenant Community Church," accessed March 16, 2020, <https://covenantredford.com/who-we-are/our-history/>.

these churches. The home church of each appointee will assume at least 30 percent of the needed support. Each of the other consortium churches will assume an equitable share of support according to their ability. A consortium of this nature is an appointee's dream!¹¹¹

The most concise and convincing piece of literature I have read on this ideal plan for independent Baptists was written by David L. Cummins.¹¹² Cummins began his brief article by reviewing some of the history and difficulties of independent Baptist deputation. He continued by sharing the sad story of one of his protégés who went to Africa under a Baptist convention. This young missionary admitted to Cummins that he should have gone as a fundamental Baptist missionary, but compromised his convictions for the sole reason of avoiding the rigors of deputation.¹¹³

The history of pre-field ministry and the impact missionaries have when they visit hundreds of churches on deputation is undeniable. Cummins wrote, "Deputation began of necessity among Baptists when the fundamentalist-modernistic division took place in the old Northern Baptist Convention." He summarized,

It became necessary for fundamental Baptist missionaries to present their needs to local churches. Wonderfully, when churches became acquainted with missionaries, personalized giving produced added prayer support. A new burden for the cause of missions blossomed within local churches.¹¹⁴

When considering how to reduce the typical length of deputation, Cummins suggested that independent Baptist pastors consider forming associations of nine churches in key locations across the United States. He rejected the

¹¹¹ Paul A. Beals, *A People for His Name* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 86. Other examples of those suggesting the consortium model are cited in chapter six of this manual.

¹¹² David L. Cummins, "An Ideal in Missions," *World Witness* (Fall 2001).

¹¹³ David L. Cummins, "An Ideal in Missions," 1-2.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

suggestion of “some missiologists” who recommended groups of three churches take on the full support of missionaries. Having only three supporting churches (at 33 percent support each) would certainly shorten the necessary time on deputation but would “allow for a very limited prayer base.”¹¹⁵ Cummins also argued that if one of the three churches closed or ran into financial problems, the missionary might be forced off the field prematurely to raise more support.

After careful deliberation, Cummins concluded that an association of nine churches would be ideal. Rather than churches supporting missionaries with a specified dollar amount per month, he also recommended churches support their missionaries by percentage instead. The sending church could assume twenty percent of the missionary's budget, while the other eight churches could take on the responsibility of ten percent each. Such an arrangement would drastically reduce the time, travel, and expense of deputation.

Cummins concluded his proposal by stating, “Having nine churches behind him would also provide for the opportunity to build a strong prayer base.”¹¹⁶ Furthermore, even if one of the churches in the group failed in her commitment, the missionary could survive on ninety percent of his budget until his next furlough.¹¹⁷ It would also reduce the time of deputation to months rather than years.

Missionaries and their supporting churches could develop close, meaningful partnerships using this model. Rather than visiting a church for one service (as the popular independent Baptist model above recommends), missionaries could spend a couple of weeks with each church. They could get involved with the weekly ministries

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ The veracity of this statement was confirmed in my survey of missionaries, question 7. According to my survey results, the average independent Baptist missionary is currently receiving just under 90% of his budgeted support on a monthly basis.

of the church and spend time with several families in the church. "This would also allow for quality time with supporting churches during furlough and a period of recuperation before returning to the rigors of missionary life."¹¹⁸

There are generally four objections to this ideal independent Baptist model. First, people claim it is impossible for independent Baptists to work together without forming a convention. This assumption is unfortunate and false. There are many state and regional independent Baptist fellowships and associations in existence today. Historically there have also been many Baptist missionary societies. Today, there are scores of Independent Baptist mission boards in the United States that manage funds sent to them from thousands of independent Baptist churches around the world. None of these examples is a convention. History has proven that autonomous independent Baptist churches can cooperate without becoming a convention or denomination.

A second common objection to the ideal independent Baptist model proposed here is the objection that churches cannot "afford" to support missionaries for ten percent of their budget. According to my research, the average independent Baptist missionary family budget is set at about \$6,000 per month.¹¹⁹ Following the model presented here, 10 percent would be approximately \$600 per month, per missionary.

The average independent Baptist Church who took my survey has 115 members and gives \$16,660.80 to foreign missions annually.¹²⁰ That works out to about \$1,400 per month. The result is that the average independent Baptist church has more than enough to partner with two missionaries if they committed to supporting those missionaries for ten percent of their budget.

¹¹⁸ David L. Cummins, "An Ideal in Missions," 2.

¹¹⁹ See appendix 2, survey for missionaries, questions 4 and 6.

¹²⁰ See appendix 2, survey for missions agencies, questions 2.

The surveys indicate that the average independent Baptist church increases their *monthly* missions giving by more than \$100 each year.¹²¹ This means that according to the survey information, the average independent Baptist church would be able to take on a new missionary at ten percent of his budget every four and a half years—without cutting or adjusting any of the financial support of their current missionaries. Churches with fewer than 115 members might decide to partner with missionaries at five percent support (about \$300 per month) until the church and their missionary budget grows.

Of course, if churches support missionaries at 5 percent rather than 10 percent, the missionaries will need around 20 supporting churches rather than 9 or 10. This would not be as ideal as the proposed model, but it would still be a *significant improvement* to the current, popular practice among independent Baptist churches. Missionaries would be much better off with 10-20 genuine partnering churches than with scores of supporting churches. Churches would be better off partnering and biblically sending a handful of missionaries at 5 percent support than sending monthly checks to dozens of missionaries they barely know.

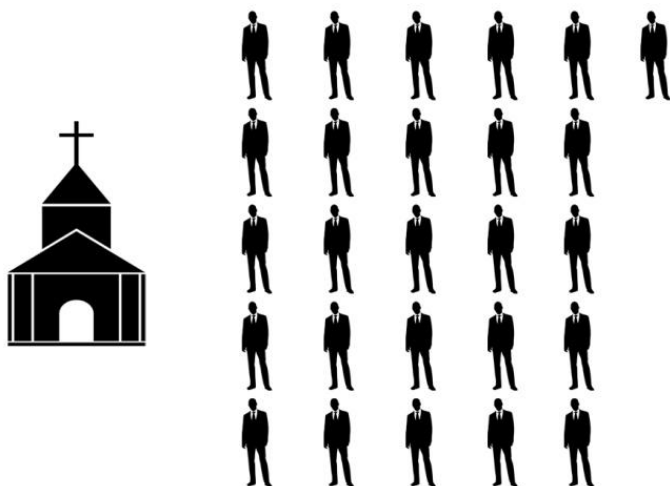
Currently, the average independent Baptist church sends support checks to about twenty-six missionaries.¹²² Pastors may feel like \$600 per month is too much, but the statistics support the reality that supporting missionaries at ten percent of their budget is definitely possible and sustainable. Later in this manual, I will explain the benefits and blessings of sending or partnering with two missionaries for ten percent of their support rather than

¹²¹ See appendix 2, survey for pastors, question 3 and survey for missionaries, question 6. According to these statistics the average independent Baptist church began supporting 6.9 new missionaries over the past 5 years. The average monthly support for current independent Baptist missionaries surveyed is \$110.90 per month. Therefore, the average surveyed independent Baptist church has statistically (not theoretically but actually) increased their *monthly* missions giving by about \$133.08 *annually* over the past five years. (6.9 missionaries x \$110.90 per month = \$665.40. \$665.40 ÷ 5 years = 133.08 per year.)

¹²² See appendix 2, survey for pastors, question 2.

mailing monthly support checks to twenty-six missionaries, most of whom you have little or no genuine relationship or partnership.

Current Independent Baptist Practice



A third flawed objection to what I call the ideal independent Baptist model (that supports missionaries for about 10% of their budget rather than \$100 per month) is that “it will require more churches.” This argument may seem reasonable, but the math does not support this concern either. This proposed model will neither require more churches nor more money; it only requires adjustments in the *philosophy* of how local churches partner and give to missions. I cannot emphasize this last statement enough.

In reality, the ideal model presented here is not a radical change in method or structure of the current independent Baptist sending model. It is more like a proposed improvement of the current model. The two models have the exact same number of churches. These churches are still sending monthly support to their missionaries. The same amount of money is designated for foreign missions. The role of independent Baptist missions agencies is unaltered, and the same number of missionaries are sent to the field.

The ideal model (with ten percent support per missionary) is rather a serious change in *philosophy* that results in a more streamlined, personal partnership between local churches and the missionaries they send.

If independent Baptist churches across the country began shifting to this model, the results would be staggering. Mathematically, this model would support just as many missionaries with just as many churches as the current independent Baptist model, but the significant percentage model would save thousands of dollars in travel expenses (money that could be used to support more missionaries) and would cut deputation and furlough time significantly.

As the reader will notice later, I am *not* suggesting that churches drop their current missionaries or start their missions program all over again. Later in this manual, I will demonstrate how this new model or philosophy can be phased in *gradually* by local churches without scrapping or damaging the current independent Baptist sending structure or system.

A fourth common objection claims that missionaries with just nine or ten supporting churches will have to leave the field if they lose just one supporting church. This is a sincere and thoughtful concern, but it is also unfounded. The average missionary surveyed for this project is currently operating at almost exactly 90 percent of his budgeted support.¹²³ This statistic means that many independent Baptist missionaries are currently serving with less than 90 percent of their budgeted support. If a missionary left for the field with 100 percent of his support, he could lose one or two supporting churches under this model and still be able to manage until his next furlough. Losing the support of two churches in one term (each giving 10 percent of the missionary's support) is highly unlikely, but even in the event of this unlikely scenario, a missionary would probably still not be forced off the field.

¹²³ See the survey for missions agencies, question 5.

Veteran missionary, field administrator, and missions professor, Steve E. Anderson, has written directly about this concern. Anderson writes, “Losing 20% of your support would *not* require your departure from the field. Belts can be tightened! Now, fifty percent would be another matter. Losing an occasional church happens, but usually not several in a year.”¹²⁴ The missionary serving at 80 percent of his budget would probably have little available for ministry expenses, but he could survive until the next furlough, as unfortunately many currently are doing.

The ideal independent Baptist model presented here is both biblical and efficient. This model has many pros but no significant cons. It is not really an entirely different model, but rather an improved version of the popular independent Baptist model currently in use. It is so new to the minds of many pastors that they often view this model with skepticism at first consideration. I have attempted to answer the four most common objections, and I pray that this model will not be rejected by the reader simply because it is new and “we have never done it that way before.”

¹²⁴ Steve Anderson, personal correspondence with author, April 13, 2020.

CHAPTER 5

BIBLICAL PARAMETERS FOR SENDING MISSIONARIES

Chapter 3 reviewed a brief history of how Baptists have been involved in sending missionaries to the foreign fields for the past four centuries. Chapter 4 then explored six sending models that have been or are still being used today to send Baptist missionaries. This chapter will present five biblical parameters for sending missionaries. With these five biblical parameters, we will be able to evaluate the models presented in the previous chapter.

God Sends Missionaries.

First, God is the one who calls and sends forth missionaries. I have already asserted that a biblical study of sending missionaries must begin with God. A narrow focus might look at only the *how* of sending, but a biblical view must begin with the *who* of sending missionaries. Christians are commanded to “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:38). Believers who are serious about seeing missionaries sent out around the world need to earnestly pray that the Lord of the harvest will do it.

In Acts 13:1-4 Luke reported,

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work

whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

There is a progression in this text. The church in Antioch had several qualified prophets and teachers who were faithfully serving the Lord (verse 1). God called two of them to go out as foreign missionaries (verse 2). The Bible says that the church ordained, fasted, prayed, and “sent them away” (verse 3). The final verse plainly states that even though the church ordained, fasted, prayed, and sent them away, they were in actuality “sent forth by the Holy Spirit” (verse 4).

The first parameter is that God calls and sends forth missionaries. Sending is God's idea and responsibility. Christians need to be in the habit of faithfully praying that God would send more local laborers and foreign missionaries into the harvest field of the world.

God Uses Local Churches to Send Missionaries.

Second, God uses local churches to send missionaries. Missionaries must be accountable and sent by the local church. Do you remember the Greek word study of *propempō* under the “Missionaries need local church partners” section of this manual? The word was defined as “to assist someone in making a journey, send on one’s way with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc.”¹ The word is found eight times in Scripture. In every case, the word is used of a local church *sending* a missionary or a missionary team. A sending model that is not rooted in and through the local church is not a biblical model. A sending model that diminishes the role of the local church or circumvents her entirely is unbiblical.

¹ W. Arndt, F.W. Danker, and W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 873.

Partnership Requires More Than Money.

Third, biblical partnership involves much more than finances. When Paul told Titus and the believers in Crete to send Apollos' team, he intended that they should support the team with more than money. The verse actually says that they should support them in such a diligent way that "nothing be wanting unto them" (Titus 3:13).

When the church in Philippi sent their support and the care package for their missionary partner Paul, they also sent Epaphroditus as well. His ministry through the church in Philippi was a wonderful example of biblical partnership between a local church and one of their missionaries. Paul described the partnership ministry of Epaphroditus by writing that he is "my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger [*apóstolon*], and he that ministered to my wants . . . hold such in reputation" (Philippians 2:25, 29). What a powerful description and definition of biblical partnership. The church in Philippi ministered to their missionary's needs as fellow brothers, fellow laborers, fellow soldiers, and fellow messengers ("sent ones").

Do you and your church have this kind of relationship and partnership with your missionaries? The partnership of these two churches (Crete and Philippi) went way beyond sending financial support. In fact, money was not even specifically highlighted in either of these cases. Money certainly plays an important role in sending missionaries, but biblical partnership involves much more than a monthly support check.

Partnership is Participation in Missions.

Fourth, sending is participation in missions. The Great Commission requires that every believer be simultaneously involved in reaching "both" the local harvest field and the foreign mission field (Acts 1:8). Every believer is

commanded to be a witness, but not every believer is called to be a foreign missionary.

Since the Bible demands that every believer be actively involved in missions, you are either a *goer* or a *sender*. Senders and goers are equally important partners in the Great Commission mandate (Romans 10:15). Chapter two of this book clearly and biblically explained that sending involves partnership. Partnership means that our church is both *missions-minded* (the general program) and *missionary-minded* (partnering with our specific missionaries).

Partnership Requires Communication.

Fifth, missionaries must communicate and update their partner churches. Local churches must also communicate well with their missionary partners. This parameter is essential. The New Testament epistles are preserved communications between Paul and many of his supporting churches. When considering Paul's sending church, the Bible does give instructive principles to follow.

Upon the completion of their first term (often called the first missionary journey), Paul's team returned to their sending church to "rehearse all that God had done with them" (Acts 14:27). A missionary's time in his passport country is often called "furlough" today. Not only did Paul and his team members communicate and report to the church, but the Bible goes on to reveal that "they abode long time" with the disciples in Antioch (Acts 14:28). This time of abiding is significant. Communication and strong partnerships take a "long time" to develop. A sending model that does not permit a significant amount of time for churches and their missionaries to get to know each other well and to strengthen the partnership between them is not a model patterned after Scripture.

Paul's second furlough is similarly described in Acts 18:22-23. Luke writes, "[Paul] went down to Antioch. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all

the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.” Communication, fellowship, and genuine partnerships take time. Communication between missionaries and their sending churches is essential. Updating those churches with specific needs is not a demonstration of a lack of faith but rather a biblical missionary parameter.

Based on these five biblical parameters, each of the six models represented above contains strengths and weaknesses. The five parameters again are: (1) God sends missionaries; (2) God uses local churches to send missionaries; (3) Partnership requires more than finances; (4) Partnership is participation in missions, and (5) Partnership requires communication.

With these biblical parameters laid out and defined, let’s take a few pages to evaluate the models presented in the previous chapter. First, God is the one who calls and sends forth missionaries. All of the models presented earlier would argue that God is the One who calls missionaries. Most missiologists would probably agree that God is responsible for sending missionaries, but not all missions models support this biblical principle by their actions and behavior.

Second, God uses local churches to send missionaries. The independent Baptist model and the ideal independent model I have proposed both send missionaries through the free will cooperation of local churches. These independent churches evaluate and support missionaries on an individual basis.

The denominational model uses local churches but supports all missionaries sent out by the denomination without the individual selection and personal relationship with the local churches. There is also no direct accountability with local churches in the denomination or convention model. If a local church supports missionaries through a denomination or convention, that church may learn that their missions money is going to support unqualified missionaries, missionaries teaching false doctrine, or missionaries involved in work that is not really

New Testament missionary ministry. In the denominational model, missionaries are accountable to the regulations and leadership of the denomination or convention—not directly to the churches that actually supply the money.

Historically, the faith mission model was designed to be interdenominational. This model may involve the support of local churches, but the majority of donations came from individuals. As in the denominational model, the missionaries were accountable to the mission agency rather than a home-sending church. The confusion of ecumenical ministry in the faith mission model is another serious problem that has already been identified. The individual support model, by definition, does not focus on local churches supporting or sending missionaries. When done properly, local churches can send tentmaking missionaries even if the missionary earns some or the majority of their financial support on the field.

Third, partnership involves much more than finances. I believe that the proponents of every missionary sending model would agree with this parameter. However, each model probably has varying degrees and understandings of this principle. The main philosophy that needs to change across the spectrum is the idea that missionaries are substitutes, employees, or distinct entities outside the local church. This mentality is a huge philosophical error in sending missionaries today. Missionaries are more than assets or statistics. They are the embodiment of the local church going global.

The individual support model is based on people sending missionaries they know and love personally. It is typically strong in the area of partnership, but it is weak or directly violates some of the other biblical parameters delineated here.

The indirect giving of the denominational model and the interdenominational faith mission models may result in good financial support, but both of these models are notoriously poor at developing personal relationships and

partnerships between local churches and the missionaries who receive their financial support.

The tentmaker model, along with the popular independent Baptist and the ideal independent Baptist models meet the other parameters, but whether they go beyond finances is a decision each local church must make. I personally have many supporting churches, but not all of these faithful supporters go beyond a monthly relationship of finances. No matter which model a local church uses, they must decide if they will simply be a missionary *supporting* church or a missionary *partnering* church (as outlined in chapter 2 of this book).

Fourth, partnership is participation in missions. “Missions is not what the church does *for* the missionary but what the church does *through* the missionary.”² Missions is not to be viewed as *a* program of the church; missions is *the* program of the church. When a church adopts this philosophy, it will no longer support missionaries with finances alone. It will recognize that every member and ministry of the church is designed to further the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. Every church member must personally be involved in missions!

Partnership and sending missionaries, the way the Bible describes partnership, is participation in and obedience to the mandate of missions. Is your church both *missions-minded* (participating in a general program) and *missionary-minded* (partnering with specific people)?”

None of the sending models can accomplish partnership because partnership is a personal decision. However, some models tend to encourage or discourage partnership more than others. The popular independent Baptist sending model described by Gardner and Howeth allows for little opportunity for local churches to get to know, love, and develop relationships with missionaries. The denominational board model and the faith mission model do not provide opportunities for local churches and

² Tom Julien, *Antioch Revisited*, 25.

missionaries to meet. Again, the responsibility is left to the individual, so partnership is possible, but typically, the missionary is relegated to a name on a prayer list under these sending models.

We have already recognized that the individual support model tends to promote strong partnership, because the supporters typically already have a personal relationship with the missionary before they are even called to missions. The tentmaking and the ideal independent Baptist models allow for as much time and room for relationship development as the local church decides. There is nothing qualifying or disqualifying about either of these particular models. Partnership with missionaries is a personal decision, and this decision is an essential aspect of missions participation.

Fifth, missionaries must communicate and update their partner churches. Local churches should do the same with their missionary partners (Philippians 2:19; 4:14). The popular independent Baptist model is very good about following this parameter. The ideal independent Baptist model would greatly reduce the furlough expense and toll on the missionary family. It would also provide missionaries with the opportunity to spend weeks with each supporting church on furlough rather than maybe one service. The indirect giving of the denominational and faith mission models does not tend to support this principle. Supporting a convention or a board, rather than a missionary, usually leads to a disconnect of involvement, a lack of accountability, and almost no personal relationship. Some tentmakers do well with this parameter; some do not. The individual support model can be very strong on communication, but this positive is trumped by the larger negatives mentioned earlier.

CHAPTER 6

PRINCIPLES DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE SENDING PARTNERSHIP

The purpose of this chapter is *not* to produce a missions policy that can be cut and pasted by individual churches. The stated purpose of this book is to provide a biblical *philosophy* of partnership so that you can develop a biblical missions policy that is tailored to fit your local church.

To arrive at a biblical philosophy of partnership, we have surveyed the Bible and learned that God is a missionary God. His Word is a missionary book, and His church is a missionary body. We explored the biblical mandate of partnership. We learned that there is a huge difference between *supporting* missionaries *who do* missions and *partnering* with missionaries *to do* missions. We presented a brief history of how Baptist missionaries have been sent the past four centuries. We identified and described six specific sending models that have been used by various Baptist groups, and then we evaluated those models by five given biblical parameters. This chapter will suggest one sample policy and two significant principles designed to improve the sending partnership of your local church and her missionaries.

One Sample Policy

I believe every church should have a congregationally approved missions policy. According to my research, about 40 percent of independent Baptist churches do not have a

written missions policy.¹ Appendix 1 provides a sample missions policy but is *not* offered as a perfect option for everyone. Appendix 1 is nothing more than an outline to help a pastor and his local church think through some of the important issues. For example, some may choose to use the faith promise method while others may give a percentage of their general budget to missions. This sample may be considered and adjusted to your own setting, but should *not* be accepted “as is” by anyone. This proposed policy is also designed as a tool to be referenced in the final chapter of this book.

Two Significant Principles

The title and basic intention of this entire project is to communicate and to convince readers of a biblical philosophy of missionary partnership. I do not believe churches should continue “taking on” missionaries they barely know to do a work they know little about. Churches should send missionary partners to further the church’s mission around the word. A change in philosophy will lead to a change in policy. I have provided a generic, skeletal policy for consideration.

This chapter emphasizes two significant and practical principles that I strongly recommend. *If independent Baptist churches incorporated just these two principles, deputation time and cost could be reduced by eighty percent.*² Furlough might actually include some rest and rejuvenation for the missionary, and partnerships between sending churches and their missionaries would be radically improved. Under these principles, missionaries would only need to update about nine churches on furlough rather than the scores they are currently expected to visit.

¹ See appendix 2, survey for pastors, question 7.

² This estimate is calculated on the reality that the average missionary today has 61.58 supporters (see appendix 2, survey for missions agencies, question 6), and would need less than twenty percent of this number of senders with my proposed model.

Increase Individual Missionary Support.

The suggestion to increase individual missionary support was the most often repeated suggestion by both pastors and missionaries who completed my surveys.³ Many pastors know this principle could make a huge difference in helping to improve the sending of missionaries. The time to begin teaching this philosophy in our local churches is *now*.

According to my survey research, the average independent Baptist missionary receives \$110.90 per supporter per month.⁴ If you are one of the majority who agrees that the system must be improved, this figure must also be improved.

I am passionate about this subject and discuss ideas like this with pastors from time to time. When getting to the point about increasing missionary support, I have had pastors tell me almost the same thing on more than one occasion. I have been told, “It is ridiculous how long missionaries have to endure deputation. That’s why our church supports missionaries at \$100 per month.” I write the following sentence in sincerity and love. *Churches that support missionaries for one hundred dollars per month or less are the reason why missionaries endure such a long pre-field ministry.* The simple truth is that if independent Baptist churches continue to support their missionaries for about \$100 per month, deputation will continue to be “ridiculously long.”

During our last furlough we met with a supporting church missions committee. They had some great questions for us. They asked “How many supporting churches do you have?” When I told them “more than 60,” you could hear an audible groan of sympathy around the room. I turned the question around and asked the chairman, “How many churches do you think would be ideal for a missionary to have?” He believed that a missionary should have more than 10 (for stability), but that fewer than 20 would be nice.

³ See appendix 2, the survey for pastors, question 8 and the survey for missionaries, question 16.

⁴ See appendix 2, survey for missionaries, question 6.

I said, “Then you believe it would be best for churches to support their missionaries at between 5 and 10 percent of their budget.” There was a long silence in the room as the committee members considered the suggestion.

How many supporting (or should I say, partnering) churches do you think would be ideal for a missionary? Would you like the challenge of visiting 62 churches during a 52-week furlough? This is exactly what a typical independent Baptist missionary faces during a one-year furlough. How many partners do you think would be just right? If you believe that 10 would be good, then are you willing to begin supporting new missionaries at \$600 per month? If you think 20 supporters is about right, then are you willing to begin supporting your new missionary partners at \$300 per month (on average)?

In my sample policy, I have suggested that churches begin supporting their missionaries by a percentage of their needed support rather than by a uniform amount for all missionaries. I have suggested supporting missionaries who are members of your church for twenty percent of their needed budget, and missionaries from other churches of like faith and practice at ten percent. I have already responded to the four common objections to this proposal in “An Ideal Independent Baptist Model” section of this manual. The pros of this method are obvious.

If independent Baptist churches began moving toward a ten percent level of support (twenty percent support for home missionaries), it would dramatically reduce the cost and time of deputation. Please recall that I have explained how this method will require neither more churches nor more money. It will simply require a change in philosophy of how the missions money is distributed. Current methods result in the average independent Baptist church sending money to 26.3 missionaries at around \$100 per month.⁵

The independent Baptist missions agencies I surveyed indicate that their missionaries have an average of 61.6

⁵ See appendix 2, survey for pastors, question 2.

supporters.⁶ If this first principle was gradually implemented across the country, eventually missionaries would only need nine supporting churches. This would reduce deputation time by years, and the cost of deputation by tens of thousands of dollars per missionary.⁷

I understand that my calculations are based on the improbability that all independent Baptist churches would switch to this proposed model. I also understand that the changes I am proposing will not happen overnight. I would actually *prefer* (as you will read in the final chapter) that these changes happen gradually over the next several years. Pastors need years to educate their people and lead them from a support philosophy to a partnership philosophy. For the sake of the missionaries currently on deputation, a gradual transition would also be better. Even with this reality check, the fact is that about three percent of the pastors I surveyed are already supporting missionaries at ten percent of their budgets or more.⁸ What I am suggesting is not only possible, it is currently happening in regular-sized local churches, where this principle has already been embraced. If just 5% of independent Baptist churches changed their policy to support missionaries at 10% of their budget each year, in just one generation (fewer than 20 years) we would arrive at the national scenario of each missionary having 9 or 10 partners rather than the current average of 60-something supporters. The time to begin increasing missionary support is now!

⁶ See appendix 2, survey for missions agencies, question 6.

⁷ Adam Crabtree, the executive director of Beacon International Baptist Mission, has studied the deputation expenses of missionaries from three independent Baptist mission agencies. His research concluded that “It costs a missionary family \$225,000 to complete 2.5 years of deputation and move to the field.” (Adam Crabtree, personal correspondence, December 21, 2018.) With my suggestion, missionaries could theoretically call and visit eighty two percent fewer churches than the current popular model. This percentage is based on the difference between the current model that requires an average of forty-nine supporting churches and my proposed model that would ideally require only nine supporting churches, an eighty-two percent difference in time, travel, expense, etc.

⁸ See survey for pastors question 8.

Churches that support their missionaries at ten or twenty percent make other significant investments in their missionaries. Increased percentage giving leads to holistic investment that involves many areas of partnership.⁹ Jesus taught, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21).

Churches who support dozens of missionaries for \$100 per month (or less) rarely communicate and partner with their missionaries spiritually, emotionally, physically, etc.¹⁰ When a church makes a \$600-\$1,200 monthly investment in one family, you can be sure their hearts, prayers, and partnership are “treasured” with that particular family. The church knows them personally, their current prayer requests, and the details of their work (and by “their work,” I am referring to the extension work of the *church* through the missionaries they partner with).

In chapter two, I began the “Moral Support” section by asking the question, “Is it possible for a local church to be *missions*-minded but not *missionary*-minded?” I do not question the generosity of independent Baptist churches. I firmly believe that independent Baptists are some of the most missions-minded Christians on the planet. However, I believe that if we are honest with ourselves, we could all use some improvement in our *missionary*-mindedness. Christ’s statement in Matthew six was a call to evaluate where we are laying up our “treasure.” I am certain of this; if we put our “treasure” and our focused effort into sending *missionaries*, in contrast to giving sacrificially to a *missions program*, we would see a noticeable improvement in the ministry of partnering and sending missionaries.

My suggestion to increase the support level of missionaries would not decrease the missions-mindedness of churches. Rather, increased individual support levels would focus our sending efforts on a handful of missionaries we know and love, rather than scattering our sacrificial generosity toward

⁹ Please review the “Missionaries Need Local Church Partners” section of Chapter 2 in this manual.

¹⁰ See survey for missionaries question 12 and footnote 69 of this manual.

a general missions program full of missionaries we barely know. Again, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:21). I believe Christ’s words support the principle that increasing individual missionary financial support will advance missions-mindedness, will improve missionary-mindedness, and will promote more giving among members of our local churches. It is missionaries who are sent, not missions programs.

Before moving on to the second principle, let me reiterate that I am *not* suggesting that you begin cutting and slashing missionaries from your missions program the moment you read this suggestion. In fact, I do not recommend that you cut *any* missionaries to accomplish this principle.¹¹ Instead, I would suggest that pastors take a year or two to teach their church the difference between the philosophy of supporting and the philosophy of partnership. I then suggest that the churches begin implementing this increase in financial support policy from this time forward – not retroactively.

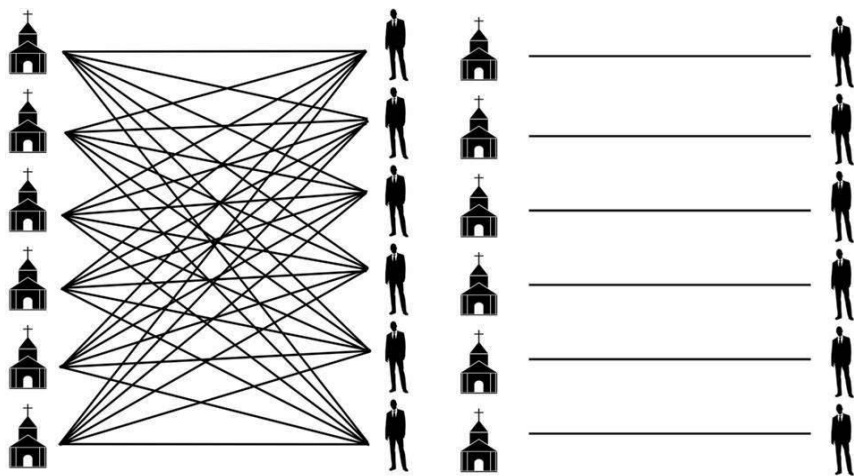
A natural question about this principle is, “If we increase the support of our new missionaries from now on to ten percent of their budget (\$600 per month average), how long will it be before we can take on our next missionary?” My surveys revealed that the average independent Baptist church increased their *monthly* missions giving by more than \$100 per year over the past five years.¹² This means that according to the survey information, the average independent Baptist church would be able to take on one new missionary at ten percent of his budget every four and a half years.

¹¹ See Appendix 1 and the Proposed Missions Policy.

¹² See survey for pastors, question 3 and survey for missionaries, question 6. According to these statistics the average independent Baptist church began supporting 6.9 new missionaries over the past 5 years. The average monthly support for current independent Baptist missionaries surveyed is \$110.90 per month. Therefore, the average surveyed independent Baptist church has statistically (not theoretically but actually) increased their *monthly* missions giving by about \$133.08 *annually* over the past five years. (6.9 missionaries x \$110.90 per month = \$665.40. \$665.40 ÷ 5 years = 133.08 per year.)

Rather than taking on about seven new missionaries every five years for support (the average independent Baptist rate according to my surveys), the average independent Baptist church would be able to take on a new missionary every four to five years.¹³ In other words, rather than continuing the current independent Baptist trend of commencing the support of six new missionaries for \$100 each over the next five years, I am suggesting that independent Baptist churches limit themselves and wait until they can partner with (*propempō*) one missionary for about \$600 per month. I emphasize again, such a policy would not require more churches or more than the average increase in missions money.

Let me explain this further for those who may still be unconvinced. A church can choose to support six missionaries for \$100 per month, or they can choose to support one missionary for \$600 per month (about ten percent of the average missionary budget).¹⁴ In both cases, the church is giving \$600 per month, and the missionary(s) are receiving \$600 per month.



The example on the left, in the illustration above, is an accurate, historical representation of the average independent Baptist church support practice over the past

¹³ See the survey for pastors, question 3.

¹⁴ Please refer back to the illustration in chapter 4.

five years.¹⁵ The average independent Baptist church I surveyed began supporting between six and seven new missionaries over the past five years. The example on the right in the illustration above represents my ideal proposal. If every independent Baptist church eventually began supporting missionaries at ten percent rather than about \$100 per month, statistically, the average independent Baptist church would be able to send or partner with one new missionary every four to five years.

Increasing individual missionary support will dramatically improve your relationship with the missionaries you support. Missionaries would be able to spend more time with each local church partner during furlough (perhaps weeks, rather than a single service). This first principle promotes genuine and healthy partnerships between churches and their missionaries. The next principle is designed to streamline and make the pre-field and furlough ministries more efficient.

Confine Your Missionary Candidates to One Geographical Region.

This second principle may seem insignificant, but it will save missionaries a lot of time and travel expense during deputation and furloughs. Since it would be impossible to calculate the distance of the average supporting church, I asked for the median distance of the supporting churches of the missionaries who took my survey. I learned that the median distance of supporting churches for those surveyed was 966 miles from their home church.¹⁶ *The distance between the sending church and the median supporting church of the average independent Baptist missionary is almost a thousand miles!* This statistic can and should change.

¹⁵ See survey for pastors, question 3.

¹⁶ The average distance of the missionaries' farthest supporting church was 1,905.11 miles (see the survey for missionaries, question 8). The average closest supporting church was 27.64 miles from the missionary's sending church (see the survey for missionaries, question 9). This makes the median supporting church distance 966.38 miles from the missionaries' home churches.

I have recommended in my sample policy that pastors consider not inviting potential missionary partners who live more than a day's drive from their church.¹⁷ Beals insists, "Draw the line where you will – two hundred miles, home state, or home state and adjoining states. We must put a stop to deputation globe trotting."¹⁸ Missionaries desire to get to the field as quickly as possible. Some are willing to drive, fly, run, swim, or hitchhike to just about any like-minded church in order to share their ministry burden and raise ministry partners. However, it is much more beneficial for life-long missionaries to be able to return home from the field and schedule all their update meetings with partners within one geographical region.

Veteran missionary and missions professor Steve Anderson raised his entire support twice. He is currently a field administrator for Baptist World Mission. He recalls,

When we came home from candidate school in August of 1979, I started asking (begging, really) the Lord to bring in our total support within a 200-mile radius of our home town, Flint, Michigan. The Lord honored that request. We ended up with 29 supporting churches, 2 of which were a 4-hour drive from Flint, and the other 27 churches within 2 hours of Flint. It was huge! Thank you, Lord! When we joined BWM in 1997, I was even bolder—asking the Lord to bring in our support within a 150-mile radius of Flint, and He did it!¹⁹

Anderson readily admits that a 150-mile radius would not be possible for a missionary sent out of a rural church in Montana, but the principle should still be applied even if the radius includes an entire state or a particular region of the country. Prayerfully draw a line, and do not support missionaries sent from a church on the other side of the country. Applying this principle is better for developing solid relationships with your missionary partners, and benefits both your church and her missionaries.

¹⁷ See Appendix 1, Qualifications for Partnership.

¹⁸ Paul A. Beals, *A People for His Name*, 85.

¹⁹ Steve Anderson, personal correspondence with author, April 13, 2020.

Dr. Fred Moritz made a suggestion that he applied in one of his churches. He had a pastor friend on the other side of the country who supported two missionaries that his church also supported. One of these missionaries was from his friend's region of the country and the other missionary was based in Moritz's part of the country. Moritz realized the waste of time and money these missionaries would face on furlough. He realized that his church would be better equipped to partner with fewer missionaries. So, in an attempt to develop a more concentrated partnership with his missionaries and to help financially and logistically improve the upcoming furloughs of both missionaries he made a proposition to his friend.

Moritz suggested an idea he refers to as the "drop one and double the support of the other" plan.²⁰ He asked his friend if he would be willing to trade the missionary from his region of the country for the missionary from his pastor friend's region of the country and then double the support of the missionary they each retained. In other words, both churches stopped supporting the missionaries from the other side of the country and then doubled the support of the missionary based in their area.

This kind of plan and action *will* improve the furlough travel of missionaries. This suggestion will not alter a church's missions budget by a single dollar, but could substantially improve relationships between local churches and their missionary partners (Matthew 6:21). The drop and double plan does not have to be used for missionaries far from your church either. This idea could also be used to help develop partnership relationships with missionaries in your region of the country also. If you are interested in cooperating in the "drop one and double the other" plan with other likeminded pastors, perhaps mission boards would be willing to help connect you with local churches that support two of the same missionaries your church supports. The savings in travel time and money would be

²⁰ Fred Moritz, personal correspondence with author, October 26, 2020.

considerable for churches and their missionaries every furlough.

Let me emphasize that I am *not* suggesting that every church should do this with all of their missionaries. If a church already has excellent partnerships with all of their missionaries (including the ones based on the other side of the country), then the “drop one and double the other” plan is unnecessary and counterproductive to the missionary partnership philosophy being promoted in this book. This idea is only for churches that have more missionaries than they can practically and actually partner with. I assume that if your church has been sending a check to a missionary every month for ten years, but they have never updated your church in all of that time, they would probably be more than willing to have you arrange to drop and double their support through cooperation with another supporting church in their home base region.

Missions agencies, statewide fellowships, and regional leadership conferences are just some of the potential catalysts for change. Most mission agencies are made up of a board of directors. These directors are typically pastors and leaders of key churches from across the country. If mission directors began teaching principles of improvement during workshops in their annual meetings, perhaps these key pastors and church leaders would take the philosophy of biblical partnership back to their churches and regions.

Real reform of the independent Baptist sending model must come as a gradual wave. One church in this state and another church in that state is how change begins, but this change must eventually gain national momentum. Broad change is possible and necessary. If you are a pastor or church leader reading this manual and you are excited about what you are reading, I encourage you to prayerfully and patiently begin the process of change in your church, while sharing this book and the principles in it with other pastor friends.

Allow me a moment to tell on myself. When we were on deputation nearly twenty years ago, we had one child. A

pastor called me and invited me to come to his church for their annual missions conference. I was thrilled; pastors do not usually call missionaries! I quickly learned that this church was located well over two thousand miles from my sending church and home base. However, the pastor offered to fly my family out to the conference and then promised to take us on for support.²¹ I said yes, and that church has been faithfully supporting us \$100 per month to this day. My wife and I now have four children. Can you believe that this supporting church has not seen my adult son since he was an infant, and that this faithful church has never met my three teenage daughters?

The travel expenses by vehicle to distant churches are also prohibitive. For example, we have a supporting church located about 500 miles from our sending church. This church supports us at \$50 per month. Whenever we come back to the States, this church requests that our family come and share an update in their church. Based on the government provided *per diem* statistics for miles and meals (not counting lodging), a weekend trip to and from this church could cost about 20 months' support ($\$50 \times 20 \text{ months} = \$1,000 \text{ per diem}$).

Geography may seem insignificant during deputation, but it is a big deal during furlough. The traditional pattern was that missionaries served overseas for four years and came back for a year-long furlough. For various reasons, many missionaries are choosing to return more often for shorter furloughs. We have personally tried to schedule six to eight-month furloughs every third year during our years as missionaries to Africa. Can you imagine trying to update more than sixty supporters in twenty-six weeks?²² Please help your missionary partners now and in the future by

²¹ The airfare for the three tickets was about \$1,200 or the equivalent of one year's support ($\$100 \times 12 \text{ months}$). If we ever wanted to update the church today, it would cost us about \$400 times six (\$2,400), or the equivalent of two years support from that church ($\$100 \times 24 \text{ months} = \$2,400$).

²² The average missionary has 61.58 monthly supporters. See appendix 1, survey for missions agencies, question 6.

confining your new missionary candidates to within a day's drive of your church.

There are literally hundreds of independent Baptist churches in each region of the country that already loosely, or informally, band together to support and send missionaries around the world. These churches do not all dot their i's or cross their t's exactly the same way, but they are close enough doctrinally and philosophically to support missionaries with the same mission agency (and therefore, the same doctrinal position). Baptist World Mission has held the same doctrinal position for more than sixty years. They were kind enough to provide some information to prove this point. I asked the finance office, "How many churches are Baptist World Mission missionaries currently receiving support from in the states of New York (the East), Florida (South), Indiana (Midwest), Texas (Southwest), and California (West Coast)?" The following statistics reveal how many churches in each of these strategic states have given love offerings or regular support to missionaries of Baptist World Mission.

235 churches in the state of New York

249 churches in Florida

420 churches in Indiana

149 churches in Texas

213 churches in California²³

Imagine a group of just fifteen or twenty churches in a state or region committed to this sending philosophy. They are all prepared and committed to supporting missionaries at five, ten, or twenty percent of a missionary's budget. They are all faithfully preaching and praying that God will call and send forth laborers from among their own ranks. Imagine when that first young couple is called. The couple has proven themselves faithful in their local church ministry. The home

²³ These statistics were acquired directly from the finance office of Baptist World Mission on March 23, 2020.

sending church commits to send them with twenty percent of their needed budget. The pastor contacts some of the other churches in the region, and these churches have the couple in for two or three weeks of ministry and fellowship. Imagine that couple getting on a plane for their field of service in six months rather than three years. Imagine them leaving with nine or ten supporting churches who know them well, rather than 61.6 supporters that they visited maybe one service.²⁴

Imagine this couples' first furlough. They never have to leave the state their entire furlough. As on deputation, these missionaries can spend a couple of weeks visiting and ministering in each partnering church, rather than popping into one church on a Sunday morning and another church in the evening every weekend for six months.

We all know that change would be better for churches and missionaries. The surveys reveal that the majority of both missionaries and pastors desire change. Experts have been outlining variations of these principles for decades. The time to stop talking and to beginning taking steps toward real change is now! Are you in?

²⁴ See appendix 1, the missions agency survey, question 6.

CHAPTER 7

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING A PARTNERSHIP MODEL IN YOUR CHURCH

Because you are still reading this book, I am confident that you seriously desire to improve your partnership and sending capabilities. Most of our discussion has focused on the biblical philosophy of sending and partnering with missionaries. The final portion of this manual is intended to provide some general strategies and personal motivation for your sending policy and procedures. If you are not fully content with your current missions program, I pray that this final section will encourage you to implement some of the difficult principles that will improve your sending responsibility and joy!

The Present Model Should Be Improved.

I believe the independent Baptist sending model is by far the most biblical and the most effective of all of the sending models. It worked for Paul, and it has been working to send American missionaries for more than a century. I have been privileged to grow up in serious sending churches, and my family and I have been sent by this model for the past two decades. I firmly believe this model is biblical. I do not believe the system is broken. With that said, I also believe it should be improved where possible. I am passionate about getting missions-minded leaders and church members to resolutely affirm that deputation and multiple local churches working together to send missionaries are biblical concepts. I am just as passionate about getting these same

people to acknowledge that the present model has several areas that should be improved.

More than two-thirds of independent Baptist pastors surveyed acknowledge that the current model needs to be overhauled or improved.¹ An acknowledgment of deficiencies is a good start, but many pastors and missiologists have been talking and writing about the need for improvements for decades. It is foolish to continually admit that the system needs some adjustments or repairs (decade after decade) while refusing to put into practice the difficult policies that are necessary to bring change and improvement.

Let us all determine to improve our sending and partnership practices with missionaries where possible. Change is difficult. Convincing people to do things “different than the way we’ve always done it before” comes with inherent challenges. However, even if the transition takes several years to actually implement in our churches, “...let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:9).

The Pastor’s Role Is Key.

There is a reason I prefer to be called “pastor” more than any other title by the members of our churches in Africa. The titles reverend, bishop, elder, doctor, presbyter, preacher, parson, etc., are legitimate and frequent prefixes to church leaders. However, none is so fitting to the ministry and responsibility of that leader as the humble term “pastor.”² Of course, the word “pastor” is the English transliteration of the Latin word *pastor*, which means

¹ See survey for pastors, question 12.

² This idea is beautifully explained in the first chapter of one of the best books on the philosophy of pastoral ministry ever written. I require all of my Bible college students to read the following book, and I highly recommend it as edifying reading for all pastors. Charles E. Jefferson, *The Minister as Shepherd* (U.S.A.: Ichthus Publications, 2019), 5-32.

shepherd. The pastor is the under-shepherd of the church of Christ. Like Christ, the good shepherd who leads, feeds, disciplines, and protects His flock, the under-shepherd or pastor of the local church is charged with the same responsibilities.

I offer this paragraph of explanation to emphasize the role and the responsibility of the pastor in bringing change to the local church's participation and philosophy of missions. Like a shepherd, the pastor must lead and guide the flock into the right philosophy and praxis of missions. Change is never easy, but a patient, faithful pastor can lead the flock from where they are to where they should be. A loving shepherd can bring about some of those needed improvements in missions philosophy.

Scottish Pastor George Robson said in an address at the fifth International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions,

In short, the pastor holds the key of the situation, and I do not know of any missionary-hearted pastor whose missionary outlook is always revealing itself in his handling of his ordinary pulpit themes and whose missionary zeal is always revealing itself in his pulpit intercession, who has not gradually drawn his people into full sympathy with his missionary aim.³

It is sad when a pastor rarely preaches about missions. Some pastors hire out this responsibility to others. Some will delegate the heavy responsibility of training the flock to be passionate about world missions to guest missionary statesmen. Some will invite keynote speakers to come and teach their philosophy of giving and faith promise. Robson further declared,

The second principle which we ought to firmly impress upon our own minds is the connection between the spirit of the pastor and the spirit of the people . . . The pastor

³ George Robson, "Points to be Emphasized in Developing the Missionary Interests of the Congregation," in *Students and the Modern Missionary Crusade* (New York, NY: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1906), 616.

must seek to be himself what he would have his people become. He must be an example as well as a teacher, in order to be their leader. I have found it not uncommon in Scotland for a minister who desired to awaken missionary interest in his congregation to ask a stranger to occupy his pulpit and preach a missionary sermon, or to invite a missionary to give an account of his work. Although such a visit may serve of passing interest, or quicken some to larger actions, yet for the masses the very fact that the pastor delegates this particular task to a stranger, induces them to look upon missions as a side work laying apart from the direct responsibility of the pastor and from the main life of the congregation, and to shun any concern about a charge which the pastor does not seek personally to enforce.⁴

Robson is not saying that inviting missionary guest speakers into your church is a bad thing; he is saying it is a bad thing if they are the only ones emphasizing and teaching the priority and philosophy of missions in your church. The pastor is to be the “example as well as the teacher.” The pastor is the key to changing the problems with the current independent Baptist missionary sending model. He must recognize that the current system has some areas that can and should be improved, and he must commit to leading his people in the way that he believes would be better—no matter how much time is required or how many difficulties will be encountered.

Twenty years ago, my family and I were on deputation. We attended the missions conference of a large church to which the senior pastor had recently been called. The halls of the church were lined with dozens of pictures and prayer letters of missionaries the church supported around the world. After the conference, the pastor told the visiting missionaries that he wished he could take us all on for support, but that the church needed a lot of work and development in their missions philosophy and program first. He hinted that the missions program he inherited was not as practical and effective as he would like. He told us that the church supported many missionaries that he had

⁴ Ibid, 615-616.

never met. He went on to confess that some of the “missionaries” supported by the church were not missionaries at all; they were simply relatives of church members involved in ministry.

Rather than continue to send lots of checks to lots of missionaries around the world, who no one in the church could remember, and rather than compound the problem by adding three or four more families from that conference, the pastor decided to begin the long, hard process of leading his people to accept a much more effective and biblical philosophy of missionary partnership. He assured us that after he had had some time to settle in and lead his church along, he would get back with us. I kept the pastor on my prayer letter update list, but never really expected to hear back from him again after we finished deputation and left for the field.

For the next decade, that shepherd lovingly and faithfully taught his people his practical and biblical philosophy of missions. He taught his flock the difference between sending checks and sending missionaries. He taught the difference between supporting missionaries to do *their* work and partnering with missionaries *in* the work. He made the case that it would be better to send fewer missionaries with greater investment and partnership, than to continue supporting scores of missionaries that very few people kept up with or knew. Ten years later, this same pastor contacted me and invited us to come and participate in their missions conference during our next furlough. I was delighted! This church has been a partnering church now for the past several years.

The pastor is the key to developing the missions philosophy of the church. The pastor must recognize that change is necessary and possible. The shepherd is the only one who can lovingly lead the church to change and improve her missions philosophy and policy.

The Partnership Model Must be the Goal.

I trust that by now you are convinced that a biblical philosophy of sending missionaries involves much more than finances. Partnership must be the goal, and a healthy view of sending should be the guideline.

Some years ago, a man in a church we were visiting said to me, “I hope we can take on more missionaries this year. You can’t support too many missionaries, can you?” That statement and question got me thinking. I am not convinced that a church “can’t support too many missionaries.” That last sentence may sound sacrilegious, but what do you think? Can a church support too many missionaries?

The biblical terminology for the relationship between churches and their missionaries is partnership (*propempō*). Missionaries are sent, not just supported with money. That is what the Bible teaches. We demonstrated from Paul’s inspired correspondence with his supporting church in Philippi that partners of missionaries should provide moral support (Philippians 1:3-5), prayer support (Philippians 1:19), reentry support (Philippians 1:21-2:2), communication support (Philippians 2:19), logistical support (Philippians 2:25), financial support (Philippians 4:15-19), and personnel support (Philippians 4:18).

Many churches cannot provide this level of partnership support for the missionaries they already support. If they were honest, they would have to admit that they actually support too many missionaries to effectively partner with all of them. One transparent independent Baptist pastor publicly admitted, “With over fifty missionaries, I would never be able to, in my lifetime, accurately or appropriately serve them, meet the needs that they have and provide the accountability that missionaries need on the field.”

Perhaps some churches should consider not taking on any more missionaries until they are better partners with the ones they already have. If we only want to support

missionaries to do their work, and we do not care about partnering with them in the work, serving them, meeting their needs or providing accountability, then the answer is “No, we cannot support too many missionaries.” If we are more interested in partnership and sending missionaries as the New Testament exemplifies, then the answer might be “Yes, we can support too many missionaries.”

A church with too many missionaries does not know their missionaries well and cannot effectually or fervently pray for them. Do we want to simply *support* missionaries as they do all the work, or do we want a biblical, active *partnership* with each of our missionaries?

I mean no disrespect by my words, and I certainly don’t mean to come across as a whining missionary. I am not disgruntled. I am passionate about encouraging change. In order to encourage change, sometimes we need to look in the mirror and honestly make personal needed changes (James 1:23-24). My intention is not to discourage more giving, praying, and going. I intend to emphasize the need for more sending and partnering in contrast to supporting and simply “taking on” more names of obscure missionaries. Partnership must be our sending goal.

The Plan Requires Patience.

Unless a pastor is a church planter, he inherits a missions program and philosophy from the previous pastor of the church. This inheritance is often a difficult situation. In addition to the previous pastor, the church has probably accumulated missionaries and unrecorded policies from several previous pastors.

Consider my home church as an example. In the past twenty years, we have had five senior pastors.⁵ All five of

⁵ A four-year average tenure is fairly typical for Baptist pastors. According to Thom S. Rainer of Church Answers, the median tenure of Southern Baptist pastors from 2004 to 2008 was four years. The median tenure of Southern Baptist pastors from 2012 to 2018 was six years. <https://thomrainer.com/2017/03/six-reasons-pastoral-tenure-may-be-increasing/>.

these pastors took on new missionaries during their tenure, and some missionaries were even added to our church missions program during interim pastoral leadership. In reality, our current senior pastor has inherited a missions program developed and influenced by each of the past ten pastors and interim pastors. Our current pastor has not personally met the majority of our supported missionaries. In addition, our church has never created or approved a missions policy. Sadly, this is an all-too-common scenario.⁶ Perhaps you are reading this book because your church is in a similar situation right now. What can you do? The watchword is patience. Missions professor Paul A. Beals wrote, “The word to eager, young pastors is – ‘Go slow!’ . . . Gain the confidence of your people, then necessary changes can be made together.”⁷

I estimate that it will take a minimum of two years to teach and persuade a local church of a biblical philosophy of sending/partnership. According to the survey statistics I collected, the average independent Baptist church’s missions fund grows enough to take on one new missionary (at ten percent of his budget) every four-and-a-half years. The church will need to decide if they want to increase the support of their current missionaries or if they want to wait, save, and take on new missionaries later down the road. Some churches may choose to lock their existing missionaries into their current rate of support and begin the new policy with missionaries going forward. No church should dishonor the commitment they have made to their current missionaries by cutting them all and just starting over from scratch. This would not be an ethical decision.

As in the case of my home church, it probably took decades for your church to get into its current situation. It will not be reversed in a week, a month, or even a year. It took years to get to where you are, and it will take years of faithful instruction, planning, and prayerful change to get to where you want your church missions program to be. The fact

⁶ This is the case for forty percent of the churches I surveyed. See appendix 2, survey of pastors, question 7.

⁷ Paul A. Beals, *A People for His Name*, 80.

that you are reading this book encourages me to believe that you are one of many committed to making patient, positive changes in how you send your missionaries.

The Plan Requires Action

I began this manual by sharing how deputation was described to me forty years ago. I went on to portray my own deputation experience twenty years after that. Another twenty years have passed since I began the ministry of deputation, and still, very little has changed. My surveys indicate that both missionaries and pastors agree that serious and substantial changes need to be made to the deputation and furlough models of independent Baptist missionaries.

Missionaries must recognize that deputation is biblical. Pre-field ministry is not exclusively about fundraising. Deputation is ministry. Missionaries must meekly embrace their God-given role in fulfilling the Great Commission. Missionaries should prayerfully enter each pre-field ministry and furlough opportunity as a chance to recruit more participants in the cause of world missions (both senders and goers). As missions professor Brian Bucy puts it, we must biblically and humbly recognize that “Missionaries are benefactors to the church, not beggars.”⁸

We have attempted to demonstrate the need for a philosophy of missions based on a biblical theology of missions. I believe that independent Baptist churches must do the work of the Great Commission through their missionaries rather than simply supporting missionaries to do missionary work. I believe we must not be content with sending checks; we must all be passionate about our personal responsibility of sending and partnering with missionaries (Romans 10:15). We must accept that missionaries are not substitutes or external agents of the church. Missionaries are members of the church who are sent by the church for the glory and in the power of the One

⁸ This quote was taken from personal correspondence with Pensacola Theological Seminary professor Dr. Brian Bucy on March 3, 2020.

who founded His church to do the mission of the church around the world.

Are you willing to be used of the Lord as a catalyst for change, even if few seem willing to join you? Are you willing to make changes and to promote change in some of the areas this book has highlighted? Do you believe it is a good idea to create and implement a missions policy in your church? Then do it now. Do you believe it would be better to limit the area from which you invite and partner with missionaries? Then do it now. Do you see the wisdom of partnering with fewer missionaries that your church can actually know, love, and minister with? Then begin teaching your people the difference between support and partnership now. Begin immediately to take steps toward the missions program you desire 5, 10, or 15 years from now. Many practical changes have been discussed for decades. *Now* is the time for action. *Now* is the time to rally and make the long-term commitments necessary for lasting change.

My prayer is that if the Lord stays His return, I would be able to look back twenty years from now and see individual churches, and possibly even regional concentrations of independent local churches, that have stepped up across the nation and are sending missionaries more effectively than they are today. I pray for churches that are passionate about sending independent Baptist missionaries. I pray that these churches will send and partner with their missionaries more efficiently, making more disciples for the glory of the Lord as a result of the implementation of some of the philosophies and principles delineated in this manual. Missionaries need partners.

Thank you for investing your precious time in reading this book. If you have any questions or if I can ever be of service to you in any way, please feel free to contact me at: **cameroon4christ@yahoo.com**.

All to the glory of God,

Ben David Sinclair

APPENDIX 1

A PROPOSED MISSIONS POLICY FOR ANYWHERE BAPTIST CHURCH

I. Purpose and Philosophy of Missions

Purpose

God is a missionary God. The Bible is a missionary book, and the local church is a missionary body to which Christ entrusted the task of reaching the world. Missions is not *a* ministry of Anywhere Baptist Church (ABC). The Great Commission is *the* mission of ABC! According to the Great Commission passages of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the God-given responsibility or mission of the church is to reach every person, of every nation in the world, for the glory of God. The believers of ABC are expected to be Spirit-filled witnesses “both” locally and “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Philosophy

Recognizing the biblical mandate to reach the world for God’s glory, ABC desires to develop a missions philosophy, policy, and program based on the Word of God. The Great Commission requires witnessing, baptizing, and making disciples of people from “all nations.” This discipleship

process can only be accomplished effectively through the planting of indigenous churches around the world.¹

The calling of making disciples and planting indigenous churches in the uttermost parts of the earth was given to those in the Bible called “apostles.” The word apostle is a Greek-to-English transliteration that means “sent one” (*apóstolos* = apostle). The 12 apostles were given supernatural sign gifts. These sign gifts ceased with the completion of the inspired 66 books of the Bible. To differentiate, the church’s “sent ones” today are called missionaries. The term missionary is a transliteration of the Latin word *missio*, which literally means “sent one” (*mission* = missionary).

A missionary is a God-ordained servant who is sent by his local church to cross geographical, cultural, and language barriers to proclaim the Gospel, baptize believers, train disciples of Christ, and to assemble these disciples into indigenous, autonomous local churches among all nations of the world to the glory of God.

Not every member of ABC is called to be a missionary, but every member of ABC is commanded to be a witness (Acts 1:8). Not every member of the church can be a “sent one,” but every member of the church is commanded to be involved in sending missionaries (Rom 10:15). The following policy is designed to give direction and guidelines to the missions program of ABC.

II. Leadership and Promotion

Pastor

The pastor is a gift from God to the local church (Ephesians 4:11). He is responsible for the leadership and direction of the church and its missions program. The pastor will give an account to God for his care and leadership of Christ’s

¹ The term indigenous refers to something that occurs naturally in its native habitat. An indigenous church is usually a reference to a church that may have been started by a missionary but is now autonomous, self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.

church—including how the church managed her Great Commission responsibility (Hebrews 13:17).

The pastor should preach and promote missions often from the pulpit. The pastor should regularly invite missionaries on deputation or furlough to share their burden for missions with the church (perhaps one per month). The pastor may take regular missions trips to see each missionary sent by the local church. Perhaps the pastor could take a missions trip every second or third year.

Deacon of Missions

While the pastor is ultimately responsible for the direction and oversight of the missions philosophy and direction of the church, the Bible has provided the church with servants who are ordained to assist the pastor in the work of the ministry. These servants are called deacons (Philippians 1:1).

A pastor is wise to appoint deacons over certain ministries and “business” of the church. As there may be a deacon of finances or a deacon of maintenance, there may also be a deacon of missions “whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:3).

The qualifications of the deacon of missions are the same as all other deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13). The pastor will ultimately determine the responsibilities of the deacon of missions. We do not want to be just a *missions*-minded church, but also a *missionary*-minded church.

III. Sending Practices

We want to send and partner with our missionaries well (Romans 10:15). Under the direct oversight of the pastor, the deacon of missions may work closely with the pastor in:

The organization of the annual missions conference.

The organization of a missions committee (if desired by the pastor).

The regular communication with each missionary (quarterly minimum).

The regular assessment of each missionary's morale and strategies for regular encouragement.

The assembly and shipping of personal and ministry-related logistical items (such as Bibles, tracts, and M&M's).

The promotion of faithful prayer for missions and missionaries. This promotion could include printed prayer lists and updates for the members of the church.

The reading or highlighting of missionary prayer letters every week from the pulpit.

The oversight of the sending and arrival of monthly support.

The promotion and organization of regular missions trips.

The quarterly communication with all sent missionaries. This communication is essential.

The reservation of a vehicle or rental house for missionaries during their furlough ministry.

The evaluation and facilitation of reentry support or counsel if the missionaries need it during furlough.

While these activities may be delegated to members of the church by the pastor or deacon of missions, all of these sending policies should be practiced by ABC in order to send their missionaries well.

IV. Budget

Faith Promise

The missions giving and budget of ABC will be structured on the Faith Promise system of giving. This means that each year, church members will make faith promise commitments that will give direction for the sending budget of the coming year. Faith promise giving is sacrificial giving

over and above the tithe. Missions giving will be used to send missionaries (as defined by the first page of this policy) and to further the Gospel abroad. Missions giving will not be used for local evangelism and outreach.

80/20

While the Faith Promise budget may wax and wane from year to year, the budget will be set up on an 80 percent, 20 percent system. This means that 80 percent of the promised money each year will go toward monthly support to send missionaries. The remaining 20 percent will be saved for:

Honorariums for guest missionary speakers throughout the year, including missions conference.

Special missionary projects (e.g. new tires for a missionary passing through or giving toward a project of a supported or non-supported missionary).

Saving to reach the amount needed to begin supporting another missionary on a monthly basis.

Having a surplus in case the 80 percent falls short and is not enough to pay the monthly support of our missionaries for some reason.

If the faith promise giving falls so short that the 20% surplus is not enough to cover the monthly financial support of all the missionaries, the church may use up to 10% of the general fund giving to cover the deficit for up to 3 consecutive months. If the deficits continue for more than three months, the church must reduce the percentage at which they support their missionaries equally across the board. Once the faith promise giving improves, the percentages of support will be returned to their original levels. (Any changes in support will be immediately communicated to all the missionaries in writing.)

Monthly Support

ABC will support new missionaries sent *from our membership* at 20 percent of their monthly budget.² This does not include former church members or loved ones who grew up in the church or school but are now members or sent out of another church.

ABC will support new missionaries who are *not members* of ABC at 10 percent of their monthly support. Monthly support will begin when the church votes to begin sending a missionary and will cease when the missionary retires, resigns, or is disqualified (according to this policy).

Since ABC already supports several missionaries below this monthly rate, they will be maintained at their current level indefinitely. Current missionaries supported by ABC who do not qualify under this new policy will be advised in writing that their support will cease when they return to the States for their next furlough.

Active missionaries disabled during service will be supported for four months, and then a review will be done by the pastor for consideration of continuation or cessation of support. Active widowed missionaries will be supported for one year, and then review will be done by the pastor for consideration of continuation or cessation of support.

V. Missionaries

Qualifications for Partnership

What kind of people will ABC send to further the Gospel, make disciples, and establish local churches? Missionaries sent by ABC:

² The typical independent Baptist church supports as many missionaries as they can for around \$110 per month. ABC does not want to simply send financial support to missionaries once a month; we desire to send missionaries with whom we enjoy a sincere partnership. The average independent Baptist missionary is laboring with a \$6,000 per month support budget. Therefore, a commitment of 20 percent may be approximately \$1,200 dollars per month. A commitment of 10 percent may be around \$600 per month.

Must have a clear testimony of salvation and calling.

Must be an active, ordained member of ABC or a likeminded, independent Baptist church in the United States.

Must meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Must be approved by a fundamental baptistic missions agency.

Must completely agree with the doctrinal statement of ABC and this missions policy.

Must be an evangelistic, disciple-making, New Testament church-planting missionary.

Must communicate with and update ABC quarterly in writing and at least once every five years in person. If a missionary does not follow this policy, he should be warned. If quarterly updates do not follow after two warnings, that missionary should be considered for removal from the ABC missions program.

Must be based out of a sending church less than 750 drivable miles from ABC.

Must complete deputation in less than four years. If deputation goes longer than four years, the missionary will be reviewed for consideration each quarter until deputation is complete or the church decides to quit sending that missionary.

Must maintain their original stated goals, sending church, mission agency, and field of service. If a change is made from these particulars, the change must be biblically and satisfactorily explained, and the new ministry, church, or agency must also be in full compliance with this policy. Any change in any of these areas must be explained to and approved by the membership of ABC.

Must maintain at least three-quarters of their time on the foreign field. Exceptions may be made for health or a family

emergency. If a missionary lives in the United States for more than one year, his status should be reviewed.

Must maintain their own retirement plan. We will not continue to support missionaries after their resignation, retirement, or dismissal.

Application for Partnership

Missionaries who desire to explore a partnership with ABC must first apply by filling out the application on the church website. This application includes the submission of the missionary's promotional material (with testimony and references), agreement with this policy, and agreement with the doctrinal statement of ABC.

Mission organizations, parachurch ministries, and missionary helps ministries may be considered for no more than \$100 per month support.

If the pastor is interested in one of the missionaries, he will call the missionary for a personal interview.

Prospective missionaries will be invited to come, share their burden, and preach at least once at ABC.

Before a missionary can be considered for a sending partnership with ABC, the missionary and his family must attend at least an entire missions conference, or at least two full Sundays.

If the church has enough money in faith promise commitments, the pastor may present a missionary to the church for a congregational vote to begin sending that missionary immediately.

Discontinuation of Partnership

The sending partnership of ABC will normally end when the missionary resigns or retires. The sending partnership will also conclude if the missionary changes his Great Commission goals, his doctrinal position (including his position on separation), fails to maintain the partnership

expectations listed in this policy, or changes his sending church, field of service, or mission agency without acceptable explanation.

Just as a partnership with missionaries must be proposed by the pastor and confirmed by a majority congregational vote, so the discontinuation of missionary support must be proposed by the pastor and moved by a majority congregational vote.

VI. Missions Agencies

The local church is the sending agency, and a mission board is a service agency. The mission board or agency is designed to serve or assist the local church in her sending responsibility. ABC is not large enough to have her own in-house mission agency. Furthermore, we believe that there are many sound fundamental Baptist mission boards already doing a good job servicing local churches and their missionaries around the world. All missionaries sent by ABC must be serviced by agencies or local churches that meet the following qualifications and expectations.

Qualifications

Must be a fundamentalist, separatist agency. This means it is unwavering on the fundamentals of the faith, and it separates from those who are not. It must practice and promote doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and personal holiness.

Must be a baptistic agency. Some good agencies do not have Baptist in their name, but agencies associated with ABC must be in agreement with our doctrinal statement and missions policy.

Expectations

Must honor the autonomy and authority of the local church.

Must be able and competent to process and distribute the financial support of our missionaries.

Must be competent in assisting our missionaries with legal issues, travel strategies, visas, and living in their foreign country.

Should be willing to offer experience and missions advice to the local church leadership when requested.

We want a healthy, transparent relationship with the missions agencies to which our missionaries are associated. Therefore, the agency must be willing to communicate with the pastor or the deacon of missions about financial, personal, or ministry-related issues of the missionaries they service. If something questionable is going on with the finances on the field and the missions agency is not forthcoming with the details of a missionary sent by ABC, the association with that agency will be immediately terminated.

Should be capable and willing to help evacuate missionaries in an emergency.

Must send all designated funds to the intended missionary. A reasonable fee or percentage for the mission agency is acceptable (up to 10% of the missionary's total budget), but an agency that pools funds of all their missionaries is unacceptable.

APPENDIX 2

NATIONAL SURVEYS

A Survey of Independent Baptist Pastors

A survey request email was successfully delivered to 1,411 independent Baptist pastors across the United States in June of 2018. This email was opened by 743 pastors. The following 20-question survey was completed by 111 of those pastors. The survey was completely anonymous.

1. How many members does your church have?

Independent Baptist churches have an average of 114.59 members (109 responses).

2. How many missionaries does your church support?

Churches support an average of 26.32 missionaries. One church gives to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative program. Some churches also support "organizations" such as Christian camps, mission boards, etc. (108 responses).

3. How many of these missionaries did you begin supporting in the past five years?

Churches began supporting an average of 6.91 new missionaries in the past five years. Eight churches have not started supporting any new missionaries in the past five years (106 responses).

4. How many, if any, of your missionaries did you increase support for over the past five years?

Churches increased the support of an average of 6.83 missionaries in the past five years. Thirty-two churches did not raise the support of any of their missionaries. Several responded with the word “All.” One pastor explained that they had to lower the support of their missionaries because of financial difficulties, but when the church income rebounded, they raised the support of their missionaries back up to their original levels (96 responses).

5. How much money did your church give to foreign missions last year?

Combined, the 102 churches who responded to this question gave a total of \$1,699,401.21 to foreign missions last year. The average church gave \$16,660.80. Based on the answers to the first question of this survey (on average, there are 114.59 members per independent Baptist church), independent Baptist church members gave an average of \$145.39 to foreign missions last year. That is \$12.12 per month and \$2.80 per week. In conclusion, the 12,490 independent Baptist church members represented by this survey gave an average of 40 cents per day last year to foreign missions.

6. How would you define a missions-minded church?

This question received 107 responses. Some responses were brief, while others were paragraph length. This evaluation has attempted to quantify the defining concepts into 13 identifiable categories. Pastors indicated that a missions-minded church is a church that:

- Financially supports missions (40 mentions),
- prays for missionaries (34 mentions),
- is involved in local and foreign outreach (31 mentions),
- is fulfilling the Great Commission (26 mentions),
- furthers the Gospel through evangelism (21 mentions),
- educates and promotes missions through missions conferences, missionary prayer letters, and missionary speakers (20 mentions),

- sends missionaries from its own church (both long and short-term, including visiting missionaries on the field) (18 mentions),
- promotes church planting (11 mentions),
- emphasizes missions as their church's priority (9 mentions),
- communicates with missionaries and “loves missionaries” (8 mentions),
- partners with missionaries (4 mentions),
- is “going continually” (4 mentions), and
- practices missions for the glory of God (2 mentions).

Some concepts were so unique that this surveyor struggled to fit them neatly into a particular category. These unique definitions are quoted here. Pastors defined a missions-minded church as: “A church with a love for God and therefore a love for others.” “Obeying every impulse of the Holy Spirit.” “A church that determines to reach an area and dedicates their resources to that region without piecemealing their money in a hundred directions.” “A church that is obedient to Christ, because they have a heart for Him, His Word, and His will.” “A church that has as part of its philosophy and emphasis outreach to the unreached, and expresses that practically and substantially in its ministry.” “A New Testament church.” “A church that seeks to reproduce itself.” “A church who is making disciples of Christ who are making disciples of Christ.”

7. Does your church have a congregationally-approved missions policy?

One hundred nine submissions resulted in 66 “yes” responses (59 percent), and 45 “no” responses (41 percent).

8. What is your goal of financial missionary support?

Thirty pastors (27.27 percent) responded by selecting the option that read, “We want to support fewer missionaries at a higher support level than the average independent Baptist church.” Twenty-one pastors (19.09 percent) responded, “We want to support as many missionaries as we can at an average independent Baptist support level.” Twenty-seven

pastors (24.55 percent) “want to support as many missionaries as we can up to \$100 per month.” Most of these support their missionaries at either \$50 or \$75 per month. One pastor said their church desires to support a missionary in every country of the world for \$50 per month.

The greatest number of pastors selected the choice, “Other (please explain).” Thirty-two pastors chose to explain their church philosophy of supporting missionaries rather than selecting one of the three provided choices. Eight of these pastors (7.27 percent) said they support missionaries as the Lord leads them. Five pastors (4.55 percent) said they want to support “as many as we can for as much as we can.”

Three pastors explained that they support their missionaries at a percentage of their needed budget, rather than with a monthly dollar amount. Two of these pastors support missionaries from other churches for 10 percent of the missionary's needed budget. One church supports their “home grown missionaries” for 25 percent of their budget. The second church supports their own missionaries at 20 percent of their budget, and the third pastor said, “If our church sends a man, we will support him at 50 percent of his needed support.”

One pastor explained that his church increases the support of their missionaries by \$25 per month each time the missionary reports to their church during a furlough. One of the last pastors wrote, “We want to support missionaries in as many places as possible without losing . . . the ability to be familiar with each missionary family.”

9. Approximately how many missionaries on deputation contact you each month?

The average pastor receives 4.95 calls or emails each month from missionaries on deputation (105 responses).

10. Approximately how many missionaries on deputation do you schedule in your church each year (including missions conference)?

One hundred nine pastors responded with a number of answers. The results reveal that independent Baptist churches schedule about 5.19 missionaries on deputation in their church each year. Five pastors responded by saying that until the church finances increase, they only invite missionaries they already support, or furloughing missionaries. One pastor wrote that he only invites missionaries he intends to support.

11. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects your practice of inviting missionaries on deputation to your church?

One hundred ten pastors answered this question.

- Thirty pastors (27.27 percent) selected or explained that “We only invite missionaries on deputation we intend to support financially.”
- Fifty-one pastors (46.36 percent) indicated, “We regularly invite missionaries on deputation to present their work and then select some for financial support.”
- Twenty pastors (18.18 percent) explained that “We periodically invite missionaries on deputation to our church in order to keep the Great Commission before our eyes, even though we do not plan to take on any new missionaries in the immediate future.”
- There were nine “other” or unique responses. Three of these indicated they do as God leads. One said they could not support missionaries, but when they invite missionaries in they give them a “generous love offering” to help them on their way.

12. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects your opinion of the current independent Baptist deputation/furlough paradigm?

This question produced 106 responses.

- Four pastors (3.77 percent) believe “it is effective as it is and cannot be improved.”
- Thirty-one pastors (29.25 percent) believe “it is acceptable.”

- Fifty-seven pastors (53.77 percent) think “it is working but could use significant improvements.”
- Twelve pastors (11.32 percent) feel “it is a broken system and should be replaced by a completely new paradigm.”
- Two pastors (1.89 percent) believe that “deputation is unbiblical and should not be done.”

13. What would you estimate the average independent Baptist church sends for monthly support to its individual missionaries?

One hundred eight pastors answered this question with a figure. A few pastors specifically commented that they are independent churches and they “do not care” what other churches are doing. Several left this answer blank or admitted they had “no idea.” Of the ones who answered, the average guess was \$75.90.

14. How many years would you estimate the average independent Baptist missionary spends on deputation?

One hundred four viable answers produced an average estimation of 3.06 years. According to the survey answered by missions agencies, the actual average is 2.5 years (see question 11 of the agency survey).

15. Which of the following statements most accurately describes your expectation of your furloughing missionaries?

Exactly half of the 110 pastors who responded to this multiple choice question did not chose one of the given answers but decided to write in their preference. After reevaluating the questions and answers, the expectations of these pastors have been divided into seven categories.

- Thirty-four (30.91 percent) said, “We do not expect our missionaries to visit us during their furloughs; we are content with faithful prayer letters.”
- Twenty-three (20.90 percent) conveyed that they expect visits when “feasible.” In other words, when the missionary has time, when he is in the area, or when he can afford it.

- Sixteen (14.55 percent) said, “We expect our missionaries to update us as a family during each furlough.”
- Fourteen (12.73 percent) said, “We do not expect our missionaries to update us during their furloughs. We are content with virtual updates like DVD furlough presentations and live Skype calls.”
- Twelve (10.91 percent) indicated that they expect periodic visits, but not every single furlough.
- Seven (6.36 percent) said, “We expect our missionary men, but not their families, to update us during each furlough.”
- The remaining four (3.64 percent) communicated that it was up to the Lord's leading.
- One pastor suggested that missionaries “call the pastor when you are on furlough.” Another mentioned, “We also don't think it's healthy to be driving all across the country to connect with every church on every furlough.”

16. How many of your supported missionaries have you visited on the field?

One hundred five pastors responded to this question. The average pastor has visited 2.29 of his missionaries on the field. Not all of these visits were to foreign fields. Thirty-three (31.43 percent) of these pastors have never visited one of their missionaries on the field.

17. Do you read the prayer letters of your supported missionaries?

One hundred ten pastors answered this question. Eighty-nine pastors (80.91 percent) read all prayer letters. One mentioned that they have missionaries who send weekly updates. They do not read every weekly update, but they do read all the monthly or quarterly updates. Sixteen pastors (14.55 percent) read some or most of their missionaries' prayer letters. Five pastors (4.55 percent) indicated that “someone conveys the prayer letter highlights to me.”

18. How many times each year do you personally correspond (by phone or by mail) with your missionaries?

According to the 110 pastors who answered this question, 32 responded with answers that cannot be calculated. They wrote things like, “as needed,” “depends,” and “varies.” Some wrote comments like, “a lot,” “often,” and “frequently.” Others wrote reviews of themselves like, “not enough,” “infrequently,” “rarely,” “hardly ever,” and “I need to do better.” The other 78 pastors communicate with their missionaries 4.73 times per year, on average. A few pastors stated that they reply to every update they receive from their missionaries.

19. Beyond financial support, in what ways does your church participate in meaningful partnership and relationship with your missionaries?

There seemed to be a common misunderstanding about this question. The question was asking about things that churches do to develop the personal relationship (friendship) with their missionaries. Many commented on ways they encourage missions in general, but not *missionaries* personally. For example, the most common thing pastors mentioned in response to this question was, “prayer.” Prayer is an essential aspect of missions, but it does not improve relationships between missionaries and their supporters. The question was obviously not written well or clear.

The results showed seven ways that pastors believe they “participate in meaningful partnership and relationship with” their missionaries. Of the 106 pastors who answered this question,

- Twenty-eight said they pray (26.42 percent),
- Twenty-one said they remember their missionaries during birthdays and Christmas with cards or personal correspondence (19.81 percent),
- Eighteen give toward special projects and needs (16.98 percent),
- Nine take missions trips (8.49 percent),

- Nine highlight and read missionary prayer letters in church (8.49 percent),
- Six provide furlough housing or do special things with their missionaries during their furloughs (5.66 percent), and
- Four send care packages or gifts to their missionaries on the field (3.77 percent).

20. What suggestion(s) would you personally offer to other pastors to improve the current independent Baptist deputation/furlough paradigm?

Ninety-four pastors offered suggestions to their peers. Ten suggested that churches, and their missionaries, would be better off if churches supported fewer missionaries at a higher rate or percentage. In the words of one pastor, “Support fewer missionaries at a higher rate so they don't have to spend so long on deputation. When they do go on furlough they can spend more time with supporting churches and less on travel time and money.”

Seven respondents stated that pastors should be very involved in helping missionaries contact and network with pastors during the missionary's deputation ministry. One pastor wrote, “If each pastor just recommended three fellow pastors to every worthy missionary on deputation, this would be a remarkable help.” Another wrote, “When you find an awesome missionary, recommend him to everyone you know.”

The encouragement for pastors to emphasize missions as the mission of the church, not just “a program,” was suggested. Several pastors encouraged their peers to visit missionaries on the field. Many offered the counsel that pastors should be more active in getting to know their missionaries, their families, and their ministries on a more personal level. Four pastors advised, “Do not invite or bring in missionaries you cannot support.” Others said that pastors should be transparent with missionaries about the possibility of support.

Many pastors offered unique suggestions to this question. The following suggestions are quotes taken directly from the survey. "Concern yourself with producing more missionaries from your own church." Five recommended that their fellow pastors respond to all missionary phone calls and correspondence, even if the answer is "No." One wrote, "Missionaries waste a lot of time on second, third, and fourth calls."

One wrote, "Ask the missionaries themselves for advice. Listen and learn from them." Others wrote, "I believe pastors should honor these men and their families. Many of us pastors treat missionaries condescendingly." "Treat missionaries properly; we cannot do our work without them." "Stop lording over missionaries." "Don't judge a book by its cover; get to know the missionaries by having honest conversations." "Give in faith to missions beyond what you think you can afford."

Furlough is important for churches to get to know their missionaries. "Paper" relationships atrophy over time. "Stop sending missionaries stupid questionnaires." "Make sure your own heart is fervent for missions." "Encourage missionaries to see deputation as ministry, not a necessary evil." "Sending churches should take on half the needed support of their missionaries."

"The independent nature of many churches makes deputation unnecessarily difficult, time-consuming, and expensive. We need to develop cooperative networks that would allow us to better vet and then support missionaries that allows us to invest our funds, and them, their efforts, on mission." "The current system needs some radical change. Perhaps a tentmaking model would be better." "Stop forcing missionaries to crisscross the country for your missions conference. Only invite those from your region."

"I never refer to it as furlough because that term implies rest. There is nothing about deputation, pre-field ministry, or whatever term is employed that is restful. I suggest that churches accommodate missionaries, their schedules, and their families as much as possible." "I feel each pastor

should do deputation. It would increase love offerings and shorten deputation.” One pastor simply suggested, “Use 'faith promise' giving.”

Several pastors tried to balance the question out by reminding others of the positive attributes of deputation. One wrote, “I think there is value in the deputation model as it currently exists.” Another pastor wrote, “I'm good with deputation. I see it as a ministry for the missionary, and good training for living by faith and building relationships with pastors and churches.” “I think there is value in the deputation model as it currently exists.”

The suggestions continued. “I believe pastors should better prepare their missionary candidates before they send them out on the trail.” “Promote missions on a weekly basis in your church.” “Encourage membership to personally know the missionaries they support.”

A Survey of Independent Baptist Missions Agencies

The following survey was sent to 47 independent Baptist missions agencies in June of 2018. A total of 15 agencies completed the survey.

1. How many missionary units does your agency service (singles, couples, or families are each referred to as one “missionary unit” in this context)?

Fourteen agencies answered, representing 1,560 missionaries. The average independent Baptist agency participating in this survey services 111.43 missionaries.

2. What is the average, budgeted monthly support for your missionary families (this question includes couples without children)?

Thirteen agencies answered. The average budgeted monthly support is \$6,209.01. While this figure represents the average budgeted support for missionaries, it is important to note that the average missionary is actually receiving less than 90 percent of his budget each month in actual donations (see question five below).

3. What is the average, budgeted monthly support for your single missionaries?

Nine agencies answered. The average monthly budgeted support is \$3,325.23.

4. Are your missionaries required to maintain 100% of their monthly, budgeted support to remain on the field?

The unanimous answer of all 15 agencies was “no.”

5. At what percentage of monthly support do your missionaries living on the field average?

Nine agencies answered. The average was 89.83 percent.

6. On average, how many supporters does each missionary have?

The average number of supporters for each missionary is 61.58 supporters (13 agencies answered).

7. What is the average monthly donation given by supporters to your missionaries?

The average monthly donation per supporter is \$91.15 (13 agencies answered).

8. What percentage of your missionaries' supporters are individuals (as opposed to local churches)?

The average percentage of individual supporters is 16.64 percent (11 agencies answered).

9. Have you seen an increase or decrease of individual supporters in the past decade?

Five agencies saw an increase in individual supporters (42 percent). One agency saw a decrease (8 percent), and six agencies saw no recognizable change (50 percent). Twelve agencies answered this question.

10. What best summarizes your agency's preference or philosophy concerning individual supporters?

- Zero agencies indicated “We do not allow our missionaries to accept support from individuals.”
- Two agencies indicated “We discourage but do not refuse individual supporters.”
- Four agencies indicated “We encourage some individual supporters.”
- Zero agencies indicated “We recommend that our missionaries raise a majority of their monthly support through individual supporters.”
- Other (please explain)... Seven agencies communicated that “We encourage them to get church support, but we do not discourage them from obtaining individual supporters.” One agency holds the view that “We leave that up to the missionary and his supporting church.”

11. What is the average duration of deputation for missionaries with your agency (from the date of appointment to the date of departure for the field)?

The average duration of deputation is 2.5 years (13 agencies answered).

12. What percentage of missionaries begin deputation, but never reach the field?

The average percentage of missionaries who begin deputation but never reach the field is 8.7 percent (10 agencies answered).

13. What is the average tenure of missionaries with your agency (please calculate from the time of appointment to the time of resignation or retirement, and give your answer in years rather than terms or some other measurement)?

The average tenure of independent Baptist missionaries is 16.83 years (9 agencies answered).

14. Does your agency have a required program or curriculum to help prepare and educate your missionaries for their ministry of deputation (e.g. candidate school, required reading, etc.)?

Thirteen agencies answered, "Yes." One agency answered, "no." Of the 13 agencies that answered "yes," seven require two weeks or more of candidate school training. One agency requires their missionaries to complete a book list. Three agencies require two or more weeks of candidate school, plus they have a required reading list. One agency did not explain.

15. Does your agency have a program or curriculum to help educate pastors and churches in the roles and responsibilities of being partner-senders?

Eight agencies answered, "No." Six agencies answered, "Yes." Only two explained their program for educating pastors and churches. One agency offers yearly pastors'

conferences, and another agency offers educational videos on its website.

A Survey of Independent Baptist Missionaries

The following survey was offered to 855 independent Baptist missionaries. The survey was completed by 109 missionaries during June, July, and August of 2018.

1. How many churches did you call during deputation?

Missionaries called an average of 925 churches during deputation. One missionary decided “to see the pastors face to face” rather than call them on the phone. One answered the question by writing, “Eight hours a day, six days a week, for many months” (95 responses).

2. How many churches did you visit during deputation?

Missionaries visited an average of 168 churches during deputation. One missionary stated that many of his meetings were “unscheduled meetings” (101 responses).

3. What percentage of the churches you visited committed to support you monthly?

Missionaries averaged regular support from 22 percent of the churches they visited during deputation (101 responses).

4. How many supporters do you presently have?

Missionaries average 49 regular supporters (102 responses). For some reason, this number is significantly lower than the same question given to missions agencies. Missions agencies reported that their average missionary has 61.58 supporters (Missions agency survey question 6).

5. How many of your supporters are individuals or families (as opposed to churches)?

Missionaries average 4.75 individual supporters (104 responses).

6. What is the average monthly support of your supporters?

Supporters give an average of \$110.90 per month (98 responses).

7. At what percentage of your budgeted support are you currently ministering?

Missionaries minister while averaging an 89.39 percent support level. Two missionaries mentioned that part of their income is from social security (98 responses). This response is the same as the response collected from question 5 of the missions agency survey (89.83 percent).

8. What is the distance of your farthest supporting church (in drivable miles) from your stateside home base or sending church?

The average distance of missionaries' farthest supporting church is 1,905.11 miles (101 responses).

9. What is the distance of your nearest supporting church (in drivable miles) from your stateside home base or sending church?

The average distance of missionaries' nearest supporting church is 27.64 miles (104 responses). According to the responses of questions 8 and 9, the median average distance of missionaries' supporting churches is 966.38 miles.

10. What was the average dollar amount of your love offerings during your deputation ministry?

The average deputation love offering was \$249.83. One missionary mentioned that some churches include gift cards with their honorariums. Another missionary observed an ironic trend during his deputation. He wrote, "The smaller the church, the bigger the offering and vice versa." One missionary reported that his largest love offering was over \$700, and came from a church of fewer than 100 people (84 responses).

11. How many contacts receive your prayer letter updates?

On average, missionaries send their updates to 395.17 recipients. Many post their updates on Facebook and some mentioned that they send weekly updates (99 responses).

12. How many personal replies do you average each time you send out your updates?

Missionaries receive an average of 6.42 responses from their prayer letter updates (102 responses).

13. What suggestions would you like to anonymously offer to pastors and churches that might improve the *deputation* experience for missionaries and churches (Feel free to offer as many suggestions as you like on any area of deputation ministry, travel, hospitality, correspondence, family, etc.)?

This question generated hundreds of suggestions. The following list includes both often-repeated suggestions as well as unique advice. More than 100 missionaries responded to this question.

The most popular suggestion to pastors was the request that they clearly communicate their expectations for the missionaries during their visit and to be honest about the possibility of support. This suggestion was repeated almost word for word by 28 missionaries. Several reported that pastors often told missionaries they were going to take them on for support, but then never did, and never gave an explanation. One missionary said that ten churches promised to begin supporting him when he left for the field. None of these churches followed through with their verbal commitment.

The second most popular suggestion was that pastors begin supporting fewer missionaries at a much higher level of support. Seventeen missionaries made this suggestion. One response suggested supporting missionaries at 5-15% of their budget rather than a uniform amount of money for every missionary—no matter their field or budget. One suggested, “Pastor people into a better philosophy” partnership with missionaries.

Sixteen missionaries desired that pastors would call them back, “even if the answer is ‘no.’” One indicated that he contacted 400 churches during his deputation. He said he had to call these churches “5 times each” on average to reach the pastor. Two missionaries wrote that churches need to call missionaries back or “change their answering machine message,” which nearly always promises, “Please leave your name and number, and we will return your call as soon as possible.”

Twelve missionaries recommended that pastors invite missionaries to stay for a longer visit. Several missionaries suggested that churches be more considerate about housing arrangements. Pet allergies, food allergies, laundry, privacy, ironing, and offering to house the missionary until his next meeting were all offered as suggestions. Three missionaries recommended that the pastor stay one night in the prophet's chamber or housing arrangement to see what it is like and what might be done to improve the situation.

The results of preferred missionary housing were diverse. Two missionaries said they preferred a clean, private prophet's chamber. Four indicated that they preferred to stay in homes and get to know the people of the church better. Five preferred staying in a hotel. Two factors, however, were unanimous among all respondents. The consensus was, “Please make sure, wherever you house missionaries, that the place is clean and provides family privacy.”

“Please remember we are human.” And, “Let our kids be kids” were a couple of suggestions mentioned by five missionaries. Ten missionaries asked that churches be considerate of home-schooled families by not over-scheduling the mother and children. Five asked that pastors only invite missionaries they are planning or able to support. They wrote that this policy would prevent a missions conference from devolving into what missionaries referred to as a “talent competition” or “beauty contest.”

Other practical deputation suggestions for pastors included, “Teach and encourage your people to develop missionary partnerships, rather than just missions support.” Three missionaries requested help from pastors to schedule other local churches in their area.

Some practical furlough suggestions included providing missionaries with a car or at least offering a mechanic's help when they visit. Two missionaries suggested that churches consider raising their support annually based on inflation. According to this survey, missionaries love restaurant, gas, and Walmart gift cards (in contrast to missionary closets).

14. What were the most challenging and potentially discouraging parts of deputation?

One hundred eight missionaries responded to this question. Thirty-six indicated that trying to reach pastors and the lack of response from pastors was disheartening. The second most challenging part of deputation is the “exhaustion” of travel, schedules, and the “length” of deputation. Taking care of children on the road and living out of a suitcase for years is potentially discouraging to some.

The third great challenge of deputation, according to the survey, is the perceived “lack of interest” and “apathy” toward missionaries. Twenty-two missionaries referred to a lack of anticipation or excitement with missionary arrival and attendance. A few mentioned the discouragement of learning that they were scheduled only as pulpit supply, and the pastor was out of town.

“Scrutiny,” “criticism,” and “judgment by others” were challenges cited by nine missionaries. Seven more missionaries mentioned the unrealistic expectations put on missionary children.

According to 13 missionaries, more than a few pastors promised support, promised to return calls, or promised to mail the love offering later, but did not follow through.

Other challenges mentioned by three missionaries included deputation “dry spells”—when weeks and months go by without new support. “Scary prophet's chambers,” “dirty homes,” and “unsafe hotels” were mentioned by five missionaries. Keeping up with one's walk with God during the trying schedule and uncertain locations of deputation were challenging for some. Trials like bereavement, sickness, and vehicle troubles were also mentioned.

Five missionaries wrote that it is a struggle to navigate the “camps” and the hot-topic issues from one church to the next. Twelve missionaries reported that they found deputation an overall positive experience.

15. What were the most rewarding and encouraging parts of deputation?

One hundred five missionaries answered this question. Their answers can be summarized in the following seven categories.

The most rewarding and encouraging part of deputation was the development of lifelong friends and prayer partners according to 52 missionaries. These friends include pastors, church members, and other missionaries.

The second most common answer had to do with the joy of seeing fruit during deputation (28 mentions). Souls are saved, and Christians surrender to the call of missions across the country as a result of independent Baptist missionaries going, witnessing, and preaching throughout the nation.

Seeing the strength and the growth of Christ's church in many places is a faithful blessing (26 mentions).

Many missionaries are thankful for the opportunities to learn and depend on God's faithfulness, provision, and answered prayers during deputation (16 mentions).

Sixteen missionaries cited the expressions of “love,” “hospitality,” and “generosity” by so many of God's people as a constant encouragement.

“Seeing much of America as a family” was mentioned by 9 missionaries.

Five missionaries mentioned how learning great ideas from pastors and missionaries across North America encouraged them.

16. What suggestions would you like to anonymously offer to pastors and churches that might improve the *furlough* experience for missionaries and churches (Once again, feel free to make as many constructive suggestions as you like)?

Some of the 110 missionaries who completed this survey could not answer this question because they had not yet experienced furlough. Even so, the remaining veteran missionaries provided scores of suggestions for pastors to help them improve the *furlough* time and ministries of their missionaries.

Suggestions from missionaries to pastors include again the suggestion to support fewer missionaries at a higher amount or percentage. Twelve missionaries suggested that pastors allow them more time to update and share what God has done since the last update. Twelve missionaries requested that pastors do better with personal communication. Nine missionaries desired that pastors would clearly state what they expect them to do when they arrive to report during furlough.

Nine missionaries wanted pastors to understand that furlough is not a vacation. Six survey responses specifically mentioned the children. “Remember the children” was one suggestion. Nine missionaries requested some personal, one-on-one time with the pastor. Eight missionaries requested that pastors be “flexible” with missionaries on furlough. It was suggested by five missionaries that pastors consider not requiring their missionaries to come and update the church physically every furlough.

Five missionaries mentioned how difficult it is to find a car or a place to live during a furlough. Four suggested reassuring your missionaries during their furlough that you are praying for them. Four suggested increasing the

support of missionaries based on the value of the dollar or a little increase each year. Three asked that pastors be cautious and considerate about housing arrangements. Three missionaries say that furlough is a good time to raise funds for special projects on the field. Three asked to be treated as friends by pastors. Two suggested providing time and space for home-schooling families. Two suggested being sensitive to dietary needs, and two requested sufficient time to prepare for return to the field.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ben David Sinclair was born in Crown Point, Indiana. He was born of the Spirit at the age of 12 during a week of revival meetings. Ben was called to preach the next year and began serving the Lord through disciple-making and preaching in high school. His godly parents, Gerald and Patricia Sinclair, have been very instrumental in his spiritual growth and direction.

Ben married Rebecca Ann Sykes in June of 1999, and God has blessed them with four awesome children. Ben was ordained and is sent by Calvary Independent Baptist Church of Chattanooga, TN. The Sinclairs joined Baptist World Mission in February of 2001 to serve the Lord in Cameroon, Africa.

Ben earned a bachelors and masters degree from Northland International University, a Specialist in Ministry from Bob Jones University, and a Doctor of Ministry from Pensacola Theological Seminary.

God has enabled the Sinclairs to plant several churches, establish the Faith Baptist Bible College of Bamenda, and participate in the training of several ministers who have been instrumental in establishing dozens of churches in West Africa.

Ben has written several gospel tracts, multiple college courses, a pre-marital counseling curriculum, and four books (*Should Christians Drink Wine and Alcohol?*, *Pentecostalism: A Different Gospel*, *Spiritual Growth Series*, and the book you hold in your hand).

Ben's life is a testimony of the grace of God. He is afraid of heights and hates flying, but God called him to be a missionary in Africa where making long flights is a necessity. Ben is extremely shy by nature, but God called him to preach at age 13. He has been forced to depend on the Holy Spirit for grace and power every time he steps behind the pulpit. Ben was diagnosed with dyslexia while in grade school, and yet God is enabling him to learn his third language in his forties. He spells at a grade school level and has been unable to learn how to type properly. Even with his modified hunt-and-peck typing technique, God has used him to write thousands of pages of evangelistic and discipleship material.

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord”
(1 Corinthians 1:27 and 31).