SEND TO *SURVIVE*

SEND TO SURVIVE

A Missions Handbook for Churches on How to Send Well

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MISSIONARY

Send to Survive: A Missions Handbook for
Churches on How to Send Well

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The Work of Missions Essential to the Life of the Church

It may seem an unnecessary task to endeavor to show that the work of missions is essential to the life of the Church, that it is involved in the idea of its being, and in the history of its origin; and that the New Testament in its doctrine and its history sets forth the salvation of the world as the object of the gospel, and lays the responsibility for the accomplishment of that object upon the missionary agency of the Church. It is so true that it seems like a truism; and yet, like many things of primary importance, there is danger that it be left to take care of itself in the search after less obvious and practical interests. . . .

The Church cannot live except by growing, it cannot exist except by extending itself. And yet, throughout its history, it has been occupied with controversies, with the development and settlement or reformation of its doctrines, with the discussion of its relations to the state, or with the struggle for existence under persecution, and its work of missions has been lost sight of, or

relegated to a secondary place in its estimation, instead of being regarded as the reason for its being, and the legitimate sphere of its activity. And even in these days of missionary agencies, we are apt to regard the work as accessory rather than fundamental; to draw distinctions between its various departments more than to insist upon its essential unity; and therefore, to underrate the effect of this work upon the spirituality of the Church and upon our own personal spiritual life. . . .

Without believers in Christ, called out of every kindred and people under heaven, there is no Church of Christ upon earth. And therefore, the Church by its initial constitution and in the very idea of its being is a missionary institution, composed of the scattered company of the people of God and, with the law of self-perpetuation imposed upon it, existing for the very purpose of extending itself and bringing the nations into its living union. For this reason, when our Lord founded His Church on earth, it was, as at Pentecost, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon all. For this reason, when He ascended, the great promise, made not for immediate consolation so much as for future guidance, was that the Holy Spirit should be given continuously unto the end. For this reason, He sketched to His disciples the future contests and persecutions His people should meet with in the world, all of which should issue in the glorious triumph of His kingdom in His second coming. For the same reason, when He commissioned His

apostles, it was with the express command, "Go into all the world and preach my gospel to every creature." And to this idea of the Church as a missionary organization the Book of Acts remarkably corresponds; for, amidst all vicissitudes of persecution and internal corruption, the fundamental thought of the book is growth. . . .

It follows, therefore, that in whatever degree the Church fails to appreciate her duty to the world, and to neglect the means of this growth, she vitiates the idea of her being, and dwarfs and despiritualizes her life. It follows that these notions of ours of churches restricted nationally, or by denominations, and these distinctions between the Church and her missionary agencies—as though the life were in the home organization, and only the far off and secondary channel of her life were in the missionaries she sends to the frontier or to the heathen—are ideas contrary to New Testament truth. Nay, if we must make distinctions, let us rather say that the missionary work is the Church, and the home organization is the appendage. Paul and his missions were more than Jerusalem and Antioch combined. And let us be assured that the law of her being is, that in proportion to her sound and spiritual extension abroad, will be the vigor and illumination of her life at home. . . .

Now look at the New Testament in its broad outlines of history and literature. Its history is the history of missions; its epistles are the literature of its missions. The great, comprehensive, historical fact of the Apostolic

period is the change of dispensations; that is, the calling of the Gentiles; that is, missions. . . .

Thus, the Church owes the very title deeds of her existence, the very doctrines of her salvation, to the early missionary impulse of the Holy Spirit. . . .

C. W. Hodge
November 7, 1880[1]

1. Extracted from C. W. Hodge, *The Work of Missions Essential to the Life of the Church* (Princeton: Press Printing Establishment, 1880).

SEND TO *SURVIVE*

PART ONE

PRINCIPLES

01

Own the Mission

In the 19th century, Scottish missionary to India, Alexander Duff, made a provocative claim, "The chief end for which the Church ought to exist—the chief end for which individual Church members ought to live, is the evangelization or conversion of the world."[1]

Is this true? Does the Church exist for the evangelization of the world?

It's the sort of claim that elicits an immediate response. Those who are already "bought in" on missions might immediately and heartily give an "Amen," while others may start to squirm. "Doesn't this sound too man-centered?" "I thought *worship* was the chief end of the Church, and the individual members of the Church." After all, Duff's statement seems to contradict *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* and one of the most familiar maxims in all of Protestant Christianity:

1. Alexander Duff, *Missions: The Chief End of the Christian Church* (Missionary, 2026), 7.

> *Q.* What is the chief end of man?
> *A.* Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.[2]

This is the same doctrine that we find so beautifully explained in the galvanizing opening to John Piper's classic work, *Let the Nations Be Glad*,

> Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.[3]

At first glance, it appears that Alexander Duff is at odds with the Westminster Divines *and* John Piper! This is particularly confounding when we consider that Alexander Duff, as a Scottish Presbyterian trained by Thomas Chalmers, was confessionally committed to the Westminster Standards. What is the answer? Can we harmonize Duff's claim with the catechetical doctrine that John Piper so beautifully captures in his work?

2. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism: With Scripture Proofs*, 3rd edition (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996).
3. John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 15.

It is my (Chad's) conviction, and Brooks's, that Piper and Duff both capture the biblical truth that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. It is our conviction that the Church is by its nature a missionary society, and that every member of the Church is a member of that society for life.[4] It is our conviction that this missionary society we call the Church exists to empty itself for the sake of the conversion of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation in order that these tribes, tongues, and nations can realize their chief end. In fact, it is our conviction that any church, or individual member of a church, that fails in this endeavor has missed his chief end in glorifying God and enjoying Him forever.

Rather than contradict Westminster, Duff's maxim is, in fact, essential to it. We see this kind of relationship between the moon and the sun. If the moon's chief end is to bask in the glorious light of the sun and to reflect the brightness of the sun's glory, then it is no contradiction to also say that the moon's chief end is to shine the light of the sun upon the world in the darkness of night. Likewise, Christ tells His Church, "I am

4. J. W. Alexander, "Love to Christ the Motive of Missions," *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle* 15, no. 12 (Dec 1847): 359. In his sermon, J. W. Alexander quoted the Rev. John H. Rice, "The Presbyterian Church is a Missionary Society, the object of which is to aid in the conversion of the world, and every member of the Church is a member for life of said society, and bound to do all in his power for the accomplishment of this object." We believe it is consistent with the original authors' meaning to exchange the word "Presbyterian" for "Christian."

the light of the world" (John 8:12). But then He says to His Church, "you are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). As the moon exists to reflect the light of the sun upon the earth in the dark of night, so we exist to reflect the light of Jesus, the Son of God, our Savior, to the nations who grope about in the darkness. This is our purpose until Jesus returns, and the shadows of darkness are chased away by the brightness of His coming. If we are those who glorify God and enjoy Him forever, then we are *by nature* those who declare His excellencies to our friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, and the nations (1 Peter 2:9; Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:47). Christ's Church is a society that glories in gospel light. We glory in and enjoy God in Christ and by the Spirit. As such, Christ's Church is an instrument of that gospel light to the world. We cannot glory in what we do not share. The flame of gospel light is either present and burns brightly for all the world to see, or the flame has been snuffed out.

This purpose cannot be achieved by hiding our light under a bushel—by keeping our evangelical blessings to ourselves. As those who are *evangelical*, we glory in the gospel of Jesus Christ, because He comes to us clothed with all the graces and gifts of God. We are also those who are *evangelistic* because we proclaim that gospel message to others for their salvation and God's glory. If our churches fail to bear the light of the gospel, which is our chief end, then Christ will remove us (Revelation

2:1–7). As Alexander Duff went on to write, "when a church ceases to be evangelistic, it must cease to be evangelical; and when it ceases to be evangelical, it must cease to exist as a true Church of God."[5]

Please don't miss this central claim of our work, or any of the staggering implications that go with it: the Church is a missionary society. Churches that glorify God and enjoy Him forever are churches that evangelize both their *neighbors* and the *nations*. We send gospel ministers to unreached language groups, or we fail to be the Church.

Owning this identity is essential for the success of a sending church, and therefore is essential for its survival. These companion and complementary chief ends—for man to glorify and enjoy God; for the Church to evangelize the world—are not optional. A church's mission, the message, and ministry must be anchored here, in grateful obedience to the Savior's command to go, and in certain hope of the result that indeed the world will be evangelized by His Church.

Defining the Mission of the Church

Once we embrace the notion of our church as a missionary society, it's critical to define what we're about. Whenever we use terms like "evangelism" or "missions,"

5. Duff, *Missions: The Chief End of the Christian Church*, 5.

we need to define them. Our churches need to be clear on what they mean, and how they're related.

According to the scriptures, *evangelism* is the proclamation of the good news:

> Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:44–49)

With this as our foundation, it's important to note four biblical attributes of evangelism:

1. Evangelism accords with all of the scriptures (Luke 24:44–45). The good news of the person and work of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of what the Old Testament promised (Romans 1:2–4). The New Testament inerrantly, infallibly, authoritatively, and sufficiently lays out how the glorious Old Testament promises find their fulfillment in Christ. Thus, the scriptures are necessary

to our task. This is why Paul is keen to tell Timothy to "preach the word" (2 Timothy 3:14–4:5).

2. Evangelism is only potent when done in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). The Apostles are eyewitnesses of the gospel events, but they are to wait in Jerusalem until Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit comes, and not before, they are to go out to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth to witness to the person and work of Jesus. Inasmuch as they do so, Christ's voice is heard by Christ's sheep (Romans 10:14–17).

3. Evangelism announces a set of historical facts about Jesus (Luke 24:46), specifically His life, death, and resurrection. These facts are always present in the gospel proclamation of the Apostles in Acts.[6]

4. Evangelism announces the doctrinal implications of those historical facts (Luke 24:47). If you look to Christ in faith, a faith that bears the necessary fruit of repentance, then you will be forgiven your sins in His name. In other words, evangelism includes a call for response: faith and repentance. Evangelism also has a promise of benefits: forgiveness and eternal life in Christ.

We see the Apostles follow this pattern in Acts. We also see them commending the same in the Epistles. This is evangelism. This *may* be done by members of a local church. This *must* be done by gospel ministers.

6. J. Gresham Machen made this point to great effect in his book *Christianity and Liberalism*.

Missions is the sending of a gospel minister to a group of people to do the work of evangelism and church planting.

Mission comes from a Latin word, *missio*, that speaks of being "sent" or "sending." In the Greek New Testament, this has its corollary in the word "apostle." Although the foundational office of "Apostle" has now ceased (Ephesians 4:11; cf. 2:20), there is also a more generic nature to the word "apostle," referencing those being sent. In fact, no one can preach unless they are sent (Romans 10:15). So, when the church sends missionaries, we are sending people to do evangelism, but we are sending them to do more than just that. We are making disciples, as Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:19–20). The means of making disciples is "baptism," in which a person is identified with Christ, with our Triune Lord, and "teaching," which speaks to ongoing edification of the new disciples.

Both baptism and teaching assume a context of church planting. Jesus told the Apostles that He is building His Church (Matthew 16:18), and He gave them instructions about church discipline (Matthew 18:15–17). Furthermore, this is the pattern that we consistently see the Apostles follow (Acts 2:22–24, 37–42).

While missions is more than evangelism, it is never less. Evangelism is a necessary part of missions, but not all evangelism is missions. Missions, as the Church

sending *itself*, is the unique expression of its mission. As Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert helpfully explain,

> The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father.[7]

Unreached Language Groups

As the Church goes out into the world, its Great Commission mandate *necessitates* the work of laying new foundations among unreached *language* groups. This notion of unreached language groups may seem like a subtle one—it's common to find similar distinctions of *people* groups or nations—but it's a significant one, and the scriptural argument for language as the distinguishing characteristic of unreached groups harmonizes effectively with our conviction that sending missionaries to the unreached is a requirement in fulfilling the Great Commission.

When Jesus issued the Great Commission, He commanded the Church to make disciples of "all nations"

7. Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 62.

(Matthew 28:19). Those two words—"all nations"—are derived from three Greek words—*panta ta ethnē*. This has been translated a number of ways. However, what is most fundamental in understanding this Greek phrase is how language has divided humanity into separate peoples. We were divided based on the confusion of our language at Babel (Genesis 11:7). It is due to the separation of humanity on this basis that we read about the various families, clans, and nations (Genesis 10:5, 20, 31).

When the Lord called Abram and promised him that in his offspring all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1–3; 22:17–18), this language for "families of the earth" is interchangeable with "nations" in Genesis (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 26:4; 28:14; cf. Galatians 3:8). All of these *nations* have been divided on the basis of *language*, and the Lord will redeem them all in Christ as His gospel of salvation is proclaimed to every tribe, tongue, and nation (Genesis 49:10; Psalm 2:7–8; 67:2–5; 87:4–6; Isaiah 2:2–3; 25:6–8, 49:6; Daniel 7:13–14; Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). They will hear the gospel of salvation in their own language (Zephaniah 3:9; Acts 2:5–12). When the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, we saw the beginning of the reversal of Babel. The new creation has been inaugurated in Christ. It is a gospel that will be proclaimed to every nation upon the earth, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

The Apostle Paul understood this well. Thus, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, he was keen to proclaim Christ

where He had never been *named*. He expressly wrote in Romans 15:20–21,

> and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."

Paul is committed to laying a new foundation. He wants to name Christ where He has never been named. Therefore, he asked the church in Rome to help him as he went to Spain. What is telling in his request is that much of the known world where Paul had traveled in his missionary journeys (Romans 15:19), where Christians were significantly less than two percent of the population, was considered to have "no room for work" for the Apostle (Romans 15:23)! The reason for this is that Paul had planted churches in those regions. The foundational work was done. He was now headed to a place where there was no foundation. Although these new foundations did not require Paul to acquire new languages or translate scripture anew, as the remaining unreached languages do for us today, the logic of Paul's "obligation" (Romans 1:14) implies the necessity of language acquisition and translation as needed.

This logic is what lies behind *The 4 Lanes of Missions*. These are the categories we use to gauge and calibrate

our missions efforts in our context today. By highlighting Church presence (or absence) and language as the key metrics for understanding a mission field, by mapping these onto our knowledge of a targeted region or people group, we can identify four primary "lanes of missions"[8] that your church will send to.

Lane 1. Strengthening national pastors, usually in a language that they can understand but is not their mother-tongue (i.e., English, Spanish, Portuguese, French). The "global south" is commonly cited as the future of Christendom. But it is riddled with the "prosperity gospel" and all manner of heresy. The solution is not to remove those pastors, but to teach them better theology and practice.

Lane 2. English-speaking church planting and strengthening in key international cities around the world. English is the fastest growing language in the world, and is necessary for business, aviation, maritime work, and many other fields. Sound international churches (what English churches are commonly called) are helpful platforms for gospel ministry that go beyond the English language.

Lane 3. National or majority language church planting and strengthening. French, Urdu, Bahas, Arabic, and Hindi are examples of national languages where churches are being planted and strengthened on

8. A fuller treatment of this topic is in this article: https://www.missionary.com/articles/categories-in-missions-that-alleviate-ambiguity.

a regular basis. While every national language of the world has the gospel and the Church, there is far too little gospel presence and too few healthy churches among them. They should not be categorized as an unreached language group, but very much fall within the bounds of "poorly reached" language groups.

Lane 4. Minority language church planting. There exist today somewhere between 1,700 and 2,500 language groups that have no gospel, no disciples, and no church among them.[9] They are rightly called unreached language groups. The work in this "4th lane" is quite challenging due to difficult languages that must be learned, translations of the scriptures that likely need to be done, inhospitable locations (climate, disease, culture of locals), and hostile governments.

There are Christian believers, churches, and Bibles in the majority languages (Lane 3), throughout the world. There remain untold lost people among those majority languages. The missions work being done among them is godly and good. But the foundations have been laid. Meanwhile, there are thousands of minority language groups (Lane 4), who have no Christian believers, no churches, and often no Bibles. Those

9. The team at Missionary, along with some partners, are working on a comprehensive list of the languages left in the world and what the state of the church is in those languages. This is the beginning of that research: https://www.missionary.com/product/gospel-ambition-a-prayer-guide-for-the-unreached-30-pack.

are the unreached language groups of the world where no foundation has been laid. They have never heard the name of Jesus Christ, nor is there any opportunity for them to hear His name. They need missionaries to go and proclaim the gospel in their language so that they can hear the word of truth and be saved.

This is the priority of Christ's Church in missions precisely because it is His priority. He has given His life for every tribe, tongue, and nation. He is the heir of them all (Matthew 28:18). Therefore, we are sent to claim those language groups for Him.

Sending Well

As a missionary society with a clear understanding of our obligation to the unreached, the Church has the right and responsibility to send well. Inherent in this claim are three connected claims. First, it is the Church's *right* to send. Second, it is the Church's *responsibility* to send. Third, it is the Church's responsibility to *send well*.

The Church's Right to Send

There is no principle in Christianity that allows for self-sending, nothing to permit an individual Christian taking on the mantle of "missionary" without the approval of his church. In the Old Testament, prophets are held to account according to whether they were sent or not (Jeremiah 23:21–22). In the New Testament, the

Lord Jesus, the Chief Shepherd and prototypical gospel minister, was *sent* by the Father, and the Lord who sends is not careless in His sending. In the same way as Jesus was sent, He sent His Apostles (John 20:21–22). The Apostles pass the baton of this mission to the Church, of which they were the foundation (Ephesians 2:20). But even during the ministry of the Apostles, we see them work from within the Church to raise up and send forth gospel ministers. Just after the ascension of Christ, the Apostles wrestle with who will replace Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve (Acts 1:15–26). They work this out within that fledgling church. It is the church at Jerusalem that sets apart Philip the Evangelist, and the Seven (Acts 6:1–6). It is the church at Antioch who sends out the apostle Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1–4). It is also the church at Antioch to whom Paul and Barnabas report on their missionary activities (Acts 14:25–28). Further, Paul writes clearly to the church at Rome that someone cannot preach unless he is sent (Romans 10:14–15). Finally, Paul quite clearly demonstrates that the elders were setting apart men for gospel ministry (1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6).

The Church's Responsibility to Send

Despite the biblical gravity of sending, it is often the case that young people return from a conference or retreat and decide they are "called" to go into missions. We praise the Lord for this zeal and sensitivity to the

work of the Spirit through the word. Receive their eagerness with joy when they approach you, but don't sit back and wait for that day. Rather, we would urge the elders of the church to take a more forward position in the work of sending. The Church sends, not individuals. It is not only the right of the church, and not the individual, but it is the responsibility of the church, and it is a grave one.

Therefore, we encourage the elders to begin taking steps to help the church embrace the responsibility of sending. Here are some practical ways that can be done:

1. Pray for your young people by name. Ask the Lord to raise up many of them to be missionaries.

2. Teach your youth about missions. Give them good missionary biographies to read and watch. Missionary.com has a variety of resources to help.

3. Bring foreign missionaries to address your church.

4. Challenge your young people to serve the church in a variety of ways.

5. Challenge and train your young people to begin doing active evangelism in your own community.

6. Take your young people to conferences and short-term missions trips where they will be challenged to consider God's heart for the nations and their own role in it. Missionary Go Conferences are a good option. Radius International also offers Radius Serve for a short-term foreign missions opportunity.

7. Have the elders make a list of faithful young people and begin to approach them about considering gospel ministry both at home and abroad.

The Church's Responsibility to Send Well

It is necessary but not sufficient for the Church to exercise her right and embrace her responsibility for sending. The Church must also send *well*. There is a dramatic difference between simply preaching and preaching *well*, between exercising church discipline and disciplining *well*. Sending missionaries is no different, and there are four practical ways your church can send better:

1. The church must *train* and *test* before sending. Yes, we need to have a healthy sense of urgency. But urgency should not be confused with hastiness. Paul arguably had the greatest sense of urgency in history. Yet, Paul encouraged Timothy to never be hasty in laying on hands (1 Timothy 5:22). So we must test and train potential missionaries (1 Timothy 3:1–13; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:3–9). The church must examine a missionary candidate's character and doctrine. Examine his marriage, parenting, personal ruggedness, and facility in business, evangelism, and language learning. There are training centers that do this in partnership with the church. Radius International has a training center to assist in preparing and testing for missionary work, specifically among the unreached language groups.

2. The church should ordain and commission missionaries to the field. We encourage the elders to hold an ordination and commissioning service for the missionaries being sent to the field. Preach on God's heart for the nations. Encourage the missionaries to persevere and the church members to pray for them and care for them. This can be an opportunity to share a meal, and a send-off celebration for the missionary.

3. The church needs to support and care for the missionaries during their entire stay on the field. We recommend that your missionaries seek the advice and permission of the elders at all key decision points (choosing a language group, a business, teammates, etc.), that your church have liaisons who contact your missionaries each month and ask them about their lives. It is also recommended that updates regularly be reported to the elders. Elders should check in on the missionary teams at least annually. Ideally the church should send an elder and his wife to visit the missionaries in their context every year. Here are some of the areas where regular follow up is necessary:

How are their hearts? Are they growing in their love for the Lord? Are they regular in the spiritual disciplines of reading the word and prayer? Are they continuing to mortify sin?

How is their marriage? Are they intentionally and sufficiently attending to relational intimacy? Are the commands to wives to submit to and respect their

husbands being obeyed (Ephesians 5:22–24, 33; 1 Peter 3:1–6)? Are the commands to husbands to love their wives, to avoid being harsh, to live with them in an understanding way being obeyed (Ephesians 5:25–33; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7)?

How are their children? Are the children obedient to their parents (Ephesians 6:1–3)? Are the parents obeying the commands to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)? Are the children fondly cherished or treated harshly? How are the children doing in education, language learning, building friendships, and navigating their current life stage?

How are the single missionaries holding up in the intense loneliness that comes with cross-cultural service? Do they have teammates who care for them? How are they maintaining chastity?

How is their family at home, particularly aging parents and college-age children? Is there any way the church can share the burden of helping with aging parents? Are there families in the church who can house, care for, and follow up with college-age children who have returned from the field?

How is their team? Is there any excessive team conflict? Are they clear as to team expectations and interpersonal communication? Are they keeping short accounts by engaging in necessary confrontation and forgiveness?

How is language learning going? Are the missionaries diligently putting in the daily hours needed to

successfully learn the language of the people? Are they progressing through necessary lessons and evaluations?

How is their business, if one is needed to secure and maintain a visa? Are they still making sufficient time for language learning given the demands of their business?

How are their financial support levels? Do they have sufficient support to maintain health insurance and save for retirement? It may be noble to speak against the notion of ever retiring. However, we must plan for the eventuality that we may not have the ability to work for as many years as we face the necessity of spending.

How faithfully are they engaged in intentional evangelistic efforts, assuming they have reached the necessary level of fluency to communicate the gospel clearly? What is their plan to pursue evangelism? Are they faithfully executing that plan?

What is their plan for home assignments? Are they getting sufficient rest and time with family? If they need to spend time in raising support due to attrition, are there ways your church can assist in this regard to lessen their burden? Does someone have a vehicle to loan during home assignment? Is there a residence that can be used while they are home? Do you have a budget for a rental? How will you notify the church of their return? How will you notify the church as you send them back to the field? In what ways do you expect them to participate in the ministry of the church while home? In what

venues will they update the church on their work while they are home? Are there any special health concerns that must be addressed while home?

4. The church transitions the missionaries home from the field. How does your church determine when a missionary has completed their work to which they have been sent? How will you walk with them in discerning the timing of their transition? When your missionaries complete their task, or must leave the field for other reasons, it is important to help them with their transition plans. As with a home assignment, they will need a residence and vehicle on a temporary basis. Further, they will be looking for work, or a new ministry assignment. We recommend you walk through those decisions with them. We also recommend your elders write a letter of support for any newly approved ministerial calling. As mentioned above, we also recommend you walk with them through transitioning their young adult children home, if they are continuing in their mission work.

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In order for a local church to embrace this duty, these rights and responsibilities must be articulated and emphasized by the leadership. Sound missional practices like these won't make a difference if they only exist on the mission committee's hard drive, or remain in the pages of this book! They have to become a visible element of the congregation's ministry. The fellowship of

the saints has to own this mission as a part of its identity as a church. Change like this is a monumental task, but, as we'll see in the next chapter, it's one Christ has purposefully equipped His Church to accomplish through His power.