

DEVELOPING

MISSIONS IN THE CHURCH

 **DR. PERRY J. HUBBARD**

**DEVELOPING
MISSIONS
IN THE
CHURCH:**

A guide for missions training

Dr. Perry J. Hubbard

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Foreword

Over the last three years I have had the opportunity to travel and visit 20 countries and interact with the leaders and members of the Wesleyan Churches in these countries. I have had the privilege of sharing material on missions and share in encouraging the development of missions in these churches.

This opportunity and the interaction with the people revealed to me the depth of their desire to become actively involved in missions. At the same time I began to understand the areas of need for training to help them carry out this desire. Out of this interaction grew a realization that material was needed to help them develop training in the area of missions.

The churches have a growing concern about how to provide training in two critical areas; training those being sent as missionaries, and training the churches who are involved in the sending process. It is my hope that this material will help them evaluate the areas where training is needed and be able to make the necessary plans to provide that training.

Dr. Perry J. Hubbard

DEVELOPING MISSIONS IN THE CHURCH: *A guide for missions training*

Dr. Perry J. Hubbard
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Rick West – Thank you for your encouragement to work on this material.

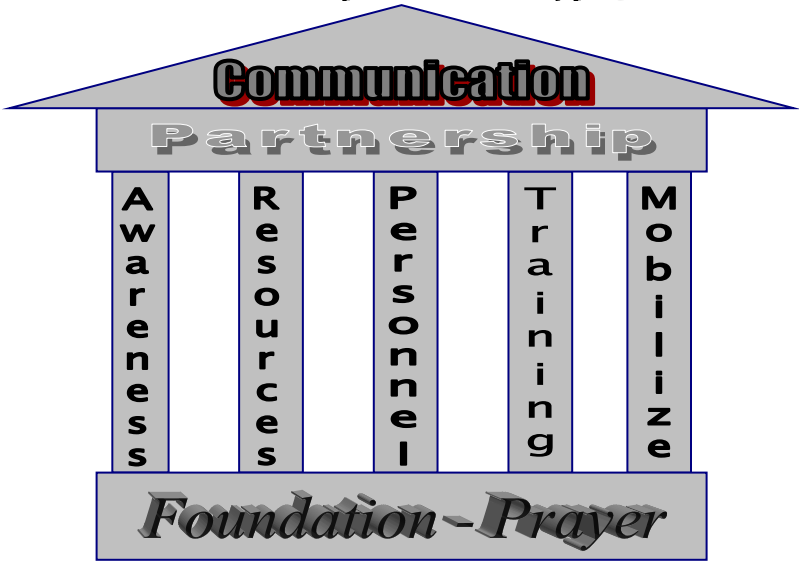
Jibacam – The leaders of the missions movement within the Wesleyan Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean have given me the freedom to interact and learn more about what it means to be involved in missions. Your desire and interest have made this work possible.

Nancy Hubbard – I would like to thank my wife for the hours she has spent reviewing and editing the materials for me to be sure my grammar and spelling were correct. More important she made sure that what I said was making sense and helped to keep me from wandering.

Introduction – Missions Training Guide

The guide that is being presented has been designed to help us evaluate and understand key areas of need for training as relates to missions. It is divided into five areas for study and each area is then divided into four levels of development. It is further divided into four levels of evaluation.

Missionary Planning Guide



This diagram shows the different areas and how they are related. The main section represented by the columns is the focus of this study. We will spend time on each of the other areas because they are critical to our ability to develop a missions program and provide needed training.

The columns can be further represented by the training grid shown below.

Mission Training Guide

Step/Level	Area One Awareness	Area Two Resource	Area Three Personnel	Area Four Equipping	AreaFive Mobilize
Principle	Teach Theology	Teach Giving	Teach Call of God	Teach Discipleship	Teach Ministry
Preparation	Teach Cultural Awareness	Teach Areas of Giving	Define Activity	Identify Key Areas for Training	Description of Ministry
Process	Teach Goals and Planning	Develop Plans for Giving	Establish Needs for Personnel	Prepare Materials	Mobilize
Practice	Develop Missions Awareness	Develop Funding for Missions	Recruit Personnel	Train Personnel	Send those Called as Missionaries

The five areas for study are:

1. Awareness
2. Resources
3. Personnel
4. Equipping
5. Mobilize

These are not in order of significance. In fact being able to fully accomplish the task in any one area is dependent on what is happening in all of the areas. If we are successful in building awareness then we will see a direct impact on our ability to raise funds, recruit, equip and mobilize people. In like manner our ability to mobilize people is dependent on our effectiveness in building awareness, raising funds, recruiting and equipping.

Further the focus cannot be on a single group of people. Each area will deal with a broad spectrum of people. Within the process there are the local church members (both as individuals and the local church as a group) the leaders, (both pastoral and denominational), local, district and national church committees, and then finally the missionary personnel. As above, where effectiveness in one area both affects and is affected by all the other areas within in a group, the same is true of the relationship among the groups. To be completely effective with one group requires there to be input and development in each of the other key groups.

As we deal with the different areas we also see a scale of development involving levels of competency and progress. These are identified as follows:

1. Principle
2. Preparation
3. Process
4. Practice

The interrelations among these are not as simple to define or explain but they exist. As we move from the lower levels to the upper levels in one area, there needs to be similar development in the other areas for real growth to occur. While it is possible to move from level one to level four in one area, the results will have limited affect until there is similar progress made in other areas. An example of this would be as we learn to understand the need for missions, the theology that guides us and we see people respond, we then desire to send them. But unless there is growth in the area of giving this will happen in a limited way at best.

Occasionally it will happen that we will see a leapfrog effect from lower to higher levels. A group jumps to action without the previous steps occurring. This does not mean there is no need for the work at the previous levels to be done. In fact it often will highlight the need and challenge people to go

through the process more carefully in a way that would not have happened without having the leapfrog.

There are three other key areas that need to be included in the overall grid but exist outside of the grid for key reasons.

The first area deals with being connected with God so that we have a clear understanding of what God is doing and wants us to do.

Area One

Prayer	Preparation	Waiting On God	Waiting on Power	Waiting on Holy Spirit	Perseverance
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The first area of prayer must be clearly understood as the basis and driving force behind the entire process. Without prayer we cannot even begin, will not have the strength to continue, or have an awareness of the goal we are aiming at.

The other two areas deal with linkage. Joining together to do the work and keeping the lines of communication open.

Area Two

Communication	Local Church	District National	Missionary	Schools	International
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The second area of communications is critical if we want to be able to share and encourage each other. Each grouping within the church needs to understand the process and role of communication in the overall picture. We need to know how to share what is happening to encourage each other and to continue the process of training.

Area Three

Partnership	Reason Purpose	Relationship Resources	Structure Responsibility	Results Review
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The third area deals with the concept of partnership. In reality there are very few groups who have all the resources, skills and people need to do the work of missions. This area reflects on knowing what we have and what we still need in order to carry out the task before us.

With these guidelines in mind let us take time to define each of the areas a little more carefully before beginning to look at each box within the grid.

Awareness – We need to provide understanding as to why we are to be involved in missions and how this affects the life and ministry of the church in the whole world.

Resources – We need to provide understanding of our responsibility to support the work of missions and the resources we have available to support that work. It also involves understanding and developing structures of how to gather, record and send the funds raised for this work.

Personnel – We need to define the call of God and explain the different types of ministry people can be involved in carrying the gospel to the world.

Equipping – We need to define the skills and tools involved in missions and then train people in each of the key ministry areas as relates to missions.

Mobilize – We need to provide the opportunities and guidelines for people to actually do missions.

In looking at the key levels that are involved, we need some basic guidelines again to help understand what is to be accomplished at each level.

- Level One – Principle – at this level we are providing information and guidelines so that people will understand what is expected in each of the key areas.
- Level Two - Preparation – At this level we are focusing on developing the structures and plans that will guide us in each of the key areas. The goal is a system or structure that will inform us as to the skills needed for each area and how we will provide for obtaining those skills.
- Level Three – Process – At this level we will be involved in understanding and implementing of the processes needed to achieve our goals in each area.
- Level Four – Practice – At this level we will carry out the plans that have been developed in the previous levels. We will become directly involved in missions.

Prayer – This is not only a prior activity that must occur before we start. It is a continuous activity that is always in process. The five divisions do not represent a sequence that must occur in prayer but actually, five activities that need to be occurring in a continuous pattern, often overlapping. Without prayer we cannot begin, continue or hope to succeed.

Communication – Again we are not looking at a sequence that must occur for training to be effective. We are looking at what must happen in each critical segment of the whole for each single piece to be more effective. As each segment listed understands its part in the total, each part will be more

effective. It is much like a piece of music. Each instrument can make music on its own and improve in the production music, but as all the instruments join together the total result is much greater than simply the sum of each. Let but one fail and the whole is diminished.

Partnership – This is a look at how the individual, the individual church, and the whole are to be involved in missions. It looks at the life of the church and the part it will play in sending a missionary to the world. We will need to understand what partnerships are, what they provide for us, what they expect of us, and how to set them up.

This guide has been set up and applied to the need to provide for training in missions, from the individual member to the national church as a whole. It can also be applied to other key areas of training for the church, training in evangelism, pastoral ministry, church planting, Sunday school development and many other areas.

It should be true that as we develop key guidelines in one area they should help us be more effective in others. If not then we may be causing an isolation effect which does not build a strong church but merely a false impression of strength because of what is being done in one area. We become so focused on excelling in one area we forget about others or allow them to suffer because we have put all our energy into one activity. We then fool ourselves by the impression of how good we are doing in the one area. As a result we become unbalanced and will become sickly and weak. Effective guidelines for one area are truly effective if they reveal the interrelation of all aspects of the church and can be applied to them all so as to develop in a healthy holistic manner.

Prayer – Introduction

In this section we are going to look at five areas in which prayer is critical to starting and maintaining missions. This is shown as level zero. It is where we begin and must remain. It is the foundation on which everything must be built and at each point in the work, from beginning to end. We must always come back to prayer.

Level Zero Prayer	Preparation	Waiting for God	Waiting for power	Waiting for direction	Perseverance
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Chapter 1 – Preparation

Before one even begins any activity there is a time of preparation. We see this in our world in many areas but most clearly in the work force. Every job has a time of preparation. For some jobs it is short and for other jobs it requires years of training and practice. We are familiar with this type of preparation. It involves standards related to skills and knowledge.

There is another type of preparation that goes on that we are less aware of. This relates to development of relational skills and values. Much of this preparation occurs without our knowledge and initially without our consent. Our parents, friends and many others provide the input. Initially we are not aware of what is happening. But as time goes on, we develop relationships, make choices regarding values, build friendships and learn to live in our society.

If we are dissatisfied with our training for a job or not happy with the job we are doing we can enter into a new phase of training. We can change jobs to get more experience, we can get more training, or we can even change careers. Hopefully we will be more effective in the next one because we will have a better understanding of the process.

When it comes to dealing with a change in ones social and interpersonal training the process of retraining is different. In the previous concept we are dealing more with skills and obtaining them. Evaluation is based on effectively learning the skills. When it comes to our social and interpersonal world there is another factor. We now have the added element of moral value. Is this right or wrong? The answer affects how I will respond to what I have been trained to accept and how I have been trained to behave. Should I

behave in this way or that? How should I treat others? How do I know which options I should choose?

What has caused me to reconsider my actions or behavior? What happens so that I reevaluate what I am doing and now decide that I am behaving in an unacceptable manner?

There are several situations that cause us to reevaluate. I may see how others are behaving and the results of that behavior, and decide that something is not right. My activities and behavior may cause me to be in trouble with key representatives of the social structure, i.e. police, teachers and others. My idea of what I want may not match what I am actually getting. The result of these situations may open the door for thinking through how I got to this point and that the preparation I received was somehow inadequate or defective and so I open the door to the possibility of retraining, of going through another preparation period to become more acceptable to myself and to certain others.

With these ideas as a backdrop we need to go one level deeper. There is a level of preparation and training that we are even less aware of. We can use the term “worldview” as an effective means of dealing with this. From the start of our life we are being prepared to see the world and its activities in a way unique to the people or group we are a part of. It will be the foundation on which all of the above occurs. This preparation provides the frame work in which I evaluate my social and interpersonal training, my values and beliefs. It provides the framework that determines the types of skills and work that will be available to me.

Worldview is often so well incorporated into our life that we hardly see it. Yet if it is removed or damaged we become confused and disoriented. To change our behaviors and values can be easy. To change my worldview is very difficult and requires something beyond ourselves. There needs to be

an outside influence that challenges what we believe to be true about the world and why things are the way they are.

Effective prayer must deal with the same kinds of issues as we prepare to enter the world and share the gospel we have been given by our Lord.

The first level of preparation is easily understood. We are encouraged in many ways to pray for key skills to do the work of missions. Paul talks about seeking after the gifts of the spirit. These include gifts that would make us effective in missions, gifts of evangelism, preaching and prophecy (1Cor 12). It also includes training in life and ministry. Jesus spent a great deal of time training the disciples in key areas of skills as related to their future ministry. Paul encourages Timothy to teach key leaders so they can pass on the skill he has learned from Paul (1 Tim 2:2). We understand the need to pray for the preparation of people for the work of missions.

At the second level Jesus shares with His disciples critical information about how the Holy Spirit will work in our lives (Jn 14-15) and what the Holy Spirit can and will do so that we as people will have the right attitude toward the work God has for us. Paul expands on this information as he talks about dying to self (Eph 4:22-24, Col 3:9-10) and the remaking of our lives in the image of God. We are to put off the old man and put on the new. We are to become servants even as Jesus became a servant (Phil 2:5-11). We are to be reborn in the likeness of Christ (2 Cor 3:18, Rom 8:29). These ideas and directions involve opening the door to reevaluation and retraining of heart, mind, body and soul so that we can more fully love the Lord our God and be able to effectively do the work we are being trained to do.

These two levels of preparation, and their relationship to prayer, are not hard to understand or identify. Where there

are people who have a similar worldview as we do, then it is easy to share what we have learned and use the skills that have been given to us. We learn the needed skills because we see them as valuable. We make the needed changes in morals, values and character because we can see and understand the benefits and results of such changes. We clearly understand how they relate to our world and how to apply them.

What about where the worldview does not allow for this possibility? What about places where God, as we know Him, is not known; and truth, as we know it, is not known? What about places where our communication and skills have no meaning because of differences in language, culture and worldview? How do we hope to have an impact in these areas? The preparation of these people in relation to life and key values at the base of their worldview has been different from ours. This makes our preparation for helping them change at the other levels difficult if not impossible.

We easily pray that God will provide the skills and training needed. We know we need to pray for changes in our values and character. When the worldview is different we then need to pray for preparation at another level. We also need to pray for God to prepare the people we are being sent to, and ourselves, at the deepest level of change.

The Bible records several occasions where such situations existed and what happened. Preparation occurred long before those with the truth arrived. Those who encountered the ones who had been prepared by God were not always ready for what was about to happen. Some needed extra help in their own lives and others were able to see more quickly what God was doing. In both cases the goal was being able to respond to those God had prepared in a way they would understand.

- The first example is Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jo 4). Some background may be helpful in understanding the outcome. When the Jews were sent into exile people from other regions with different beliefs were relocated to Israel. God responded very negatively, not to their presence but to their religious practice because it excluded worship of Him. The people cried to Assyria (2 Ki 17:24-30) to send back some of the priests of the country to teach them how to respect the god of the land. This resulted in a mixed understanding of God and what He desired from the people. While it was not correct, it left the people with some information about God and what He expected.

By the time of Jesus they had developed a syncretistic view of God and how to worship Him. Yet in that distorted view had been built a kernel of truth. When Jesus came He understood that small truth and used it as an access point to reach the woman, and then the community of which she was a part. They believed. Later when Philip came to preach (Acts 8:5-8) and teach they took the next step of faith and believed in the risen Christ. God had prepared the people of that region for what was coming in the future.

Just before Jesus' ascension He tells the disciples to go into a time of prayer (Acts 1:4) to prepare themselves for the next step. They do not know what this means but obey and set themselves to the task of praying so they would be ready.

- Another event occurs with Philip and a lone Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-39) who has gotten a copy of the Jewish scriptures and is reading it. Why a man from Ethiopia has an interest in these materials is never explained, yet here he is studying something that is outside of his worldview.

Philip is busy with other activities but God directs him to a lonely stretch of road. To us it makes no sense and yet Philip responds. As a result he meets the Ethiopian and helps him take the next step in being prepared for God's work in his life.

- Next we have the encounter between Peter and the Centurion (Acts 10). On this occasion two worldviews have to be impacted in order for the changes to occur at the next two levels. The centurion has learned of God and senses there is more to know but has no idea of how to proceed or how to prepare. He reaches out to God. God responds and gives him directions on how to proceed.

Peter is not even thinking about reaching out to people of another culture and worldview system. God has to work in Peter's life to alter his view of the world so that he will be able to interact with the centurion. He finally agrees to go but has reservations until God's Spirit responds and blesses the Centurion and those in his household in the same manner as has occurred to Peter.

- The people of Antioch go into a period of prayer (Acts 13:1-2) not knowing what God wants but preparing themselves to hear God's direction. When God speaks they respond and move in a direction that will change the lives and ministry of Paul and Barnabas and many others.
- The most interesting of these events involving preparation at the deepest level involves Paul and a plan to go further into Asia. As he is praying over this God gives him a vision of a Macedonian man calling out to Paul to come to them and teach them about God (Acts 16:9-10). God has been working preparing people to hear

the message. Paul has been praying. When God shows him what has been prepared he is able to respond.

Don Richardson has written a book titled, “Eternity in their hearts,” where he states the concept that God has prepared people to hear the gospel message (Eccl 3:8). Our job is to find the key that unlocks the door that God has already prepared. We need to pray over the preparation that only God can do to open doors to people’s hearts, allowing them to see what is lacking in their worldview and causing a desire to seek an answer to the questions that are raised in that process.

Prayer at this level must occur in two areas as seen in Peter’s encounter with the Centurion. We must pray that God will prepare us to understand the need of others to hear the truth, and to accept their culture so that we may enter into it. As we enter into it we must remain true to God’s word. Paul explains this as he talks about becoming all things to all people in order to win some (1 Corinthians 9). We also must be praying that God will prepare those we are going to.

Part of the prayer for preparation may involve learning who is being prepared and listening to God as He reveals the proper time for sharing the Gospel with them. It may mean entering a culture or group and spending a great deal of time learning about them. It may mean waiting on God to reveal the key, or using us to prepare them for what we have to share. We may have to learn to be silent and wait. Not an easy thing to do.

This prayer may involve watching for the open doors that we might normally miss or even avoid because it looks to difficult for us, or because we feel we are unable or lack the proper resources. God told the church in Philadelphia not to worry about such things (Rev 3:8). If He opens a door then He will provide what is needed. Preparation is not about

getting our resources ready. It is about getting us ready, and getting those in our mission field ready, to hear the message God has for them.

While it is good to focus on praying that we will have the needed skills for the task, and praying that our lives and attitudes will be changed in critical areas, it is also important to pray for God to work in areas we cannot prepare for. Areas that only God can access. God prepared the Ethiopian, the Centurion, and the Samaritan woman. This led to the Samaritans and the Macedonians openness so that when the one He sent came they were ready to hear the message. God prepared Philip, Peter, Paul and even Jesus so they would be able to communicate with those who had been prepared to receive the message.

We need to spend time praying that God will prepare us in all three areas so that the Gospel will be received, and the people who receive it will respond. We need to pray that we will be in the places that God has prepared so we can share in the moment of need. We need to pray that our attitude will become more and more like that of Christ who sought to do all His Father was doing to reach the lost. We need to pray that we will be to wait as long as needed so that when the time comes we are ready to respond when God opens the door. We need to pray for the preparation of the people of every tribe, tongue, and nation so that they will be ready to receive those who come with the message.

This opens the door to discussing the process and need to wait on God.

Chapter 2 – Waiting for God

How often as a parent have you had to say to your children “wait for me?” Probably all too often. In their excitement to see, or experience, or do, they rush ahead without you. How often have you started to assemble something without reading the instructions? The desire to do it now and get it assembled without someone’s help and direction or to do the task because we believe we can do it challenges us to try. How often do we act on an impulse even when others suggest we be patient and wait?

Why do we need to tell our children to wait? Why should we stop and read the instructions or let someone explain what needs to be done? Why should we pause before we act and ask more questions, or to pause and examine the reasons for our impulse and the possible results of not waiting?

The answer is quite simple. We want to believe that we know more than we do, can do more than others think we can do, and that we have the right to decide what when and where we will do something. Sometimes this is true. But all too often the results are just the opposite of what we desire. We rush ahead only to get lost or then we have to wait because we don’t know the next step and need help. We try to do the job only to have to take it all apart because we forgot something, or broke something, in the attempt to get it done. We act on impulse, resulting in more work than would have been necessary ... or cause trouble for others because we did not know all that was involved... or loss because wasted time, energy, and resources for ourselves and others.

We need to learn to wait.

This is not a new concept but often a misunderstood one. For many it brings to mind sitting around and doing nothing;

wasting time and incurring a loss. We are waiting for others to get ready, waiting for others to provide what I need, waiting for others to finally get their eyes open and see what we have already seen. The focus is on me and what I want, so waiting is a waste and a loss.

We need to learn that waiting is not about wasting opportunities but more about getting ready. The waste only occurs in relation to what we do while we are waiting. If we do nothing then it involves waste. But if we understand that while we wait we can work at being ready then much can be gained by waiting.

An example of this would be a waiter or waitress in a restaurant. Their designation includes the term wait. They wait on people. Their waiting involves a readiness to do what is needed at the proper time. Until a customer comes in they are waiting. But in waiting there is much activity. They set the table. They arrange and prepare the supplies they will need. When a customer arrives they show them to the table, give them a menu and then wait. Then they take the order and give it to the cook and then wait. They bring the drinks and meal and then wait. They deal with any requests of the customer...and then wait. They receive the payment for the services and then wait. They clear the table and wait. Sometimes there is very little waiting if there are many customers but the concept is the same. Between actual activity there is waiting. There is a readiness for the work that will be at hand.

Waiting is not cessation of activity but being sure one is ready for activity. Idleness is not emptiness. An engine idles in readiness for what will be asked of it. Sometimes the time spent idling is longer as when sitting at a stop sign or caught in traffic. Sometimes the space between idling is longer as when a long journey is involved. In either case idling does not mean nothing is happening. In fact something is always

happening just at a slower pace and in one place, so that when greater activity is needed to move from here to there the engine is ready. Longer periods of waiting may involve shutting the engine down. Even in being shut down we must be able to ensure that the engine will start and run properly when needed. Repairs, maintenance and cleaning must be done, so that when the time of waiting is over the engine will function in the proper manner.

The Bible contains many examples of waiting. There are several key scriptures that encourage us to wait on God for the proper time and place for what He has for us to do. Sometimes the period of waiting may be short and sometimes it can be very long.

Moses was called by God, prepared by God and then put on hold and made to wait. He tried to go ahead without God. He tried to protect an Israelite and ended up being banished. He would spend the next 40 years waiting. While waiting he would learn much about living in the wilderness and guiding those who were stubborn and foolish. Then God spoke and said the time of waiting was over. Moses was now ready and the time was right to free the people and lead them to the Promised Land.

David was called by God and anointed as king. He killed the giant and became a captain in the king's army. Things were looking good, but then it all fell apart and he became an outcast and a marked man always on the run. On several occasions he had the opportunity to destroy Saul and claim what God had promised him. Instead he chose to wait on God. In Psalms 27:14 he makes the statement "wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart, wait for the Lord." As a result of his willingness to wait, God fulfilled His promise and David was identified as one whom God loved. It is interesting that while David was an outlaw his actions were

designed to protect Israel and to defeat the enemies of Israel. He was active while he waited.

Consider John the Baptist and what he might have been thinking as he began his ministry. He was called by God to prepare the way for the promised one. One would think that the best place to do so would be in Jerusalem. Instead John was sent to a wilderness area to preach. One might wonder about what John was thinking as he began his teaching and preaching. He may have asked “why?” and become impatient. It would have been easy to think this his life made no sense, and instead of waiting, take off to Jerusalem.

But John did not rush ahead. He began his ministry in isolation and as he waited God began to work. The people began to come and hear what he had to say. The word began to spread until even the leaders in Jerusalem sent delegates to hear his message. From the wilderness his message spread, because he was willing to wait on God.

Jesus spent thirty years in a time of preparation and then was baptized. Instead of launching out into ministry He was led into the desert for a time of waiting on His Father. It is only after this extra period of waiting that His ministry began. We find that throughout His ministry He would take time to go pray and get away, to wait; before moving out again. Several times people try to force Him to act and take control and yet He waited until the time was right. In the garden of Gethsemane He waited. On the cross He waited.

The disciples had an intense three years of training and experiences. Then events happened and they were lost. Instead of scattering they gathered and the Lord came to them. Then a period of renewal and review began. At the end of this period they were not told to begin their work, even though Jesus has given clear directions as to what they are to

do. No they were told to wait. As they waited God came, the Holy Spirit came and they were ready to act.

Paul's life was quite a lesson in periods of waiting and periods of action. When Jesus met him on the road to Damascus he was told to wait, a man Ananias will come. During this time of waiting Paul began to understand what was expected of him. Ananias came and then (according to Paul's record) Paul headed into the Arabian desert for a period of time. He may have been there for as long as 3 years. When he returned to Damascus he tried to preach and was rejected. He headed for Jerusalem and tried to preach and was rejected. They sent him away into what looked like exile.

After about three years, maybe more, Barnabas was in Antioch and needed help. He called Paul to join him and this time the response was the opposite. People were anxious to hear and to learn from Paul. He was chosen to start the work of missions and sent out by the church. And so began a period of intense activity.

In the middle of all this activity Paul saw the region of Asia and desired to go there but was told no. He must wait. Instead he was directed to Macedonia. Later we read that all of Asia has heard the gospel. By waiting for God's time the message was presented more effectively and spread more rapidly.

Paul had a goal to go to Rome but took a trip to Jerusalem. Instead of a simple visit he ended up in prison for two years waiting. During this time he had various meetings with leaders and kings and shared the message with them. Finally the time was right but with an unexpected twist. He went to Rome as a prisoner and not a freeman. In Rome he was again forced into a period of waiting for the next activity, which might have been death or his freedom. This time was used by

Paul to witness and minister to soldiers, Jews, government leaders and others, as well as write several of the letters we now have in the New Testament. His release allowed him to revisit key areas and then proceed to Spain for a time of mission.

We need to learn to wait on God. This is a time of prayer where we watch for God's directions and provisions. All too often we make one of two mistakes. We either rush ahead at the wrong moment, without all the proper instructions and for the wrong reasons; or because we have not understood how to wait, we misunderstand the directions given. As a result we do nothing, or worse, the wrong thing.

We must learn to wait on God so that we will receive all the instructions and act at the correct moment. We must learn to wait on God so that when God says move we are fully aware of what He is saying and can move at the moment called and in the direction specified. We must wait on God by being busy in doing what is needed, so that our waiting will provide the basis for the action expected of us.

Chapter 3 – Waiting on Power

Jesus takes time during the Last Supper to lay the ground work for a very important principle. We are to rely on God for the power we need to carry out the work given to us. We are to be connected to the vine so that we will have access to the life that makes it possible to produce fruit. The branches receive from the vine the resources needed to act and produce fruit. Without that connection, what little energy or life that exists in the branch will soon be depleted.

Jesus explains what the source of this strength will be as he presents to them the coming of the Comforter. The Comforter will work in their lives. He will provide strength and hope in the face of persecution. He will provide needed instruction so that we will be strengthened in mind and spirit to carry out the work. He will provide what is lacking for us to carry out the work that will be given to us when Jesus departs.

Jesus follows up this discussion after the resurrection. After a period of preparation and review he tells them to wait until the Father comes and gives them the power they need to move ahead. They are to wait for the Spirit to come and give them what they lack. They do this and enter into a period of prayer waiting on God; after 10 days they receive the response and the effects are dramatic. The Holy Spirit comes and the sermon of a lowly uneducated fisherman is filled with special power and the people respond.

Later in Acts there is another prayer meeting. The disciples have been arrested, beaten and threatened by the Sanhedrin. They are told they must no longer proclaim the name of Jesus or they will suffer for it. The group holds a prayer meeting calling on God to send them out and to give them power to proclaim, power to heal, and power to stand firm in

the gospel. God responds by shaking the building and they exit in power and the church grows faster and stronger in spite of the opposition of the Sanhedrin.

In 1 Corinthians 1-2 Paul presents his understanding of the value of God's power as opposed to the intelligence of man. He tells the people that rather than come in the power and wisdom of man he chose to set aside man's wisdom and proclaim God's truth. A truth the world considers weak and insignificant. He tells how in proclaiming this simple truth he did so, not in the power of his strength, but in the power of the holy spirit.

James challenges the people in his letter not to become overly attracted to the power of those who are wealthy, as if they could do something more than those who are poor. Do not highly regard the power of money. Look more at the presence of God in a person.

Ananias and Saphira thought that their gift could win them special status and cause people to think of them as important members of the church. In contrast, Barnabas gives a gift and shows that he depends on God for his blessing and not on his own possessions. Barnabas is called an encourager. Ananias and Saphira are punished for their attempt to gain power through their money.

Paul reviews his life and all the reasons people should respect him, all the reasons he should be important, all the reasons that would give him the power to do the work he is doing. At the end of the list he states that none of these things are of any value (Ph 3:8).

Paul also reminds a certain group of their former position and state. He talks about how it is the presence and power of God that is critical (Eph 4).

On several occasions when Paul is facing great difficulty in his ministry, God comes to him and encourages Paul to remember that he does not have to rely on himself. God will be there. He does not have to worry about the power of those who oppose what he is doing. God will be there. In the prison in Philippi, while teaching in Corinth, while in jail in Caesarea, and when the storm is driving them while on the way to Rome. God comes to Paul and reveals that He will be there and use His power to protect and provide.

In early mission efforts there are a number of settings where God acts in special ways so that the message will be presented - Paul's blinding of the magician on Cyprus (Acts 13:11) and the blinding of Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:7-9).

We rely on the power of who we are, what we have or what we have gained. These can either get in the way or be used by God. If we rely only on what we possess then we will fail. The disciples had received training for three years and they were told not to go ahead without God's power. They waited. God worked through them, using the training they had been given in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.

Paul had received a great deal of training. He also had a significant position as a Pharisee and representative of the Sanhedrin. He made use of his background in the wrong way until God intervened and revealed to him what was wrong. Even then it would be several years before God began to use Paul. Paul tried twice to teach and preach but it didn't work in Damascus or Jerusalem. Later, at God's direction and action Paul's ministry became affective, first in Antioch and then all across the Roman Empire as he traveled and taught.

We have already shown the difference between the gifts of Barnabas and that of Ananias and Saphira. One is praised

and one is judged because of the difference in attitude and focus. One sought to honor God the other sought to increase the status of the donor. God was free to work through the one but not the other.

Paul willingly received the gifts of support from Philippi and the churches of Macedonia and yet rejected the support of another group of churches. The issue was one of power and control. To receive the one was to open the door to greater trust in God. To receive the other would be to bind the gospel to money and how it was being given. The gift would allow those giving to gain control or to say that the gospel was only available to those who could pay. Either way money would be the controlling factor and not the presence and power of God.

We must wait on God and seek his power to be truly effective. The life of Paul is a clear example of these kinds of issues. Paul faced death, beatings and imprisonment. He did so not in the strength of his body but with faith in God's power to make a way, to protect and to restore where needed. He was left for dead once and revived. He was imprisoned and God broke the chains with an earthquake. People sought to kill him in Jerusalem and God rescued him. He was bitten by a viper and survived the poison.

Paul faced the forces of Satan and those who worship the power he represents. In Philippi he healed a demon possessed girl and they attacked him. In Ephesus he confronted the leaders of key groups who used magic and other powers. They responded and destroyed their books and artifacts. It is likely that in his trial in Rome he may have dealt with the emperor Nero who was worshiped as a god. Through all of this God protected Paul.

As Stephen was being stoned, he forgave them. This is how the power of God works in us when we wait on God for our

strength. We do not have the strength to forgive but when God's power works in us we can do that, and more, when faced with the world's hatred for God and the truth.

We need to go out in the power of God. There is so much we do not know and do not have the strength to deal with. Hatred for God and the truth is far greater than our strength and resources can ever hope to deal with. In the power of God we can carry the message of salvation to a lost and dying world. We can overcome the forces of Satan and let them see the depth and power of God's love. We need to seek out God and His power, ready to wait until He provides, so that it will be clear that it is God who is at work and not ourselves.

Chapter 4 - Waiting on Direction

In every activity there are two approaches to doing the work. We can do it on our own without authorization or backing or we can seek out a group who will sponsor what we are doing and authorize us to act on their behalf.

Jesus authorized the 12 and the 70 to go out and preach and heal in his name. Now Jesus tells the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit before they go out. The Holy Spirit will authorize their activity and give them direction.

The issues of authorization and direction are critical to being effective in accomplishing any task that one is assigned. Without a clear direction of where we are going and what we are trying to accomplish no one knows if we are doing the right thing or if we are actually accomplishing anything. In the same way without authorization we may have a problem getting anyone to listen or accept what it is we are trying to do.

Let us look at the idea of direction first. In this world we are always trying to find our way from one point to another. We are trying to get to many places in order to be involved in many different activities. Working at a job requires us to have directions on how to get to the job. Playing involves knowing where to go to be involved in the sport we are participating in or the recreational activity that we want to enjoy. Gaining an education requires directions to the school. Each of these involves authorization. Authorized to work, to play, to go to school and so on.

Directions are also important in other areas of life. We spend our life learning directions from our parents, teachers and others on various types of personal relations. We give and receive directions as children and parents to help learn what

we need and what is expected of us as members of a family. Couples give directions to each other on what they want and expect as a partner in marriage.

Directions are critical to learning who God is and what He expects from us. It also involves learning what we can expect from God as well.

Directions help us get from where we are to where we hope to be. Therefore we need to know how to get directions and where to get those directions.

Have you ever found yourself in the situation where you needed directions? You have become confused as to where you are and how to get to a specific location. Now you have to choose whether you will continue to attempt to find your way on your own or ask for directions. Seeking the way on your own has many problems, especially if you have never been where you are going. Asking for directions means admitting you are lost and need help.

In trying to understand more fully the issues involved we can look at what James has to say. James uses the example of a horse in his book. Today we might use a car as the example. It does not matter. Whether we talk about a bridle or a steering wheel there are two things to consider. These items give us authority over the vehicle or horse and the ability to choose the direction to be traveled.

In the previous chapters we focused on the presence of God and need for power. That power is represented by the horse or car. The wheel or bridle represents the authority and ability to accomplish a task. But without direction that power or ability can be wasted and even dangerous. At the least we can find we have been led the wrong way. This occurs in three ways. We let go of control and go wherever events take us that is where we go and risk running into something,

which can be dangerous, or we maintain control but don't know where we are going and risk choosing the wrong way, which is usually what happens, or we relinquish control to another and trust them to guide us. Even in giving up control we have two possibilities, we chose the wrong one to yield control to and they mislead us or we choose the correct one to yield our control to. Four options exist of which only one will give the correct result.

There is a further aspect to this discussion. We must look at not only the direction we are taking but the work that will be done as we go and when we hope to arrive. There are many types of horses and many types of motorized vehicles. Some are for show, some for riding, some for pulling and some for very heavy work. Each type of horse or vehicle requires special training. This training that will determine what the one in control of the horse or vehicle will be able to do.

In the realm of human activity we would talk about skills and abilities. While all the activities of life require a common item of power or energy how that energy is used depends on the skills available to the one using the energy. An artist needs one type of skills, an athlete another and a teacher yet another set of skills. The different skills relate to the direction each is taking in life.

In the body of Christ these skills are usually referred to as gifts. The key is the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. We talk about the gifts of the spirit or the fruit of the spirit. This looks at both the beginning and ending of what the Holy Spirit desires to do in the way of providing direction to the power and authority that God has given us.

In talking about what the Holy Spirit was ready to provide we are encouraged to seek the gifts and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul spends a great deal of time on this subject in 1 Cor 12-14 and Eph 4. The gifts given will define the

direction of the work we are to be involved in. Jesus did not proceed without the presence and direction of the Holy Spirit. It is not effective to choose to be a teacher if the Holy Spirit has not gifted you in that area and thus clearly defined the direction He wants you to go in ministry. You will have neither authority nor a clear direction and those around you will see this fact.

It becomes clear very quickly that building a great team is not enough when it comes to ministry and God's work. Further having all the resources of the world will not make any difference. Even being right and doing what is right will still not be enough to do the work before us. Until we have the Holy Spirit's direction and the gifts He alone can provide as well, then we cannot succeed. We may look and sound good but it will not last.

Still some people try to move without the direction of the Holy Spirit for key provisions and guidance. Ananias and Saphira tried to give a gift outside of the Holy Spirit. They were not called to give the gift they claimed to give. The deception was costly. Peter tried to claim a courage and strength he had not yet been given. He said he would die with Jesus. Instead he denied the Lord and suffered the shame that comes with such boasting. Later Peter would be able to stand before the Sanhedrin and make a his claim to follow Christ wherever it took him. He challenged the Sanhedrin with the words, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God" (Acts 4:20).

Paul said it this way "I will boast of the things that show my weakness" (2 Cor 11:30) and as a result his dependence on God for authority and direction. When he sought the Lord to remove the thorn that Paul felt was limiting him God's response was no. He was to depend on God for all that would be needed.

The presence of the Holy Spirit was a key issue in selecting leaders. In the early church there was need for a group of men to care for the needs of the new church so the apostles could focus on teaching the people. In selecting these men the key qualification was that they were to be men full of faith and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5). The presence of the Holy Spirit was a sign of true membership in the church (Eph 1:13). Jesus ministry did not begin until the Holy Spirit came. Antioch did not send out Saul and Barnabas until the Holy Spirit gave them direction (Act 13) and Paul would not go into Asia but went to Macedonia because of the direction of the Holy Spirit (Act 16).

In 2 Cor 6:3-10, Paul lists off a number of evidences of the truth of his ministry. In that list he includes the presence of the Holy Spirit as evidence that what he told them was true. In 1 Thes 1:5 he reminds them of how they heard the gospel. It was with power and with the Holy Spirit and conviction. For Paul the presence of the Holy Spirit was a key factor in his ability to present the truth. Without the Holy Spirit this was just another philosophy of man.

Jesus warned the disciples that there would be those who would be turned away because He did not know them. They did good work in their own name and power and not in the name of God and His power. They were going in the wrong direction following their own path and not that of God. They did not know the Spirit of God nor have His presence in their actions.

At Pentecost the disciples and others were waiting. They had been told to wait for the next word. They knew the message. They knew they would obey. They merely lacked the final authorization and direction to begin the work. On that day the Holy Spirit came and they were authorized to speak and it became clear to them what direction that would involve.

At each critical point God would provide direction for the next step. He would use Stephen to move the church into Judea. He would use Philip to open the door into Samaria. He would work with Peter and later Paul to direct the church to the nations. In a number of settings we will read how the Holy Spirit worked to give further direction in more specific areas, Philip to the Ethiopian, Antioch to send out Saul and Barnabas, Paul to go to Macedonia.

Even as these specific directions were being given there continued to be a general direction of going to everyone who would listen. The church grew because it understood the direction and authority of the God at two levels. There was a general direction that all were to follow and a general authority. Treat everyone as your brother and tell them the good news. There were also specific directions given to begin new ministry in new places so that the general direction and authority could again be applied to those who responded.

In each the Holy Spirit is clearly active giving out needed gifts and instructions in order for continuing the work of carrying out the mission of proclaiming the gospel to the world. Paul said it this way in Eph 4:11-13:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

This needs to be a key aspect of our prayers when looking at missions. We need to give time to be sure of the direction

and authority of the Holy Spirit in our work so that we will be properly equipped and accomplish what God wants in and through us.

Chapter 5 – Perseverance

This section is about what happens after you begin. God has prepared, God is present, we have been given the power needed and the direction and authority are all in place. This is about finishing the race and standing firm in the process.

As you look at those who have become involved in God’s mission consider this “How many good plans, wonderful ideas and great programs have started only to die on the vine? How many people have given up in frustration or weariness?”

It is an all too common event. Pastors leaving the ministry, missionaries coming home and not returning, people resigning from positions and ministry in the church. Some will say they were not really ready or they were immature or fell into sin. Yes that is true but there is another group who was clearly ready, were very mature and had no problem with any specific sin. They went in good faith, having taken time to be trained so they could do effective work in the area they felt they were clearly called to and yet they gave up and left defeated.

Prayer is not just about getting started it is also about maintaining and finishing. Scripture is filled with challenges to stand firm. For your benefit and mine let me take time to include some of them here:

- 1 Cor 16:13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.
- Gal 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

- Eph 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.
- Eph 6:14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,
- Phil 1:27-29 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved-and that by God.
- Phil 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!
- 2 Thess 2:15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.
- James 5:8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

It is clear that there is an issue that needs to be dealt with. One would think that since we are doing what is clearly good in the eyes of God we should not have such a struggle to continue the work that has been given us. From the scriptures above and others it is clear that such is not the case.

Jesus warned the disciples that even as Satan, the religious leaders and others had opposed him they too would face persecution (Mk 13:9-13; Lk 21:12; Jo 15:20). Jesus prayed for their protection and safety in John 17. Not so much to rescue them from trouble but that they would be able to stand up in the face of the trials that would come. He told a parable of how a farmer and the workers had finished planting only to have the enemy come and sew weeds in the field in order to cause trouble (Mk 13:25). In the parable of the sower (Mt 13) He reveals three ways in which the work would be opposed, Satan in the form of the birds, rocks representing the troubles of this world and thorns representing the cares and desires of the world. It becomes clear that there will be opposition to any who seek to follow God and serve Him. Especially to those who try to carry the gospel to others.

In Paul's description of the armor of God he includes a warning that there will be opposition. Satan will come with fiery darts to hinder and to harm all who dare enlist in God's army and enter into the enemy's territory. Peter warns that Satan is on the prowl seeking those he can scare and render ineffective in their work, even destroy them if possible. Paul talks about those who have left the work, those who fallen and some even oppose the work. Demas was praised in Col 4:14 and then in 2 Tim 4:10 the report is that he has run away from the work. Phyggeus and Herogenes have deserted Paul in Asia (2 Tim 1:15). Alexander has even been opposing Paul (2 Tim 4:10).

How then do we stand firm?

First, we must be anchored in God's word. We have no problem understanding this concept. We are taught early Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; Ps 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. These are scriptures that clearly tell us the need for learning God's

word and the result that comes with this learning. We will depend on God and avoid falling into sin as we study God's word. This seems like it should be a given and yet it is easy to allow the business of life and the assumption that all we have done will somehow carry us through. So many books are available that contradict that premise that maybe we need to take what we think is a given and make it an absolute need.

Second, we need to hear the teachings of those God has appointed over us. We are challenged to maintain fellowship with the church as a means of encouragement and strength (He 10:25). This concept is repeated in many ways. We are a body, as we work together we will be strong. Without the rest of the body I become isolated and unable to fulfill my function. What good is a hand if it has no arm or shoulder to help it reach the object? Even if it is holding an item it cannot do much without the assistance of the arm and shoulder and even those three together are limited in what can be accomplished without the body and legs to support and assist in larger actions that need us to relocate our efforts. On many occasions we are encouraged to respect those who lead and listen to what God has given them. Peter encouraged his readers to listen to the words and teachings of Paul. There is never an end to the need to learn and be taught.

Third, by remembering that we are now part of the kingdom of God. Even more a member of the royal family. As a result we have rights and access to power that can be used to protect ourselves and understand how to call on our Father to care for us. We have access to resources to do the work we have been given. We need to learn a new level of dependence. The human spirit wants to believe it is self-sufficient. This is the lie that Satan proposed, we can be like God. We are not and the sooner we learn that and learn what our weaknesses are the sooner we will be able to access

God's power to protect and support us as we do the work assigned.

These are not enough. They deal with where we start from. The key is how to maintain all of what we have learned, remain in the fellowship and make use of the resources that are available to us.

As we read the letters of Paul and look at the life of Jesus we learn the key to standing firm and persevering in the work. It involves a special ministry. We call it intercessory prayer. Jesus took time to pray for himself and the ministry. One key aspect of that prayer time was given to praying for the lives and ministry of the disciples. We see this in John 17 as he reflects on those times of prayer and what He was praying for.

Paul opens many of his letters with a comment like Eph 1:15-16 "For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers." This kind of prayer is repeated in different ways. This means that Paul spent time praying for the life and ministry of those he was writing to.

Paul also requests their prayers. Let me list a few of these for you to read:

- Rom 15:31-32 Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed.
- Eph 6:19-20 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20

for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

- Col 4:3-4 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.
- 2 Thess 3:1-3 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. 2 And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.

It is clear that Paul is aware that he needs to be in prayer for his ministry and actively seek the partnership of others to pray for that ministry. Does that mean there will be no difficulty? Actually our prayers and those of others for us have nothing to do with whether there will be trials, troubles, and or opposition. Paul had all of them. He talks about his troubles in 2 Cor?. Even in his requests for prayer the focus is not on avoiding these problems but in being faithful to the call of God and clear in the proclamation of the message.

Too often we are looking for only one kind of deliverance and that is the removal of the people, situation or temptation that is disturbing us. This becomes the only answer to prayer when in fact there is a deeper more important answer. Wouldn't our ministry be so much easier if that were always the way God worked. To smooth the road when we had prayed sufficiently for his intervention.

The deeper issue is not about the problem but about us. It is about our commitment to God. This involves learning what is meant by the phrase God will provide a way through every difficulty. It is about the message God wants to build in our

lives. It is about how we live our life and walk in his way and not the rocks we want removed from our path. Paul did not ask for release but to learn how to be at peace in every situation, how to be faithful in his proclamation of the message, about how to love and deal with his enemies and to do so not out of fear but out of love so he could fearlessly proclaim the message.

The tendency is search for escape from the current struggle and not the development of our character to remain faithful in the struggle. It is about a clear conscience and living honorably no matter what happens. This was the focus of a prayer in Heb 13:18-19.

Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

Jesus gave the disciples similar instructions in Luke 22:40-41.

On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."

And as he approached his greatest trial sought the strength to carry out the father's will and to warn the disciples of their need to pray as well.

Luke 22:46 "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Earlier he prayed for them in the same line as Paul's comments. He prayed not for them to be isolated but to be able to deal with what would face them in the world.

John 17:15-16 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

From this it is clear there will be difficulties along the way as we seek to carry out the tasks we have been given by God and those chosen to lead. Perseverance in prayer will be necessary in order for us to carry the task forward towards completion.

There is one more issue that we will have to deal with as we persevere in prayer. We will always wonder how to know if God is closing the door or the situation is a result of the activities of those who oppose God. Paul saw one struggle as a thorn sent by God. He struggled to find release but God told him not to worry about it. The need was to be met by trusting God (1 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Paul desired to continue further into Asia with the gospel but God blocked that road and opened a road to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-9). There was opposition in Corinth and God encouraged Paul to stand firm for there would come victory as Paul continued to minister (Acts 18:9-11). Each of these events and the directions involved times of prayer as Paul sought out God's direction. It is only as we persevere in prayer that we will know the difference between God directing us and the opposition of Satan and those who serve him.

The first issue is to be ready to go forward; in faith believing God will direct or as the writer of the Hebrews put it.

Heb 10:36

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

We are not to worry about how long that might take. We are asked to persevere. All too often our vision is to short range. We are not prepared to look far down the road. We really do not want to count the cost. We want to see the results and gain the victory now and not later. To change that attitude will require us to pray in a way we are not used to. Thinking not in terms of days, months or years but in terms of a life or service if that what it will take to carry the gospel forward.

Jesus warned that we need to carefully count the cost to avoid failure (Luke 14:25-33). While it is true some plants yield their fruit and bounty quickly there are those that take years even decades before they begin to produce. The one requires work the other requires work combined with perseverance. Both need prayer but the one requires a commitment to prayer at a higher level.

More of us need to be like Epaphras and find others to join us in the task of praying and persevering.

Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

Chapter 6 - Perseverance Too

In considering where we have been and where this is going I found myself needing to revisit the concept of perseverance one more time. It had seemed like there was a key aspect missing from a complete understanding of the need to persevere in our prayer.

Perseverance is not just about accomplishing a job and hanging in there when things are tough, difficult, even impossible. It is actually something more and different. Perseverance allows time for unknown and unexpected developments to occur.

Around every corner, behind every door, is something we expect - at least we create images of what to expect. At the same time there is always the possibility of something we don't expect. Even a familiar corner or door can bring something unexpected.

This what perseverance is about. It is about dealing with what we expect and creating time for what we are not expecting. Unless this is part of the process then God may not be able to develop critical areas of our life. He may not be able to help us grow in our character, learn needed skills, gain important knowledge or work on key and new relations.

Without perseverance, critical tasks may not be seen and dealt with. Learning to trust others, growing in our Christian witness, strengthening our commitment and developing a deeper devotion to God would be lacking. If we are moving too fast there may be no time for these and other critical tasks to be accomplished. Such growth cannot occur in a rush but must have time to come to fruition. Much like a seed that needs time to germinate, grow, blossom and produce its fruit, we need time to accomplish certain tasks.

Perseverance is about maintaining direction and forging ahead, but also it is a time of waiting and growing. Why? Because so many lessons of life are not taught but lived. Reading a book is good but living out the process is much better.

I think about Paul and the thorn. In Paul's mind it was a hindrance to be dealt with so he could move on. He prayed over and over for the thorn to be removed, while continuing to persevere in the work. But he was missing out on an important lesson and knowledge about God's power. Then God spoke. Paul was now listening more clearly and God said that he was missing the point. It was not about being healed, but about learning to trust His strength and not Paul's.

By persevering in his life and work Paul was finally able to hear and learn what God was trying to teach him. In times of trial and struggle he learned a lesson about being content in every situation. He learned that running the race is as important as finishing the race.

Review again the scriptures

Ro 5:3-4 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. NIV

Suffering is what we are trying to avoid. The pain of waiting and wondering is not our idea of getting the work done. But it is in the process of the struggle that character and hope are forged. Rejoice not in the struggle but in what God is accomplishing in your life and through your commitment to persevere.

Ro 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. NIV

Paul says that the time of our perseverance allows God to do what is good for us. It is in that time we can learn what is more important. We learn to understand we have been called for God's purposes. That phrase alone should cause us to pause and think carefully about what is happening. God has His purposes and is working things out for our good, not necessarily for our convenience. The good we are looking for may not even be the top item on God's list (if it is even on his list) of good that needs to be accomplished

1 Co 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. NIV

It is not about escape. It is not about our developing our strength and thus overcoming the situation. It is about God providing faith to stand up and stand strong in the difficult places. It is about learning to listen to God and hear His voice. Like Elijah we need to learn to hear the still small voice. We want thunder and lightning, wind and fire. We want to feel the ground shake as God responds to our pleas. God is more concerned about how we are listening, how we are living. The way out is quiet and steady. It is gained in prayer and perseverance.

2 Co 4:15-18

All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed

day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. NIV

It seems that this reminder is like repetition. Another reminder but this one is looking out to the impact that our perseverance has on others. As they see what God is doing in us they will give thanks and bring honor to God. We may think it is all hopeless and without meaning but what do we really know of what is happening. What do we know of the ones who are watching our life and how God is working? What do we know of what God is accomplishing? So little.

I remember a time of struggle to get a job done. There was no one to help and I felt alone and that I was accomplishing very little. Then people began to share how my faithfulness in going everyday to the work and persevering had impacted them and encouraged them. I felt ashamed about how often I had complained to God. My prayer was not filled with an understanding of what God was doing. I had missed out on the joy of faithfully serving, persevering. Still God is a loving Father and in a tender way I was taught a lesson I would not have learned without the struggle and the persevering.

Jas 1:4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. NIV

When we give up, when we spend too much time complaining and whining then the work God is trying to accomplish in us will not occur. We will quit and never mature in those areas that he has been working on in our life. We are too lazy and in too much of a hurry to find the end of the current trouble. We quit and forever will be caught in the

world of what if I had ..., or what might have happened if I ...?

The ability of an athlete is based on perseverance, finishing the struggle of training in order to be able to compete effectively. Taking it easy will result in weaknesses in the athlete's ability to compete. Not allowing enough time for the training will result in poor performance. Only training in some areas will mean failure because of key weaknesses in critical areas of support for the competition.

Or think of a diamond. It starts out as ordinary coal and then the pressure begins. Not a little pressure or a short time. The pressure is immense and the time period extensive. If the process isn't completed then the diamond will be flawed and worthless. It is only by persevering until the end that a true diamond is formed. It is only as we persevere and pray for God to help us go through to the end that we will truly become mature in every way that God intends.

1 Pe 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. NIV

It is in the crucible of struggle that our perseverance will yield its greatest benefit. Our faith, which God desires above all else, will be tested and refined. Our dependence on our self and our skills will be burned away and only faith in God will remain.

When we short circuit the process, finding ways to escape or use other means than what God intends; when we interfere with or interrupt what God is doing then our faith will never

develop. It will be weak and soft like iron that has not been tempered. Tempering involves heating and beating, heating and pounding, heating and hammering. Over and over. Each time the steel becomes stronger and stronger until it is truly strong enough to accomplish the work.

Yes to us it looks like the struggle is endless, but really it is only a brief moment in the span of eternity. Yes, it looks hard and agonizing, but oh, the wonder of the results when God is allowed to fully refine our lives. Yes it looks like things are all wrong but we do not see what God sees. We do not know what God knows. We do not know how the refining of our faith is bringing honor and praised to Jesus Christ. We do not know all the ways in which God is using the struggle to reveal Christ to us and those around us. Especially if we do not allow him to take us through to the end so that the work He intended is accomplished.

We need to take our prayer and our lives to a new level of perseverance. For if we do then the message of God's love will be carried farther and clearer than we ever thought possible.

Chapter 7 – A review of training

As we begin to look into the various areas where we need to provide training it will be good to look at some key concepts regarding the process of training. It is not just *what* we teach, but also *how* we teach that will result in effective training in missions.

Instruction is more than providing information. If all we do is provide information then we are not truly dealing with all that is needed to be effective in training. It is interesting to note the number of words used in the Greek language to cover the many aspects of training - from simply the giving of information to complex processes intended to equip a person who can effectively use the information and train others to continue the process. While there are many biblical examples we could look at to better understand and appreciate what is involved, let us take just two; Paul and the church at Antioch.

Paul was a highly educated man. He had been trained from early years in the school of Gamaliel. He had successfully learned the information and was given a place of authority. He was a Pharisee and, according to his own words, a Pharisee of Pharisees. Yet in all of that information and training there was a lack of key information. He did not know the source of the knowledge he possessed and it was not personal information.

This would change on the road to Damascus. Soon after that event he tried to tell others what he now believed, but the results were not what he expected. Though he had the head knowledge there was more to be learned. He had to go through further preparation. He had to learn how to exemplify all that he had learned. It would be many years before Paul would be called on to do any teaching.

The next time Paul would share his faith and knowledge the results would be much different. His knowledge was tempered with experience and a life of commitment to God. What a difference that made as people gathered to hear the teacher and be taught. He presented the information in a new way and with a clearer focus.

Paul's teaching now came with authority. Not the authority of a skilled instructor alone. He now taught from a life built on a relationship with the source of the information. This is critical to be effective in our training. We must be involved in more than providing information. We must also be involved in providing a clear example of the effect that information has in our life.

Paul's teaching had a clear target. He didn't teach just to hear himself and have an audience. The teaching was designed to deal with key groups of people. When talking to people about the scriptures, he knew who was listening and adjusted to meet their need. When dealing with churches, there was another level of information and different expectations. When training his leaders, we see another aspect of the application of the information and knowledge he possessed. They received special attention in how to become effective as teachers and trainers and what needed to happen in their lives to be effective.

The teaching had a clear focus. Paul was not one to ramble. There was a clear focus and purpose to what he had to say. He was not interested in fine rhetoric that sounded impressive. That would only misdirect those listening. The focus was always on God and the work of Jesus. Superficial and superfluous language was a distraction. Getting to the point and being clear was the goal. That meant saying what was needed even when it was difficult and challenging to those who were listening. That was the focus - helping

people take the next step in their life and ministry so they would be more effective.

The teaching also encouraged fellowship. Even when discussing difficult issues the point was not to isolate or discourage but to share and encourage. There would be costs involved in obeying what was being taught but by working together people helped each other carry out what they learned. True instruction did not occur in isolation but in the context of others. So what was taught was to build the body of Christ and increase the body as it reached out into the world. That means that good teaching should always be beneficial. It should build up the fellowship and strengthen it so that the church could effectively move into the world with the gospel.

Antioch was an example of a church involved in being taught and taking action. They received the truth and the leaders saw a need for instruction. Barnabas was sent. He determined that the need was greater than his ability and recruited Paul. The church was growing and needed teachers who could help direct that growth. The record states that for the next year Paul and Barnabas were engaged in a time of training. This training resulted in the church being ready to respond to God's directions and take action based on those directions.

The church helps us see what should happen when a significant time of training is occurring.

- First, they received truth. The church was hearing the gospel and people were responding. They also were open to continued training in their life.
- Second, they grew. The growth was remarkable. They not only grew in numbers but in their lives. It was significant. So significant that the church in Jerusalem sent a representative to see what was

happening. Here in Antioch those who received the gospel were first called Christians; people could see Christ in them.

- Third they were trained. Barnabas saw the need and called Paul to assist in an extended period of training. While it is not stated exactly what all was included in the training it is reasonable to assume that it focused on maturing as a Christian in life and in ministry.
- Fourth, they were involved. Even before the period of training there is involvement in ministry. That involvement is encouraged so that when God makes His plan known to the church leaders the response is easy. They send Saul and Barnabas. This becomes the pattern. Training leads to involvement.

Paul uses this as the pattern for his ministry. People are saved and called. There is a time of preparation, practice under supervision, and then they are assigned to work. This happens with Timothy, Titus and many more. The records show that as Paul traveled he sought to train people so they could become elders for the local body of believers.

As we consider the process of training let us keep a key concept in mind. It is one thing to learn about something, it is another to learn how to do it. Here are a few examples. Learning *about* cooking is not the same as learning *how* to cook. Learning *about* driving is not the same as learning *how* to drive. I would not want to be in the same car with someone who had only read a book about driving but not had any actual experience in driving. This same concept needs to be applied to missions. Learning *about* missions is not the same as leaning to *do* missions.

In the above examples we must realize there are different levels of competency and areas of expertise. In cooking you can be a caterer, baker, or chef. In driving you can learn to

drive a motorcycle, car or bus. In missions there are different areas of involvement and activity as well. Training helps us to know the differences and gain skill in specific areas.

In going from learning *about* to learning *how* we will discover there are four levels of learning. Each are important in order to be successful in learning *how*.

Level One – Information

At this level we have no explanations, just information. If the information is presented well we will be interested in learning more.

Level Two – Teaching

At this level we have a structured presentation of information with some explanations of the value and usefulness of this information. There is a limited amount of interaction at this level, usually questions designed to clarify what is being shared.

Level Three – Instruction

At this level we now combine the information with application of the information to particular settings or activities. The purpose of instruction focuses on how one can use the information of the field of study in their life and activity.

Level Four – Training

At this level the focus is on providing opportunity to actually practice what has been learned. It also involves a process of review and testing to improve ones abilities and use of the information and knowledge that has been learned.

If we are successful in going through the complete process of training then we will be able to measure how we are

progressing. These would be indicators of where a student or learner is:

- Learning Truth – They have the information and can answer questions
- Living Life – They have taken the information and incorporated it into their life in such a way as can be seen and heard
- Proclamation – They have become so aware of what is learned and its importance they actively are involved in telling others what they have learned.
- Transfer – The final indicator is that what has been learned is effectively being transferred to other individuals who start up the cycle of learning again.

As we look at learning we need to understand that there are many ways in which learning can occur. Each context for learning involves different skills and processes to be effective. Each context will provide training for different people at different points in their life. Each context may also be limited to the level at which it can provide training.

Four key contexts – There may be others but these would be the most common and easily recognized.

- Context one – Daily Life
The events of life and the people we interact with can be a critical source of training. God uses events and people to teach us and help us learn many truths and skills.
- Context two – Church
The church has many opportunities and settings in which training at all levels can occur. It is a natural center for learning to occur for the Christian and the body of Christ.
- Context three – Ministry

This context involves the actual use of knowledge learned and the application of one's instructions. Here we find out if what we learned is effective.

- Context four – School

This context allows for more focused and intense training at all of the levels.

Each context has strengths and weaknesses. Each can provide training in ways the other cannot. Thus we need to think through the broader needs for training so that each will be able to contribute in critical ways to the overall process of training.

In all of the above we must consider another factor in the training process. The ability and development of the student or learner will affect how and when each level will be most effective. It will let us know when someone is ready to move to the next level.

- Primary learning – This involves the learning of Scripture; learning the basis of what we are teaching. Without a base in Scripture, other learning about life will become difficult.
- Secondary learning – This involves understanding commands and being obedient to those commands. We learn what is expected and why, so that we can make clear choices and act appropriately,
- Tertiary learning – This involves the ability to apply what has been learned to specific settings and activities.
- Quaternary learning – This involves the ability to see the issues, review what is happening and adapt knowledge and learning to new settings and

situations. It also involves the ability to teach what has been learned to another person.

Jesus' life was one of information, teaching, instruction and training. He informed people, many who didn't listen, but he gave them the information. He was constantly teaching those who came to Him. He tried to help them see and understand. He was involved in instruction, explaining why He did what He did, said what He said. He took time to train in key areas, and He sent the disciples out to practice and use what they had been taught.

A training guide, or evaluation tool, is a wonderful process to have and to deal with. But if we do not understand what is involved in training we will never be able to accomplish even the simplest task and get the results we are seeking from the exercise. If we teach at one level and expect results at another level then failure will follow. If we teach at a higher level but only allow for the results of a lower level then we will cause frustration and disappointment. Either way the results end up the same, no one is trained properly.

We need to understand clearly what is involved in training so that as we look at the key areas where it is needed, we will know how to be successful in that area. Sometimes we will need to start at a lower level because that is what is necessary and then work upwards. At other times as we see where we are we can move forward at higher levels based on what already exists.

It will not always be necessary to start at the lowest level in every area. As we more fully understand what is involved in a complete training process then the guide will become useful in helping us determine what is needed in each area and where to begin the training process.

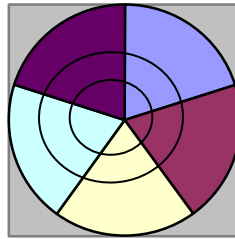
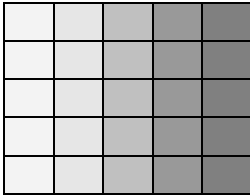
It is not just about telling people what is needed. It is about telling them, teaching them, instructing them and training them so that they can do the same with the next person. Jesus said “go and make disciples, teaching them all that I have taught you.” Teaching results in training, training results in disciples. Paul taught Timothy. Then Paul told Timothy that he should do the same and teach others. That is the measure of effective training.

Chapter 8 – Explaining the Grid

Now that we have an idea of what is involved in training we can look at how we will evaluate and what areas will be included in the process. That means establishing a structure to guide us. In this case it will be a grid to 1) divide the areas for study and 2) divide the areas into critical concepts to better evaluate what is happening in each area.

One of the disadvantages of this process is that we end up with a set of boxes on a grid or a circle divided into sections. In the grid it gives one the impression that there are sequences that must be followed and levels to pass through as one progresses. In a circle we may solve the problem of giving each area equal emphasis but end up with even greater weight be placed on starting at a level a proceeding to the next higher.

Sample Grids



While such sequences and levels may be effective for some aspects of the evaluation and thus the developing of responses it need not proceed in such a manner. We may find that we don't fit exactly into the grid; or awe are already active in several areas. The grid is simply a guideline to ensure that all areas are covered.

With that in mind here are the key topics that will be dealt with. While one can always add, combine or delete this will at least give a point at which to begin.

- Awareness – We need to evaluate what we are aware of as relates to missions and how we are involved in missions.
- Resource – We need to evaluate what resources are needed for missions, and how to deal with obtaining those resources.
- Personnel – We need to evaluate what work needs to be done so we understand who needs to be involved and how to involve them in missions.
- Training – We need to evaluate key areas of missions training that will be needed and how to provide that training. (While all of this study is dealing with training, we also need to identify the area of training as well.)
- Mobilize – We need to understand the needs of ministry, in this case missions, so that we can effectively select and enable those who carry out these ministries.

Within each of these five areas there are four subdivisions. These divisions help in working through each topic so as to fully understand the needs and do a more complete job of training in that topic. For the most part the topics do fit the four subdivisions but not perfectly. The subdivisions are:

- Principle – In this subdivision we are trying answer the key question of why. Why are we to be involved

in missions in this area? This usually involves looking at the biblical basis for a given activity.

- Preparation – In this subdivision we are trying to ask the key question of, what we are doing? What will we need to do to be involved in missions? This looks at the activities that will be required to function in the given areas as relates to missions.
- Process – In this subdivision we will be answering one or more of the following key questions, When will we go? Who will be involved? Where will it happen? When will we provide the training needed? who will need the training and where will it be provided?
- Practice – In this subdivision we are concerned with the results and carrying out missions. It deals with defining the “how” of missions. How will missions be done as we become more involved in the given area?

	Awareness	Resources	Personnel	Equipping	Mobilize
Principle	Teach Theology of Missions	Teach theology of giving	Teach call of God	Teach Discipleship	Teach on ministry
Preparation	Teach Cultural awareness	Teach areas of giving	Define activities involved	Identify key areas for training	Description of ministry
Process	Teach goals and planning	Develop plans for giving	Establish needs for personnel	Prepare material	Select people
Practice	Develop mission awareness	Develop funding for missions	Recruit people	Training people	Authorize those called (or send)

If, in fact, what is being done here is valid, then the structure could be used to evaluate how we are doing at training and preparing the church in other areas as well. For example, we could use this grid to evaluate our program of evangelism or discipleship or youth ministry.

A further point to be considered is that we can also apply this to an individual, group, church or group of churches. Of course if we focus on just an individual there will be some areas that will not apply since the overall structure is intended to guide the development of missions in the church. Still much will be useful for an individual to use to evaluate if they are getting all the training they need to be effectively involved in missions.

As we seek to build and improve our missions' awareness and activities, there are other key areas that are crucial to maintaining what we are trying to accomplish.

Prayer - the foundation we need to build on.

Training grid – Here are the supports we must build to have a mission program

Communication – This helps us to keep everything held together and straight.

Partnership – This deals with the fact that only as we work together will our goal be accomplished. Missions is not the possession of any individual or groups, but requires that we work together, under one purpose, to be truly effective.

Missionary Planning Guide



Chapter 9 – Area One – Awareness

Have you ever used or heard one of these statements?

I wish I had known.
If only someone had told me.
I didn't understand.
No one showed me how.
There were no instructions.

These statements are often used to explain why we failed in a given situation or to deal with the results of a careless comment or action that has hurt someone. They are also used to explain why we didn't respond in a way that was expected by others.

These statements also reveal that we were not aware of all the information, which then resulted in an error in judgment, an inappropriate response or no response. They highlight a need to be better informed and aware of what is happening around us. We can actively grow in awareness through teaching and practice. Our awareness can be increased through active planning or passively through the normal process of growth and being alert to what we can gain from that process.

Since awareness is built around information. The more information I have, the more aware I become, and that, in turn, affects my life. Seeking information helps me see what is missing and so I become better aware. Our life, our relations with others, our sources of information and our own personal desires impact how we gain the information. They will determine how serious we are about the search for information in a given area and how that information will impact our lives.

A key factor in our ability to grow in awareness will be *choice*. You may not choose everything that occurs in life but you do choose how those events will impact your life.

You can choose to increase your awareness by actively incorporating the information being gained and thus increase your awareness in a given area; or you can choose to reject what you learn and gain nothing.

How do we make these choices?

How do we decide what is important and what we should spend time understanding, becoming more aware of? How do we decide on the types of training needed to increase our information and level of awareness?

Since the focus of this material is missions and God is the source of missions then we need to go to God's Word for guidance to learn what we need to know and how we should respond in the area of missions. We need to learn the impact of that truth on our lives, how to apply that truth to our lives, and how to share that with others.

Paul considered it important that we grow in this area. In most of his letters there was specific reference to his desire and prayer that the people would grow in their knowledge of God.

Eph 1:17-19 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, NIV

Php 1:9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, NIV

Col 1:9-12 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.
NIV

To have this type of growth in our lives requires study of the word of God and clear teaching on what it says about missions. If this is done then people will not be caught saying “I didn’t know,” or “if only someone had told me.” We will be aware of what missions is, what our responsibility is and the work to be done.

Now let us look at our grid in regard to the area of awareness and missions.

	Awareness
Principle	Teach Theology of Missions
Preparation	Teach Cultural awareness
Process	Teach goals and planning
Practice	Develop mission awareness

Principle - Awareness

We need to think through how to increase our awareness in terms of Scripture and the training that will be involved. For this training to be effective we will need to evaluate what we

are doing as individuals, leaders and as a church. The process of evaluation will need to focus on two areas.

1. First is to explore the biblical patterns and precedents for such training.
2. Second will be determining the key areas of need for instruction and how to structure the training to effectively prepare everyone in the church for involvement in missions.

This process should also provide us with the ability to determine how effective our training is in the people's lives.

Area One - Pattern of Training

Let us look first at Jesus pattern for training. In doing so we can quickly note three key foci in Jesus ministry as he trains the disciples. First his teaching is culturally based, second, deals with practical issues, and third it includes plans for the next generation.

While Jesus focus was the community of the Jewish people, he still shows us the need for preparation culturally as we carry the gospel into the world. He encountered people of different cultures and backgrounds and shared with them His message in appropriate ways. He prepared his disciples for moving out into the world.

First Focus

His teaching was based on a clear understanding of the life of the people around him. He knew the issues of their lives and how to communicate truth using their lives and activities. His message was culturally tuned so the people would hear clearly what he had to say. His style becomes a living example of how to communicate with people. We are to learn and understand their lives so that we can use that knowledge as the basis for communicating the truth.

Becoming aware of the world around us as a source of examples and contact points is an important area of training

Second Focus

Jesus training had a strong practical aspect. When he sends out the twelve and the seventy he gives them detailed instructions on how to travel, how to live and how to do the work. This is a time of practical training which will help them in future ministry. The training begins at home and will take them beyond the boundaries they are familiar with. What they learn now will help them later. Practical experience needs to be part of our training.

Third Focus

Jesus called the disciples to be engaged in the discipleship process themselves as a key means of proclaiming and teaching all that he had taught them. There is to be a time of training and preparation for everyone so that we can go into the world to proclaim the truth. Jesus spent three years preparing a group of people for the work they were to be given. He then tells them that all they have seen and learned is to be communicated with those who will hear them and believe the message they bring. They are to be involved in training others who will follow them in the work of carrying the gospel to the world - the next generation of believers.

As was noted above the main focus of Jesus during his ministry was the Jews and not Gentiles, yet, in many of his discussion he indicates that in the future the ministry will be broader. They will present the message to the Gentiles; the process of training will take them to the world.

Next Generations

As we move into Acts this is the pattern we see. The disciples, now apostles, spend their time teaching others. Teaching them the words of Jesus and the truth of the gospel. As they are teaching, the practical issues of life are dealt with. Seven men are given the task of caring for donations and their distribution. The result of the teaching is clearly being carried out as we see a new generation of leaders and teachers appearing who carry on the work.

Stephen is very involved in presenting the message to Grecian Jews. Philip carries the message to Samaria. Barnabas is called on to supervise the new work in Antioch. As we observe this process we see that teaching is more than learning material, it is about learning how to use the information as well. It involves the ability to apply what is learned and then telling others. The result of this is greater growth in the church and another round of mission work.

Each step of expansion is followed by a period of instruction. Peter and John go to Samaria to follow up on Philip's work and teach the people further. The move to Antioch has a similar pattern. A group of Jews have learned the truth and are trained to share that truth. They go to Antioch and do what they have been trained for. The church grows. Barnabas and Saul come to Antioch and are involved in another period of teaching and training which means more people being prepared and sent out into the world.

Paul's letters contain all three elements. There is a great deal of culturally appropriate teaching, he deals with the practical issues of living as a Christian and training for ministry and always there is the emphasis of reaching those who have not heard. In those letters we hear about the next generation of people who are challenged to continue the process. There is Timothy, Titus, Epaphras and many more. Their task is the same. Teach, live and send.

These three words are very much part of Jesus' last prayer in John 17. He says that he has taught them, lived with them and is sending them into the world. The focus? Those who are yet to hear and believe. Even today the focus of our training should clearly contain missions if it is to fulfill its true task - carrying the gospel to those who have not heard.

Area Two-Structures for training

The second area to deal with is how we structure the training to make it effective in our lives and the life of our church. It relates to the people involved, the material to be presented and the responses that can be expected of those involved. All of this is affected by our culture location and resources.

We need to ask questions about the make-up of the group involved. What are the ages, the relationships, the social and economic levels? The answers to these questions will determine where we meet, what is taught, what resources will be available to aid in the process and what results can be expected.

Each age group will require a different approach and different materials. What is presented to children is not what would be presented to adults. Children have different needs than young adults: young adults have different needs than the elderly: etc. What each group does with what is learned will be different as well.

We also need to look at the different ways in which information can be shared - in the classroom, during worship, through preaching, in small group, etc. Each requires different preparation and allows for different types of responses. As we begin to understand the environment and the people we will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of our teaching.

We will also need to look at the practical issues of resources, personnel and facilities. These will vary for country to country and church to church. We need to be aware of what we have, so we can decide what we can do, and how we will do the work of training in missions. None of these should be seen as barriers or obstacles, rather as ways to guide and develop a plan that works for your church where you are.

The churches of the New Testament did not have lots of resources, large memberships or fine buildings and yet they effectively carried the gospel to their world. What we need to realize is that God can help us do the job of training where we are and with what we have. Their greatest resource was God's Word. That needs to be our greatest resource. It doesn't matter if we are in Guyana, the Amazon jungle, the mountains of the Andes or any other location. We all have the ability to use that resource, God's Word, to teach missions.

As we our training and the resources we have available to us, we need to constantly ask how that material is helping us develop a Biblical understanding of missions in our church. Do they help us deal with practical needs and make it possible for us to carry the message to the world?

As we answer these questions we will then be able to deal with the content we are presenting and the next list of questions. What are we teaching our children, youth, and adults? What methods will be effective with each group? (Memory work, stories, Bible studies, practical experiences) What is happening with our various groups like women, men, young adult, or married fellowships? How are they challenged in missions? What are the results of what we are teaching them?

What do we know of missions in terms of the Bible, its history, and those who have gone before us? What are we

teaching regarding giving, prayer, and service in the area of missions? What is the pastors' emphasis? How often does he preach on missions? How much time is given over in our worship planning to missions' emphasis?

Do not be afraid to ask these questions and others like them. It is in the process of asking the questions and dealing with the answers that we will realize our strengths and weaknesses and be able to effectively deal with teaching people what the Bible says about missions and what is expected.

Preparation – Cultural Awareness

Gaining information is only one aspect of becoming aware. Awareness should result in changes in how we interact with others. If I learn a new skill or piece of information my relationship to others is changed. I know something others may not know or have a skill they don't have. This will affect how I interact with them. I can have a negative impact (if I am proud or arrogant) or a positive one where I seek to help them learn what I have learned.

This leads to another affect of awareness. In becoming aware I must now deal with how that information fits into my life and how that information will fit into the lives of others around me. We are now moving from merely an awareness of information to an awareness of culture. This means becoming aware of my culture, aware of another culture and aware of the translation process to communicate between the two cultures.

Let us start with becoming aware of our culture. We need to learn to understand ourselves. We start by answering the question, who are we as individuals? From there we need to understand our relations to others. Who are we as we interact

with others? We also need to understand ourselves in relation to our community. Who are we in relation to another group?

This means that awareness is more than just learning more information. It also involves incorporating that information into our lives. This means dealing with possible changes in us, our relation to others and our relations between groups.

When I become more aware of my own culture then it is possible to have a true awareness of another culture. They people of the other culture will also be dealing with the same awareness issues. The key is to understand that though the issues we all deal with may be the same, the settings can be quite different. The priorities given, values held, customs involved and language used may be different for the other culture.

An example may be helpful. Here is a chart showing how that can be different.

Area	Culture One (C1)	Culture Two (C2)
Define Ourselves by	Clan	Age group
Define Relations by	Family	Economics
Define Community by	Caste	Geography

C1 defines itself as a clan based on a common ancestor. C2 defines itself as a group of people all about the same age that went through a key ceremony together. C1 defines relations based on family ties, C2 thinks in terms of those of the same economic group. C1 defines its community as those who are

part of the same caste or social level. C2 thinks in terms of a geographic location such as this valley or mountain area. As we see C1 and C2 we become aware of the need for translation; aware that communication is more than just learning about two cultures.

Another example using the same two cultures from above will help. Think of the idea of clothing. Both cultures have a term called clothing. Yet what is considered clothing is quite different. For C1 (i.e. Melanesian) a grass skirt is considered clothing. For C2 (i.e. Eskimo) clothing involves heavy fur lined coats and pants. Both cultures have a concept called modesty. For C1 (i.e. Amazon Indian) it may mean very little clothing. For C2 (i.e. Moslem) it means long robes and veils.

Awareness means we realize these differences and work on learning to communicate and translate the message of the gospel where and when needed. This is necessary if we are to be effective in our communication and as a result allow us to truly interact with them.

The physical acts seeing, hearing, and tasting can help us understand differences. Here we will quickly learn that often we see things differently, hear things differently and taste things differently than others do. What is considered attractive in one place is not attractive in another. What is considered music by one is not by another. What one considers tasty and edible is definitely distasteful to others. If we stop there we will only see the differences. We need a new level of awareness to help us see and communicate beyond the differences.

God told Israel that he saw what they were doing, he heard what they were saying and often used taste to inform them of his pleasure or displeasure with what he was seeing and hearing in the life of Israel. This level of information and awareness was not always enough to help the people of

Israel respond to what God was saying. What a difference it made to us and our awareness of God when he chose to go to another level of communication; when He translated all of who He is and His culture and entered a specific culture as a man of the first century, a Hebrew man, a carpenter.

If God was willing to take the time to become part of our culture and communicate within it, then we need to be willing to understand our own culture and the culture of others so that we can effectively communicate to them as well. Such a level of awareness will help us ask critical questions about how we provide the needed information to people and how they should respond to that information. It will help us in developing a true awareness of missions.

We will see the need to learn about others. We will see the need to understand our attitude toward others. We will see the need to learn to respect our culture and the culture of others. We will be able to effectively interact with our culture and people of other cultures.

Process - Goals and Planning

Hopefully as we grow in our awareness we will be able to see where we are and then determine where we want to be. Out of this will grow an awareness of the need to set goals and do proper planning to reach those goals.

Always we need to remember that no church or group is at the same place in its development, or dealing with exactly the same issues. That means one church's will not necessarily work for another church, and my groups plan will not be the best plan for your group. The goals and planning for a group that has little knowledge of missions would be very different from the goals and planning of a group that has been actively involved in missions and has

helped to send missionaries. Your culture will determine one way to do the work while mine will find a different way.

If we are aware of these issues it will help in making such decision as,

1. Where will missions be taught?
2. How will missions be taught?
3. When should missions be taught?
4. What should be taught?

We are ready to ask key questions involved in setting goals and planning according to those goals. Four key questions can be used to start the process.

Where: This deals with the location and the group involved in the process of becoming aware of missions. It also will help determine the material that will be presented. For example, we would present basic biblical material to children in Sunday school, the home or maybe a children's club program. If we were dealing with a "call to missions" it would a broader age group and may occur in a church worship service or a camp meeting. We could do cultural awareness with youth by visiting in the home of a person of another culture.

How: This will look at the process used. Teaching missions can involve many methods. Sermons, seminars, books, memory work or Bible studies. We could do it as individuals, small groups or as a church. We could focus on specific ages and their needs when teaching.

When: This focus on the times that will be set aside to teach missions. This involves identifying the possible times when such teaching can occur - as part of the regular scheduled activities of the church, like Sunday school and the worship service, or as part of specially organized meeting like a conference, seminar, or retreat.

What: This looks at the content that we will teach. It will be affected by all of the above. It looks at who is there, when it is happening and where we are located to determine what will be most useful and effective in accomplishing the task of making people aware of missions in that setting.

This kind of structuring then can open the door to help us increase our awareness of the need for setting good goals and developing appropriate plans. In fact we need to *plan* in order for this learning to take place. Waiting for the right moment, until we feel like it, or for people to show an interest may mean we will never set goals and make plans. This means involvement in missions may never happen.

A failure to plan may result in the opposite of getting involved in missions. We will effectively discourage people from seeing the importance of missions and cause them to have no interest; no desire to be more aware of missions.

Practice - Missions Awareness

Good planning is based on a knowledge of where we are right now.

- In what way are we aware of missions, aware of culture and aware of the need for goals and planning in missions?
- Do we know how we approach missions and what our level of participation is?
- Do we have tools to help us look at ourselves so we can get a clear picture and then plan accordingly?

To understand these questions means taking time to evaluate our current level of awareness as relates to missions.

David Mays, in a collection of resources on missions (Mays: 2000), identifies seven levels of awareness as relates to missions. They are as follows

1. Possibility – At this time we are not ready. We have to get established first. We do not have enough funds for missions. At some time we hope to get involved. Missions is only a possibility.
2. Project – Each year we identify a project, promote it and then take up an offering for that project. Mission is a once a year item on the fiscal calendar.
3. Program – Each year we have a mission program. We have set aside finances for missions in the church budget. We support missionaries through that budget. At this point it is like any other program in the church. It is given some finance and a slot on the calendar of events.
4. Priority – We have decided to increase our missions’ budget to a percentage of our income. We make sure our leaders are involved in reaching the lost. We not only have a missions program, but it is considered an important part of the church year. We see our need to be involved in carrying the gospel to the world.
5. Purpose – World evangelism is a key element of the overall ministry of the church. We have a strategy for developing missions and getting people involved. We are seeing people getting involved in missions and some are going into missions as a career. We have a missions’ committee and it is a key part of our church. We are encouraging people to get involved.
6. Passion – Our church exists for the purpose of reaching the world with the gospel. When we make decisions we ask how those decisions will impact our involvement in missions. Our people

are actively involved in reaching out to people of other cultures wherever they are found. We are seeking to clearly obey the command of Jesus to go into all of the world.

As we identify our current level of mission awareness then we can determine what we need to be teaching to each member and group in our church. We will then begin to help people become more aware of themselves, what God expects of them, and how to communicate with people of other cultures.

It is not a process we go through once, but a continuing cycle of teaching, planning and growing in our awareness of the world God has told us to reach out to. We should constantly be evaluating so we can improve in each area and increase our mission awareness. We have been entrusted with the message of the gospel and given responsibility to carry the gospel to the world. Therefore we need to do everything possible to increase our awareness of God's Word and the world we live in.

Chapter 10 - Area Two – Resources

Every activity, every program, every event is dependent on the resources available for its success. Each event and activity requires different resources for it to be truly successful. But what worked the first time will not necessarily work the next time.

Let me use the example of a birthday.

At each stage in life what is required to be successful is different. In the early years it is about the presence of friends and family of the parents. The gifts are a small part of the event; they relate to the needs of a young child. The focus is more on the parents and the life they are involved in.

In the middle years the gifts become more important. They are more about what the child wants rather than needs. The people who attend shifts from adults to friends. Activity that is fun is important at this stage.

As a person moves towards adulthood the birthday represents a shift in focus; from dependence to expressions of independence. Who attends now has greater importance than the gift. It is important to be seen as having friends. Just being together is more important than what is done. Recognition by friends and family as a person growing and maturing is critical.

As we grow older the focus shifts again. It is about being remembered. The gifts reflect an awareness of the person and their interests and desires. Small or large they say I know who you are and I remember you.

At each point there are different factors that affect what resources are required and how they will be used; resources

related to finance, people, environment, and status of the person. It also will reflect the group we are a part of. Some have celebrations every year. Others only at key times in the development of the individual. A small intimate event may require only a few people but will be costly in other areas. A large gathering may actually cost little but require a greater resource in people present.

In discussing missions we have to think along the same lines. Each group, place and time will involve different types of resources and different levels of resources. It will also be dependent on what ministry we are going to be involved in. A ministry of prayer for missions will require different resources than one that involves sending a person to another location or country. The first will require the resource of people who are committed to praying, time to pray and communication of needs to be prayed for. It may also involve a place to meet. The second will require a person willing to go, training for that person and finances to provide for the needs of those being sent.

This is probably an oversimplified way to look at the area of resources and the related topic of giving. It is hoped that by opening the discussion in this manner we will quickly see that learning about resources, how to gather them and use them is not just about raising money. By stating it this way I am hoping that it will cause people to challenge the statements and assumptions that arise when we talk about giving. Resources and our ability to give those resources are so much more. So let us consider what the resources available to us are. From there we can discuss giving and creating plans for giving based on what we learn.

Each country, each community, each group and each individual has access to the same resources. Yet in each of the above, the quantity and accessibility of those resources will differ. The church in Philippi was a poor church

struggling to survive. The Corinthian church was not. The one was giving out of their poverty the other out of their blessing. At the same time Paul said the Philippi had access to another form of wealth, their faith in God and Corinth was challenged to build up their faith to such a level.

Let us look at what different resources may be available to us.

Birth – Each of us at birth receives different levels of ability to comprehend, to learn, and our place in society. This will help define the nature of who we are in our world. Some are born female, others male. That difference will define some of the resources that will be available to us physically and emotionally. Gender is a resource. What comes from that resource will determine the nature of many other resources and how they are impacted. Our social status sometimes comes from our birth. That is a resource that we can use.

At birth everyone receives different levels of comprehension; this is often referred to as intelligence. Intelligence has the negative connotation that implies some are smarter than others. One level is not better or worse, just different. Each of those levels brings with it different kinds of resources in the way skills are learned, the manner in which that person will interact with the world around them and interact with others. To exclude one or the other or to place more value on one than the other is to miss the point. All of the levels are important to make the resource complete and effective.

At birth we receive natural abilities. One person is physically able to do an activity well and another can do a different activity. Some abilities gained automatically exclude others. A person who has great strength often does not run very fast. Speed does not always mean endurance. Even what is seen as a physical limitation may result in improved skills in other

areas. Physical size and agility are not necessary to produce music. These abilities are resources to be used.

This discussion will result in people talking about the disadvantages of being born in a poor country or in a difficult environment. That may be so but that does not restrict or prevent you from receiving any of the above resources that are related to your birth. It merely means they may develop in different ways and focus on different priorities of that location.

Location – This opens the door to discussing the resources related to location.

The first location we deal with is not geographic or environmental. The first location is that of the family. Our family builds in us resources on how to live and how to relate to others. Family shows us how to live together, work together and care for each other. It is through our family that we learn about many different kinds of resources.

The next location relates to Culture. Our culture is a resource. In it we learn how to use what is available in the world around us. This includes the physical, social and spiritual world. Through our culture we learn what is available in each area and how it can be used and shared with others. Culture defines how to give, what to give, and where to give; as well as why and when. These structures allow us to know how to obtain resources in that location and understand how to share those resources.

Finally we live in a physical location. Each location has its own resources. Each location requires us to learn how to access those resources. Each location will define the limits of their use and what has more value. Water to a person living on the Amazon is not as valuable a resource as it is to one

living in the Sahara. Your location may have a resource that no one else has, and is greatly needed by others.

Personal – In all of the above we will see that each person has resources unique to them. One person has great faith, another is able to give, another has greater levels of peace and confidence. This person is better at teaching, another has patience. While we all should have each of these qualities, some people have greater levels of ability in them.

God – This is the greatest resource. We all have this resource. What varies is our depth of understanding of God and thus our access to all that He has for us. The more we see that God is the source of all we have, the easier it will be to access those resources. He wants us to be able to gain all that is needed and will help us do so. He promises to provide all we need. This includes physical resources, social resources and of greatest importance, spiritual resources.

This great variety of resources is displayed differently in each place and each time. Our ability to give will be affected but what we see as being our resources. If we do not fully understand all of the resources available to us, we may end up restricting our ability to give in an appropriate way.

The widow gave her two mites. It became a greater gift than that of the rich man. She knew her resources. They were much more than the two mites. The rich man limited his understanding of his resources, and though it looked like much it was nothing. Another widow gives her last loaf of bread to the prophet and receives all she needs for the duration of the famine.

Joseph may have appeared to have lost everything. His family, his work and any money he may have had as he was sold into slavery. But he had something more important, his integrity and faith in God. Those resources allowed him to

survive great challenges and the result was his promotion to a position second only to Pharaoh.

David faced Goliath with very little. He was a teenager, knew little of warfare and was ridiculed. What he did have was experience with a slingshot, belief in the honor of God. He faced the giant and gained the victory. A lowly shepherd boy later became King not because of his wealth, but his love for God.

With this in mind we can now look at the four levels presented in the guide.

	Resources
Principle	Teach theology of giving
Preparation	Teach areas of giving
Process	Develop plans for giving
Practice	Develop funding for missions

Principle – Teach Giving

Most of us have heard many a sermon on giving. The most common relates to tithing. That certainly is an area of giving. We need to look at what makes tithing possible. As we do that, please remember that **giving is not just about funds but about resources.**

Scripture is filled with guidelines related to giving. These are designed to open our eyes to how we should live our life and how to handle the resources that have been given to us. That actually is the first guideline we need to learn.

1. All that we have has been given to us by God. From the beginning God has provided us with all we have.

He created the world for us to live in. He gave us permission to take what we need to sustain our lives. He gave us the earth as a resource to be used. We are to fill the earth and subdue it. Our gifts and our talents are from God, to be used for our benefit as well as for others.

2. We are to learn to give generously. God has given us more than we could ever hope to fully use. We too are to be generous in our giving. It is not about how much we give or what we give. A cup of water may be what is required. A piece of bread, some clothes. It also may mean giving our life. Generous giving is about giving what is needed out of an understanding that there is really an unlimited resource to draw from.
3. It is as we give that we will learn what we have received and are yet too received. Only a person who knows how to give knows what they really have. It is about casting bread on the water and knowing it will come back to us. It is about giving and finding our cup filled to overflowing. It is about the widow giving a loaf of bread and finding her flour bin and oil pot never empty.
4. Giving is about being a blessing to those around us. As we learn to give, God will use us to be a blessing. It will open other doors that would never have been open if we had not given.
5. Giving is about discovering the endless riches of God and his ability to provide. He can provide water in the desert. Giving is about knowing God and believing he will provide even when it seems impossible. And so we give.

Freely we have received; we did nothing to earn what we already have, our life. Freely give so that you may understand even more what you have already received.

Always remembering that true giving is giving yourself first and then from your resources.

Preparation – Areas of Giving

Giving involves preparation. There are stages that we go through as we learn to truly give. Stages that prepare us to understand our resources, the source of those resources and how to be stewards of those resources.

When I was still in high school my pastor gave a sermon describing the three stages involved in coming to the point where we truly understand how to give.

First – Tithe

Tithing is the first step we take in being prepared to truly be able to give. It teaches us a sense of obligation and responsibility. We have received much and so we are asked to give back a portion as a way of recognizing that we did not get here on our own. Tithing helps us to review the reality of life and what we have. The talents we have, the place we live in and all that we possess are the result of more than just our personal efforts and work.

This concept is a part of our life. In most societies, parents expect their children to care for them when they are old as a way of recognizing what the child received from their parents in their early years. Friendships are that way. We are expected to give in return for what we have received in these relationships. Schools often treat students that way. What you received is more than the effort you put into your education, and so alumni are expected to promote their school and support it if possible.

The tithe is where we begin to see the bigger picture of what giving is in relation to what we have been given.

Second – Thanksgiving

At any point in time we may be surprised by unexpected blessings. We often express our thanks through giving. A person helps us at a critical time and so we make time to return the favor. We are in desperate need and someone provides what was needed. We will respond with a gift that expresses our thanks. The second level of giving is just that—going beyond what is expected and, in thanks, giving what is not expected.

Parents do this very often for their children. Children know that they already have received much and yet in thanks and love the parent gives more. The father of the prodigal son did so for his son. He had already given the errant child his rightful share (or tithe) and yet when he returned home, in thanksgiving, the father gave yet again to his son.

In thanks we give at another level. We see just how much we have received and so we give. One who has been rescued from danger often gives far beyond what is expected out of gratitude for what has been done. Thanksgiving is just that, giving beyond what is expected because we know how much extra we have received.

Third – Sacrifice

At this point we step beyond giving what we can afford, into giving what we cannot afford to give. The widow could not afford to give the two mites, but she did. Too often we think about the risk involved in giving instead of the risk involved in not giving. It is when we struggle to hold on to our resources that we are actually experiencing loss in other areas far beyond what we are holding on to.

It is not until I risk my life that I will truly understand what giving is all about. Jesus said “the one who loves family more than me is not worthy of the kingdom.” He said to the disciples, who felt they had risked much to follow Him that they would receive more than they had risked. “Take up your cross and follow me” was the command He gave. But He also said that in doing so He would give them a yoke that was easy to bear. The use of the idea of yoke means that someone will be with us in the effort. Taking up a cross, sacrificing our life for Jesus, results in us gaining more than we gave up.

Sacrificial giving brings us into partnership with God in ways that cannot happen at the other levels of giving. We will learn new levels of trust and gain a new awareness of what God is able to provide and how He will care for us.

Fourth – Faith giving

Faith giving is about giving what we don't have and believing God will provide. It is going beyond looking at what we have and considering what God can provide. I often wonder about Jesus comment to the disciples when He sent them out in pairs. He told them not to take anything. They were to trust that all would be provided. Later He tells them that after He is gone they should take a bag. But I don't think that was about taking needed supplies and funds. It was more about extra clothes and necessary items.

Paul and Barnabas went on a journey for several months. They could not carry enough food for such a trip. They had to go in faith. Their next journey was even longer. There was no network on churches raising funds for such a trip. They moved out in faith believing God would provide. The provision took many forms. In some places Paul had to find work. In another, a gift was given.

The people of Israel were slaves in Egypt and had little or nothing. Yet when it came time to provide for the building of the tabernacle they gave until Moses had to tell them to stop. God had provided for this by working in the Egyptians lives to give gold and other precious items to the slaves as they left. Before they knew what the need would be, God had provided.

The churches in Macedonia gave, and then gave again sacrificially, and then in faith told Paul that whenever there was a need that he should contact them. They begged him to let them give. They were making a promise to respond to the need beyond their available resources. They believed in faith that when the need arose, they would be able to respond and give. This is what missions is all about. Giving in faith, believing that God will provide. Missions is about going, not knowing what will be needed, believing God will provide.

Process – Develop plans for giving

Every Sunday we collect an offering. It represents a plan to deal with the financial needs of the church and its ministry. In some churches, you may see other plans in effect. Small containers for clothes, coins, food, and any number of other possibilities. Each of these represents a plan set up to meet a special need.

I have also seen churches that organize the men and the women into ministry groups. They have a plan to meet different types of needs using resources other than money. The men set up work groups to do maintenance and repair for those in need. Women's groups may be organized to sew clothes or cook meals. Each represents a plan for giving to meet a need and provide a way to use the resources we have been given, whether it is money, time or talents.

We need to set up a plan to deal with giving for missions. Plans like faith promise giving (where each year people pray and ask God what He wants to do in and through them to provide funds for missions.) There are also work days for missions where supplies are prepared for a specific area of work or ministry.

Being able to set up a plan for giving means learning what the needs are and how they should be met. Some needs are regular and continuous. Money is needed every month for salary, rent, travel, etc. Sometimes there are special needs that occur occasionally, for example, the need for clothes, Sunday school materials, or relief efforts. Sometimes the need is for people to come for short periods of time to assist in work and ministry. Each mission work, each country and each setting will be different and so our plans need to reflect who we are, what our resources are, and the mission work and ministry we are involved in.

One other item to always remember. We are not alone in this work of giving. The whole load or responsibility is not ours alone. Others are involved and sharing in supplying what is needed. At the same time, we should not restrict our involvement by using the excuse that someone else will. We are to hear what God wants and make plans to respond to that truth.

Practice – Develop Mission Funding

This may sound like a repetition of above, but it is not. It is about what to do after we have raised the money, gathered the resource, and made the plans to respond to the needs God has laid on us.

We may have everything ready to go but now we must get it there. Mission funding is not as easy as local church funding. At the church we give and it easily arrives where it

is supposed to go. The clothes are given to the needy in our neighborhoods. The finances go to the treasurer and are disbursed with ease.

Mission funding is very different. We will need to move those resources over great distances. They may be physical, political, and cultural distances. Moving money from one country to another is not a simple thing. It requires either someone to travel from here to there (as Epaphroditus did), or have contact with the necessary financial institutions in two countries that will agree to the transfer of money.

Carrying money physically has various problems. It has to be in a currency that will be accepted by the country they carry it to. With banks, this problem is resolved but there are always fees and restrictions to be dealt with. Some countries place restrictions on the exporting of funds and conversion to other currencies.

Even so money can be the simplest resource to deal with. When it comes to other types of materials, we are faced with the issues related to shipping. Things like import/export taxes, duty and other controls that countries place on the movement of goods. If people are traveling they must deal with visas, passports and language concerns as they move from country to country.

We need to know what the issues are so that we can properly deal with developing our mission funding. Do we send it ourselves as a local church? Do we work through our district? Do we set up a special agency to handle this, or work through some other organization?

It is very discouraging if people are ready to give and share their resources, only to find out we are not properly prepared to handle those gifts. We need to know and plan carefully so

that we will be able to develop a good plan for funding missions.

God is calling people to go and He is calling people to give of their resources. Will we do all that is needed to make that possible? Will we look at our resource and not restrict what God can do? Will we let God show us how extensive are His resources and let Him use us to make them available for the work? Will we do all that is necessary to fund the mission God is calling us to?

Chapter 11 - Area Three – Personnel

Up to now we have talked about awareness of missions, and the resources needed to accomplish missions. Knowing what we are to do and having the resources are great, but what we need to do now is deal with who will be involved in missions. Who will do it is a key concern

In the church any job, any program, or any plan we wish to accomplish will require the active involvement of people. Whether it is only one person, some of the people or all the members of a church. It will involve people. People who catch a vision, people who take the vision and show how it will work and those who actually do the work involved in caring out the vision. This is true of any area of ministry and is also true for missions.

For most of the ministries of the church we see the vision, can watch the activities of those involved in that vision and often have opportunity to actually experience directly the results of that activity. An example could be a youth program. We have a vision to minister to our youth and reach others. We have people who set the plans and structures in place for a youth ministry. We have members of the church directly involved in that ministry. The result is we see the growth and development of the youth and in time see them become involved in the ministry and life of the church.

Missions is a unique situation. While the vision may start here in a local church or group and some people may be involved we do not often experience the results of that in a direct manner. Or so it would appear to many who are part of a church. We send money; we sometimes pray and maybe send a person but have little understanding of how it involves the whole church and what the results will be for our local church ministry.

We need to look again at what is involved in carrying out the mission of God, who should be involved and how they can be involved. To do this we need to think again about what is involved in carrying out any program. In doing so we begin to see that the most important resource of the church is its people. Their involvement in any program, especially missions, is critical for the program to be effective. Again the grid will be our guide in this discussion.

	Personnel
Principle	Teach call of God
Preparation	Define activities involved
Process	Establish needs for personnel
Practice	Recruit people

Principle – Call of God

At this level we are looking at God’s call to missions. Generally when we think of a “call” to missions, it is put in the same category as a “call” to ministry. We have heard sermons and teachings that focus our thinking in such a way that we expect a call to the ministry of missions to relate to a few key people working in that specific area of work. This is a highly restricted and selective approach to the idea of what a call from God is and a very restricted understanding as to what is meant by the work of mission or ministry. We have all heard at least one sermon based on Matthew 9:36-38 where Jesus looks at the people and tells the disciples that the field is ready for harvest and that they should pray the Lord of the harvest to send workers. This sermon focuses on calling people into full time ministry which is usually seen as one of the three areas mentioned above.

We have mistaken the nature of a harvest and the work involved. It is not just about cutting the wheat or rice or whatever is being harvested. I first began to understand this during the time I helped my grandfather on his farm. I was often there to help with the harvest of the oats (a type of grain). At that time such a harvest became a community event. We helped others and then they, in turn would help us. One person would cut the grain, others would gather it, then people would carry it in to be threshed (knock the grain loose from the grass) and still others would gather up the grain and store it. While this was going on there was another group preparing food and drink for those working.

Later in Sierra Leone I became even more aware of the nature of the work of a harvest and of the types of workers involved in a harvest. At the bible school each year we would plant rice to help feed the students. When harvest time came I became very aware of the types of work and different workers needed so that the one actually cutting the rice could succeed in the harvest.

One person alone will not be able to complete the harvest. There are many other jobs to be done. You need to find someone to make the knives, baskets and other tools needed for the work. Then you need to find people to cut the rice, others to transport the rice, another group to flog (separate grain from the grass), a group to sift the rice in order to remove the grass and other waste from the rice, and finally a group who would gather up this rice and store it properly. While all of this was going on you need yet another group to deal with preparing work to feed all the other workers and people to get and bring water to those working. So many people, so many different jobs; all so the few people needed in the field could do the job and get the desired result.

Oh yes lest you forget, someone is needed to organize and supervise all of this work. Someone to supply what was

needed, give an extra hand at critical times, provide needed tools, give words of encouragement and direction. Behind all of this is another aspect that could easily be lost in all the activity. There were others who taught all of these workers how to do these different jobs efficiently.

You will need to learn that once you give someone a task related to the harvest you need to let them do the job. If you try to do their work some other area will begin to suffer. The more you get involved in a specific area of the work the more confused the whole process will become.

This is true for missions. There are many areas of involvement that are necessary so that one person may go to another country to share the gospel on our behalf. The more people that get involved the more likely the one who goes will be successful in the work. People need to be praying, giving, teaching, and supplying critical needs as they arise.

In some of these areas everyone can do something but always there are people who will have specific responsibilities. For example everyone can pray but some may be called on to pray at a more intense level. Everyone can give. There may be some though who will be called on to give more. Everyone should study and learn more about missions but there are those who are needed to teach us what to study and how it relates to all the different ministries and activities of the church.

Consider this example. In a family the parents have a specific role to play in raising their children. Even as they focus on the work of being a parent they are involved in many other activities in order to carry out their primary task. They are not professionals in these areas and yet must be able to do the work involved. One of them needs to be able to cook, clean, do laundry, take care of the finances, act as a counselor and many more areas.

There is also a realization that further help in key areas will be needed from time to time. Parents are involved in teaching their children and yet send them to school to be taught further by a professional. In other areas they often turn to professionals for assistance at critical times. These people have trained for that very purpose, to help when needed.

In regard to missions it is the same. While each of us will have a key area of support we still need to be aware of all the other areas and be ready to help out as needed. We also need to encourage people to develop in their areas of ministry so that they will be available when needed to assist in the continuing work of missions.

We need pastors, teachers, leaders, prayer partners, givers and encouragers so that the work of the one going will succeed. While we may not see church growth or financial gain, the church will be blessed in other ways. We will gain a new sense of purpose for the church. We will obtain a level of unity because of that purpose as it draws us together to carry out God's mission. We will see new areas of support or work we can be involved in. We will have the privilege, the blessing, of being a part of carrying the gospel to the world.

We need to tell people that the call of God is about becoming a part of the harvest. The harvest is much bigger than one person with one skill. It is about many people with many skills coming together to accomplish this one work; hearing the call of the Lord of the harvest and getting the work of the harvest done.

Preparation – Define Activity

Once we understand that God is calling all of us to become involved in the work of missions we need to define the

activity that we will be involved in. This may seem like I am starting all over again and yet not quite. Defining activity involves learning what our skills are and what skills we lack. This is what a good coach does when looking at people who want to join the team. He must learn what skills each person has and what they lack. This will affect the nature of the training and even the nature of how he will approach playing the game. There are many different tactics, defensive and offensive involved in any sport. Not every style works for every group of people who come together to play as a team.

This involves a clear evaluation of what we are currently doing and not doing. We need this information in order to grow and mature in the work of missions. So we will need to ask various questions in order to gather this information. Knowing who we are as a church and what needs to be done to grow and be effective in missions is what defining our activity is all about.

We must discover where we are strong and where we are weak as relates to the different aspects of the work to be done. This can be done by asking questions like the following:

1. Do we have people who know how to give and have faith in God's ability to supply what is needed? Do we have people who are effective in prayer and know how to meet with God to present our needs?
2. Do we have people who are students of the Bible and can study and then teach what we need to know about God's call to mission?
3. Do we have an attitude of service that will allow us to support and provide what is needed for those who will go?
4. Do we have leadership that will help us to go into the world with the gospel?

As we ask these questions and seek out the answers we will begin to define our activity as a church. We will learn the areas where we can become actively involved in missions and the areas where we will need further training in order to become involved. The answers will help us focus on the area that God wants us to be specifically involved in. This will allow us to set up a plan for what we will need to be doing to strengthen that key area. At the same time we will see the areas where we are weak and need to grow.

This will allow us to plan properly at all levels of the church. The pastor will see areas where further teaching is needed for the entire church. The various ministries and groups of the church will see what types of material need to be included for study in their programs. It will allow the church to add additional training and programs for those key areas and needs that have been identified for strengthening and development.

As we saw in the illustration about parenting we will need some skill in many different areas but through a process of evaluation we can learn where our main skill and work will be. Our key focus may be prayer, giving, teaching, sending, going or caring for those who have gone. This does not excuse us of doing our part in all of the areas; it just identifies our key area. For example, we may see our selves as being involved in prayer. This is good but we will still need to give as we are able, to teach as needed and be involved in all the other areas of missions in order to have a fully developed program.

Process – Establish needs for Personnel

Once we understand and define what our activity is as relates to missions we can begin to look at the personnel involved. This is about understanding the assigned roles needed to

maintain a fully developed missions program and helping each person know what is expected of them.

So often we do not consider what our needs are in the area of personnel. We simply fill slots with any available person and hope for the best. We establish a title and put them to work. This is done without any kind of explanation of what the work will involve; any guidelines to help them understand what is expected of them, and often no clear idea of what results are expected.

This approach to dealing with the people we choose to fill key roles of leadership and ministry is filled with problems. Because we have no guidelines, no clear understanding of what our needs are in these areas, any of the following could happen:

- They do a small thing and we are satisfied just because something was done
- They do nothing because they have no idea what should be done
- They do something not directly related to what we think should be happening. This situation leads to criticism and conflict because others will have more than one expectation of what should be done.
- They do the job and much more stepping into other people's areas of responsibility
- They are never quite sure if what they are doing is adequate since there is no clear way to measure the results.

We need to look at the activity and determine what people we need to accomplish the activity and define that role clearly. It is not just about a title but a description of what work is expected to be done by that person. Let us use one type of activity as an example.

We have a plan to establish prayer for missions in the church. To do this we need to have a person who will be in charge of giving direction to this ministry. That seems simple enough but at the same time it could get complicated and confusion. Here are a few issues that will need to be dealt with.

- When will we pray – need to establish times for special prayer
- Who will we pray for – establish a list of key people and ministries
- Who will be involved in prayer – the entire church, special groups
- How will we gain the information we need to be effective in prayer – identify and contact sources for information on those we intend to pray for.
- How will the church be informed – through what means will we share the plans and information regarding prayer for missions and ministry

As we look at the activities we will be involved in, we need people to carry out those activities and provide them with guidelines so that everyone knows what is expected of them, and what the expected results will be.

Practice – Recruit Personnel

Now we need to find the right people to be involved. We should not simply fill a position with anyone who is available and willing. That may not be enough. This takes us back to the fact that God’s call covers many areas of work and need. We need to be sensitive to who God is speaking to and to the gifts of the members of the church. Sometimes it is more important to be patient and wait until God leads us to the person he has in mind or pray asking God to provide a

person in our church to fill that role; someone who senses that God is leading them; calling if you please, into that area of service.

Does that mean we do nothing while we wait? No. As we have discussed before, we all have a certain amount of skill in many areas. We may need to rely on this as a starting point, while continuing to ask God to show us that person who He wants to guide this ministry and who has been specially called to that area of ministry.

Further when we have identified that person that does not mean we are now excused from involvement. Actually it means that our involvement may become more effective and focused because there is a person who is called and gifted to guide everyone else in this key area. Recruiting involves more than finding a leader. It is also about helping everyone to see their role in relation to that ministry or activity.

In truth no leader ever does all the work. One who is truly a leader is one who knows how to involve others effectively. Selecting the right person means finding one who sees how to involve everyone. They will not all be involved in the same way and at the same level, yet everyone will know they have a part to play and will be able to do so. That is how we know if we have been effective in recruiting (finding God's person for the work).

Using the term "personnel" makes it sound like we are running a business, a school or an organization. It implies we are employing people to do specific jobs to help us be effective. It involves knowing what our product is and what we want to see accomplished.

While we are not a business or similar organization the process is not that different. We ask people to commit

themselves and their time to accomplish a specific work - carrying the gospel to the world. We need to know what we are being called to do. We need to know what the key activities are that will accomplish the task before us. We need to know what is expected of those who will lead us so we can have a clear understanding of how we will get the right people to take responsibility for each area and activity.

Chapter Twelve - Area Four – Equipping

In the previous sections we have focused on three key topics where training is needed. As we finished the last area we discussed finding the personnel needed for doing the work. Now we want to look at how we go about training and equipping those who are selected to do the work.

To be effective, we need to realize that the results we are looking for are qualified and capable people. To do this we need to understand the need for training and equipping. These two terms may seem similar and yet they are not. Training deals with providing information and practice in key areas of skill and activity to do a given task. Equipping is about providing needed tools so that the person being equipped will be able to carry out effectively the task given them.

There is a third aspect that is critical to effectiveness in this process. It involves helping the people being trained and equipped to be able to adapt and adjust as needed to the location and ministry they are involved in. All three areas of growth and development are needed for those involved to be effective in their ministry. From now when we use the term training the intent is that all three levels of development are being dealt with.

A final concern will relate to what level we are working at. There are three key levels, 1) local church, 2) district/national and 3) mission. Each level will affect the nature of our training and the goals we have for that training.

As we look at these levels we need to realize that we are training individuals, not groups of people. The individuals present will affect the nature and direction of the training. Are we teaching members of the local church, leaders in the

local church? Leaders at district and national church level? Or those being sent as our missionaries? We need to be aware of who is being trained so that our training will effectively help the individual grow and be able to contribute to missions wherever they are serving.

Training occurs in many ways in the church.

1. General activity – The normal life and activity of the church can be a source of training to the members of the church and to those seeking to join the church.
2. Fellowship – Times of coming together to share through prayer, bible study and other activities are effective ways to encourage each other and provide opportunities to practice what is being learned and observe how what is learned is applied to life.
3. Sunday School – A great deal of information can be given through this ministry of the church which provides training in the word of God to the people of the church.
4. Groups – Every church has various groups – children's, youth, women's, and men's. Such groups provide opportunities to provide training, specific to an age group of the church.
5. Ministry – Many churches have groups that are formed around ministry. Ministries such as prison outreach, programs for the poor, single parents ministry and others. These all involve training to be effective.
6. Specialty training – These are special programs or seminars held to improve our abilities in key areas. Training in evangelism, teaching, leadership,
7. Schools – Where special training is needed we often establish schools and training centers? The most common is in the area of pastoral training.

	Equipping
Principle	Teach Discipleship
Preparation	Identify key areas for training
Process	Prepare material
Practice	Training people

Principle – Teach Discipleship

There are many methods that can be used to communicate information. What we need is to do more than communicate information, we need to communicate life and purpose and vision. This involves something more than what can be accomplished by establishing programs for training.

Jesus' call to the disciples was to make disciples. To go beyond simply training another group of people. To go beyond providing information and skills. To go beyond explanations and directions. To look beyond the program to the individual and build a relationship with that person.

The greatest disadvantage of most training programs is that they do not adjust to each individual in regards to content, expectations and ability. Where are they in their growth? What help do they need? And what can they effectively do? There is no time for personal encounter and interaction to know if the training is really meeting the needs of that person.

We need to become more involved in discipleship as the most effective way to complete the training process. It may begin at a general level, but to be complete, it will need a personal encounter.

Jesus taught the multitudes, but he disciplined a small group of people who were challenged to repeat the process. They were to go to the world and make disciples. They were to teach all that they had learned so that others would know and in turn repeat the process. Paul summarizes this concept when writing to Timothy. He is to find reliable men who are to teach all that he has been taught by Paul, so that they, in turn will teach others.

If we are to be effective in missions we need to be discipling people. Discipling includes instruction and information, but it also relates to living the life of Christ. It involves accountability and evaluation. In discipling we will learn the heart and vision of the one who is teaching us. Jesus sought to do just that. He wanted them to know the Father's words, see the Father's actions and hear the Father's mission through Him so that they would understand what would be expected of them.

One by one we need to be involved in living the Father's vision of mission so that the next person will hear, see and make it their own. Missions is about making disciples, not just about teaching people information. If we want to see the church grow and be involved in missions we need to be disciplined and disciple others, so that we will become more and more like Jesus and see the world the way He saw the world.

Preparation – Identify Key areas for Training

As we are involved in discipleship we will begin to understand more clearly our strengths and weaknesses. This relates to us as individuals, the local church and other levels of organization. If we are thinking of discipling the church at the local level and beyond, we need to be able to evaluate ourselves. Effectiveness in any endeavor grows out of an ability to evaluate. Evaluation is a key element in the process

of discipleship which allows us to be honest about where we are and what needs to be done.

Paul evaluated himself many times and through that process made decisions about his life and areas that needed further development. His letters to Timothy and Titus included evaluation and encouragement to grow in key areas of leadership. As we review the mission of the church and its relationship to carrying out that mission in the world we will need to look closely at the areas where we need to grow and develop.

Knowing where we need training will impact critical areas related to missions.

- The development of vision amongst the members of the church.
- The growth and development of effective leadership.
- The development of key programs for promoting and supporting missions.
- The proper preparation of those we will send into missions as our representatives.

These are just a sample of areas we need to review to look at where training needs to occur and how to incorporate the discipleship process into the training.

Process - Prepare Materials

No training will be effective without key materials for those involved. While there are those who are especially gifted and can adapt and prepare materials as needed, many cannot do so. The other side of this problem is that there are many materials that have been produced but not all relate to who we are, where we are and how we live in our culture and setting.

There are two ways to solve this need. 1) We take existing materials and edit them so that they are appropriate to our setting and needs, or 2) We write the materials for our setting and needs. Both of these approaches will require time and input in order to be effective.

Most opt for the first approach. It seems easiest since the materials already exist. The challenge here is to identify how and where the material needs to be adapted. Sometimes whole areas are inappropriate and need to be discarded, others need major adaptation. In fact most of the material will need some work in order to be applicable to a given culture and setting.

The danger here is that we may misunderstand what needs to be changed and adapted. It is easy to say that since this book is from one who has been identified as an expert or gifted in this field that we should listen to him. When that happens we may find ourselves changing things that should not be changed, or adding information that has no use, which causes other changes that do not need to be made.

While it represents more work and a significant challenge, developing our own materials as they are needed will do more for us in the long run than constantly borrowing from someone else. It will force us into deeper study of who we are and what needs to be done. It will take us back to God's Word, with a goal of finding what God wants and how that relates to what He wants to accomplish in us and in our church.

The best situation might actually be a combination of the two: using existing materials to gain insight into key principles, guidelines and activities; and then using that information to guide us in developing materials that will be more effective in our setting. This would be especially true

when there is significant difference, in the culture of the source of the written material and the culture of those making use of the materials.

Practice – Train Personnel

This may sound obvious but sometimes we get everything in place and people don't get trained. We don't provide for the actual event. We have to do the job of training. This means providing the settings and locations where the training actually occurs.

We bring the teacher together with the student. We do this through seminars, schools and other means necessary to get the job done. We make it possible for discipling to occur. We find those gifted in this area and help them disciple others. If we don't have the people capable of teach and discipling, if we don't have the facilities to do the work of training, then we find them. If someone has a program in place then we use it.

What we will find is that in some areas we will not struggle to find facilities and people to be involved in training and discipling. As we become more specific in the training, we may need to look outside of ourselves to find them. This will probably be most apparent when it comes to training those who will go as missionaries.

The point is that once we have everything in place and know what training we need to do, then we need to do it. We need to bring together those who need the training, with those who can provide the training. At the same time, in those areas where we lack the key people we need to think about having some of our own trained in those areas so that we can increase the opportunities for training. We need to train trainers.

This training of trainers is important. Having our own members trained allows for several things to happen.

1. Available – We do not have to wait for someone to help us. We now have someone readily available and accessible to continue the training process. This availability allows for the training of more persons as well.
2. Context – Those coming from outside never completely understand all the issues and all that is involved in a given setting. Having our own trainer means having a person who understands the culture and setting and can communicate more effectively.
3. Consistent – A key issue is consistent follow up and evaluation. When we have our own trainers it will be easier to follow up on what is happening as a result of the training, and to evaluate what is happening in the training process.

It is not enough to talk about and plan for training we must do it if we are to truly become a mission minded church and fulfill God's call to mission. We need to commit the time, resources and people needed to complete the training. Also, we need to commit the time, resources and people needed to train those who are needed to provide the training we need.

Until we actually train and disciple we will not be effective
in _____ missions.

Chapter 13 – Area Five - Mobilize

Up to now we have been looking at all that is involved in getting ourselves to the point where we can be effectively involved in missions. All of the training and preparation must result in our actually doing the work we have been prepared for.

	Mobilize
Principle	Teach on ministry
Preparation	Description of ministry
Process	Select people
Practice	Authorize those called (or send)

Principle – Teach Ministry

This brings us back to the key for effective missions. It is the local church that is the key. It is the local church that is the basis for all that is to be done. Whether it occurs at the local church or at another location, without the local church's involvement, nothing will happen. The local church is where the workers come from, the local church is where the finances come from, and the local church will be the center of support through prayer and other activities.

Antioch is a primary example. They heard God's call and responded by training themselves and then sending out the first official missionaries. When the local church sees the importance of its role and does the necessary training, then they will be able to send out missionaries. It may likely take several local churches working together to accomplish some of the tasks involved in sending one. But it will not happen if the local church does not accept its role and do the work.

Preparation – Description of Ministry

All of the material we have covered is about preparation. Preparation and continued training is always essential to continued growth and effectiveness. It means we are always evaluating what we are doing so that as we move forward, mobilizing people and resources we will see ways in which to improve and grow to make our preparation of the next generation more effective.

For all this to be effective we need a clear understanding of the ministry the one being sent will be doing. This allows for them to know what is expected of them. It allows for the sending church to evaluate what is happening. It also helps keep everyone focused on what is being done.

This does not mean there cannot be a change in the ministry and the description of the work. It is possible that what we thought needed to be done will change. Having a ministry description allows us to deal with those changes and make needed adjustments. Over time the original goals may be met and so there will be a need for a change. Again having a clear understanding of the ministry will make it easier to make those changes because we will have a reference point that helps us see what has been done and decide what the next activity will be.

As is true in all ministry there is always change and growth. This is no different in the area of missions. These changes and growth will require us to adjust our expectations and commitments. This is always easier if we have clearly defined the ministry and our expectations of the missionary we are sending.

Process – Provide Guidelines

At this point we need to look at final matters related to actually sending a missionary. There are a number of issues that are different from doing ministry in a local setting. We need guidelines for their care and sending so that both the one sending and the one going knows how things are expected to work. Here is a short list of some key areas that need to be covered

1. Finance – How will we send them their finances and what form of reporting and accountability will be expected of them.
2. Travel – What provisions will be made for travel for them to get to and from the country they are being sent to? How will they deal with transportation in that country?
3. Health – What provisions will be made for their health care?
4. Reports – What type of reports will be expected from them and how often? This also relates to accountability. Who will they be directly accountable to as far as supervision and evaluation of the work is concerned?
5. Work – We need to clearly state the work we expect them to be involved in and what results we will be looking for from that work. Also how long do we expect them to commit themselves to this work (2, 3, 4 years)?
6. Documents – Be sure you know what documents are needed and provide for obtaining them and keeping them updated.

7. Others – Each missionary and each field will have unique issues and concerns. These need to be dealt with clearly so both sides know what is expected of them by others.

Sending a missionary requires that we care for these matters. If not we open the door to unnecessary frustration and misunderstanding on both sides. This leads to discouragement which can have serious affects on the ability of those sent to do the work, and on the continued support of those sending them.

Practice – Send

We need to publicly recognize and authorize those who are to go and then send them. Each church or group of churches needs to take part in this sending process. The Antioch church laid hands on Barnabas and Saul, prayed for them and then sent them.

This is the result we are looking for as we work through the entire process of effectively training the church, its members and its leadership at the local, district and national level. The more effective we are in dealing with the process of training and planning the more effective the one sent will be.

One final thought. It begins with a question that someone will ask. Do we need to get all of the training and evaluation done before we can send someone?

God works differently in every setting and group. No one will ever be completely prepared to carry out the work God gives. What we must be ready to do is respond to what God wants and use every means available to grow where needed so that the work will be done. For one group God may call

them to send before they think they are ready and another may need to be more prepared before they can send.

Sending is about obeying God, believing in faith that what He calls us to do can be done, and doing everything possible to grow in that faith and our ability to follow God's leading.

Chapter 14 – Partnership

It will not take long for any group from local church to district to national level, to realize that the scope of the work of training and sending is much greater than they can handle. There will always be areas in which we are not able to provide all that is needed. At this point we need to consider partnering with others to get the work of training and sending done.

We may not have the needed people in key areas to provide the training. We may not be able to gather up the resources by ourselves. We may need help in transferring funds to another country. The task may take more people than we are able to send and supervise.

This leads us to partnerships - working with others to get the job done. It may take several churches to raise the funds. It may take several districts to carry out the project. In some cases the churches of several countries may be needed to deal with all that is involved in working in another country. In fact it is rare that one single church can do all that is necessary by itself.

So we must understand what is involved in partnership with others. This will help us know what our part is, whether or not the partnership is doing what it is supposed to do, and if everyone is doing what they agreed to do.

Partnership	Reason Purpose	Relationship Resources	Structure Responsibility	Results Review
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Principle – Reason/Purpose

Reason – As we look at the mission God is calling us to be involved in, and we begin to understand that we need to

partner with others, we must to reflect on the reasons behind the need for partnership. Why are we seeking out partners for this work? This helps us understand our strengths and resources. We realize what we have and what we still need to do the task. By asking “why?” we can clearly define the need, which allows us to define the purpose of a given partnership.

Purpose – This is where we define what the partnership is to accomplish. Here are a few possible purposes for a partnership.

1. Finance – We need others in order to raise enough finances.
2. Training – We need help to provide needed training.
3. Personnel – We need key people to organize and/or give direction to the work.

By knowing what we are trying to accomplish we will then know what is needed from the partnership.

Preparation – Relationship/Resource

Relationship – To be able to enter into a partnership we must define the relationship of those involved in this partnership. What each ones job will be and who will be in charge. The key in this is how each of the partners relates to each other.

Resource – We will need to carefully define what each partner will be providing to the partnership. This will usually be defined in the purpose of the partnership. Who has the people? finance? skills? and facilities? and how will they be made accessible to the members of the partnership.

Process – Structure/Responsibility

Structure – This deals with how we will organize ourselves to get the work done. There are many ways in which the work can be structured in assigning duties and oversight.

Responsibility – This relates directly to the structure we decide on for the partnership. If we do not know who is responsible, one of two things will happen. The work will not get done because no one is sure who is to do what. Or, there will be duplication of effort which will result in wasting time and resources unnecessarily. Both of these lead to conflict and in the end a failure of the mission.

Practice – Results/Review

Results – In entering a partnership we need to clearly define what our expectations will be. If we do then we know what to expect and it will help keep us focused on the work and not distracted. It allows us to more efficiently use the resource available. It builds respect for the workers and a sense of teamwork as the goals are reached.

Review – There always needs to be a plan t review what is being done. This allows us to determine if we have reached our goal. It also allows us to redefine goals where needed. We can also determine if those assigned various responsibilities are being effective in their work. It allows us to examine if there are issues and needs that we didn't realize would affect the goals we set and then make needed adjustments.

Chapter 15 – Communication

After all that has been shared why do we still need to talk about communication?

We need to because it is too easy to fail to communicate. After three years of teaching and traveling with Jesus the disciples forgot all He had taught them. After Jesus was resurrected, the Bible says that He spent forty days reviewing everything He had taught them. He challenged the disciples to communicate what He had taught them to others.

Without communication all of what we are hoping to accomplish, all our plans, and all our efforts will fail. The reason I say that is that too often we assume that what needs to be communicated will be. The problem is that while some things will be communicated, other critical areas will be forgotten.

Doing the evaluation and training is just the first level of communication. Maintaining a flow of information, a constant level of communication is the second level. We need to understand the keys to keeping the information going so that we maintain what we are doing in missions and so that others will join in the mission.

Communication	Local Church	District National	Missionary	Schools	International
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Local Church –

We need to be sure that all of the groups in the church are talking to each other. The pastor, the board, the key leaders, and the various groups and ministries all need to know what each other is doing. This avoids unnecessary duplication and helps us see the places where more needs to be done. We need to continue to receive information regarding missions,

the needs of missions, and what those being sent are doing. This encourages the members of the church. It also allows them to see the results of their involvement in missions.

District/National Church –

Where we have a district/national church structure, they need to communicate with the churches and the missions they are involved in. This relates to supervision of the work, and then reporting to the church what is happening as a result of all of the churches working together in those ministries.

Clear communication at this level will also help leadership hear what the needs of the churches and missionaries. This will allow for planning to provide resources and training in those areas. It also helps to maintain the accountability of the leadership to those supporting the work.

Missionary –

We need to hear from the missionary at several levels. The missionary needs to understand their responsibility to send regular reports of what is happening. It is also important to hear of the needs for prayer and support. The missionary will need to give accurate reports regarding the finances they have been instructed with and how they are carrying out the work. At the same time, the missionary should expect to hear from the district/national church and the local church about what is happening in the lives and ministry of those supporting them.

Schools –

This is a vital area of need. So often we forget about keeping our schools in the information system. The students go for training and it is assumed that they will learn what is needed. But what really happens is that the student and the

school have little awareness of what is happening in regards to missions. The instructors and students need to know what is happening and be given the opportunity to be involved in missions.

International –

More and more we are learning that we do not function in isolation. We are part of a bigger structure called the international church. We need to find ways to share with other national church groups what is happening and what our needs are. The internet is providing simple ways to do so through email and through web sites. A simple newsletter to the key leader of each national church will help connect us to a greater support system.

As each leader receives such information it is important that it be shared with the churches of their country. This could lead to partnerships in key ministries that could not be accomplished except as several national churches come together to share resources.

We will never exhaust the need to continue to improve and develop the area of communication. The more we work at this the more effective we will be in accomplishing the task God has called us to – Communicating to the world the good news of God's love and forgiveness.

