

RMNi

RECONCILIATION MINISTRIES NETWORK

Global Missions Handbook For African American Churches

Updated 8/2013

www.RMNI.org

Jim Sutherland, Ph.D.



William Sheppard, Missionary to the Congo, 1890-1910

Table of Contents

What is a Global “Missions Team”?	3
Missions Team Action List—What to do first.....	3
Specific Responsibilities of the Global Missions Team.....	4
What is Christian Mission?.....	4
What is a Christian Missionary?.....	5
Missions Team Composition.....	5
Missions Education.....	7
Missions Education for Your Local Church.....	7
Missions Stewardship—Gathering Funds.....	9
Mission Support—Stewarding Funds Gathered.....	11
What are some criteria by which to select missionaries/ministries to support?.....	14
Missionary care—“What do we do after we begin supporting a missionary?.....	18
Responsibilities of the Supported Missionary.....	19
Special Issues for AfAm Missions Teams.....	20
People in our church are opposed to global missions.....	20
Doesn’t Acts 1:8 say to take care of Jerusalem first?.....	20
Isn’t missions the White man’s responsibility?.....	21
Will our church suffer if we send money off for global missions?.....	21
Does the Black church even have the money to fund missions?.....	22
Our church giving is low—we can’t afford giving to missions.....	22
How do we know if our church is giving adequately?.....	23
Won’t missions compete with funds to pay the staff?.....	23
Selected missions education sources.....	23
AfAm Missions/Missionaries.....	23
Picture Media.....	24
General Missions.....	24
Missions Book Sources.....	24
Suggested General Missions Books.....	25
Missions Research.....	25
Missions Periodicals.....	26
Missions News.....	26
Missions Email List.....	26
Some African American Missions Agencies.....	26
Some of the Mission Agencies Seeking AfAm Missionaries.....	26
Short-term Missions Resources.....	27
Short-term Mission Opportunities.....	27
Some AfAm Churches Strongly Supporting Global Missions.....	27
Appendices.....	29
Some cautions concerning short-term trips and solicitations.....	29
Holding the Ropes.....	30
Annual Missionary Questionnaire.....	31

What is a Global “Missions Team”?

It’s a fellowship of Christians with a passion for communicating the good news of Jesus Christ cross-culturally (CC) to those who need it, anywhere on the planet. The mission is to make our best contribution to obey the Great Commission of Christ: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:19-20, NIV here and elsewhere). True thankfulness to God is expressed by love, and love for God is shown by obedience (John 14:15; cf. Is. 29:13). Even in the Old Testament, it was “too small” a thing for God simply to save Israel—He wanted His salvation taken to the ends of the earth (Is. 49:6). Similarly under the New Covenant, it is too small a thing to keep salvation within our own community--God wants us to take it to the ends of the earth (Matt. 28:18-20). The particular domain of the Team is to support crosscultural ministry, both locally and globally¹. The tendency will be to drift from global missions toward immediate ministry to African Americans, but the global, cross-cultural character of mission outreach must be preserved, without neglecting the local community.

Missions Team Action List—What to do first

1. Obtain the backing and support of your pastor and any other key church leaders whom the Pastor may suggest.
2. Prayerfully consider who in your church would best fill the necessary positions on the MT, then ask them to pray about serving. Don’t pressure people who don’t have the burden or interest. Consider asking the Pastor to call from the pulpit for volunteers with a passion for missions to contact the MT Chair.
3. Begin planning for a short-term missions trip for MT members who haven’t taken one.
4. Begin to study missions together, using the resources listed above. A MT member familiar with the Internet could download articles for the MT to read. Order some of the recommended books, particularly from the William Carey Library www.missionbooks.org . Start a missions library.
5. Obtain a beginning budget for *global* missions, distinct from both benevolence and home missions budgets, in consultation with the Pastor and others the pastor may suggest.
6. Consider having a missions seminar at your church to raise missions consciousness.
7. Begin to plan for a missions conference, allowing about one year.
8. Ask God to send some AfAm and other missionaries to speak at your church during Sunday and Wednesday services.
9. Begin to consider missionaries to support and start with one. If you already have missionaries, check the amount and consistency of support given and make any necessary adjustments.
10. Carefully monitor the support given to the first missionary, if that is your situation, and when it is satisfactory, begin to support other missionaries/missions projects as God gives the increase.
11. Pray for God to raise up workers (also for the MT) and for wisdom as you improve the work of the MT.

Specific Responsibilities of the Global Missions Team

The Missions Team (MT) is generally responsible to set the missions policy of the church, and here are the specific responsibilities:

1. To give glory to God by spreading globally the Good News of salvation in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2. To pray for God to send out laborers into the harvest field (Matt. 9:38) and to pray for those whom He has already sent.
3. To provide missions education resources, including media, to expose the church to missionaries, mission agencies, and mission opportunities in order to increasingly mobilize the entire church body for global mission.
4. *To develop an annual church global missions budget and funding that are distinct from the church's benevolence budget and from "home" missions funds.* Local benevolence needs—both inside and in the community--should not preempt funds for global missionaries. The MT will seek to prudently stretch the faith of the church by increased annual giving to missionaries.
5. To determine what specific cross-cultural missionaries and ministries the Team will recommend to the Church for support and at what amount, and determine which ones it will not recommend. Since appeals for help exceed resources, the MT will determine missions giving priorities.

The MT will monitor the progress of ministries that it supports financially, and make an annual determination as to ongoing support, within the allocated budget², based partially upon an annual report from that ministry. The MT will determine how to best monitor that progress.

6. To communicate missionary prayer requests to the church in a timely way.
7. To support crosscultural ministry efforts, including short-term mission outreach, within the church's operating budget.
8. To provide input and guidance for the annual missions budget. Faith and much prayer are required here. You will challenge your church's faith by your missions goal, yet without presuming upon the Lord. "What has God given you the faith to believe Him for?"³ If the annual goal is too low, givers will miss a stewardship opportunity/reward and Kingdom work will suffer. If too high, the faithful will become unnecessarily discouraged. Normally the missions goal increases each year, because God keeps stretching the faith of His children.
9. The Team will keep looking for ways to support missions/missionaries, in addition to financial and prayer support.
10. Each MT member should go on a cross-cultural short-term missions trip within two years of appointment, if one hasn't already been taken, to understand missions firsthand.

What is Christian Mission?

A crisis of definition surrounds the word "missionary." Is this person an evangelist, someone who helps the needy, a witness, or something more? How is the Name of Jesus impacted by missionary work? Can a pilot, an agriculturalist or radio technician be a missionary, together with the church planter and Bible college teacher?

1. Christian mission brings the message of salvation in Christ alone to all ethnic groups so that they will come to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and their neighbors as themselves (that is—making disciples, or "learners").
2. Christian Mission is glorifying God by bringing new worshippers to Him "from every nation, tribe, people and language"—Rev. 7:9-10.

It is continuing to do Jesus' work:

- “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”--John 20:21 (out of our comfortableness)
- “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”—Luke 19:10
- To destroy the Devil's work—1 John 3:8
- “preach Good News to the poor...free the prisoners...release the oppressed”—Luke 4:18

What is a Christian Missionary?

1. A Christian missionary is someone sent by God on a task. The word “missionary” is the Latin equivalent of the Greek “apostle,” or “sent one.”

- Jesus met physical/emotional needs and saved folks. But preaching took the higher priority—it's forever (Luke 4:40-44).
- A missionary usually goes to a *different* culture and ethnic group. Paul went to Gentiles and Peter to Jews (Gal. 2:8). Global missions crosses cultures with the Gospel.
 - This distinguishes missionaries from “witnesses,” the work of every Christian, and from local evangelists.
- Missionaries are sent by God, through the Spirit, usually by local churches (Acts 13:3). The church of Antioch, while worshipping and fasting, heard the Spirit tell them to send out Barnabas and Paul “for the work to which I have called them.” (Acts 13:2). Thus began the very first “missionary journey.” The church then commissioned the team by fasting and laying on hands and they were then sent off by both church and Spirit (Acts 13:3-4). When the mission to Cyprus and Turkey concluded, they went back to First Church, Antioch and “reported all that God had done through them...” (Acts 14:27). The Church supports God's global proclamation of Christ, or no one supports it.
- Missionaries are distinguished by a “call” from God (Acts 13:2), although some believe Matt. 28:18-20 (“the Great Commission”) suffices for a call to everyone.
 - The call may be to a specific people, a country, or to a kind of ministry, such as teaching or medicine.

2. What a Christian missionary is not:

- A missionary is NOT someone who simply does the work of a deacon:
 - Comforting the grieving
 - Taking food to the hungry (Acts 6:1-4), etc.
- Nor is the missionary someone who ushers in church.
- A Christian missionary is not a local evangelist—that is a “witness,” unless that person is witnessing cross-culturally (that is to someone of a different ethnic group--for example, a Black evangelizing Hispanic immigrants).

Missions Team Composition

These are suggested responsibilities within the Team. These roles can be combined in smaller churches or in churches where missions passion is just igniting

. The primary qualifications are (1. a born-again Christian (2. having a passion for global/crosscultural missions. Better to have a few with passion, than many without that passion.

(3. the ability to give adequate time to the effort (4. able to engage in spiritual warfare, since the work will be opposed by Satan. Ideally, the Pastor has a passion for missions, and would be on the MT, at least insofar as his other duties would allow. Having these spiritual gifts represented would be excellent: discernment, mercy, administration, evangelism, giving (this person is extremely prudent in giving). Your church may need to have one MT member take more than one responsibility as you begin. A suggested initial term limit of two years would help distinguish those best suited to this post. After that, a person could be asked to stay on for a three-year term.

1. The Chair is responsible, under the pastor's leadership, to advance all cross-cultural mission involvement, to provide meeting agendas and determine frequency of meetings. The Chair moderates meetings, reports to church authorities and obtains funding for missions operations and generally promotes the overall global ministry of the local church. The Chair oversees who will and who will not speak before the church on missions, in conjunction with the Pastor.

2. The Vice-Chair takes over for the Chair when necessary, and assists with the Chair's responsibilities.

3. The Secretary records the decisions of the MT and communicates as the Team directs.

4. The Treasurer oversees creating the annual missions budget and communicates with the appropriate church officers in a timely way. The Treasurer sees that commitments do not exceed the budget, that missionary financial support is promptly and faithfully sent, and communicates to the Chair in advance of any anticipated income shortfall. The treasurer also informs the Chair of any special financial circumstances.

If the global MT has its own checking account, the Treasurer will reconcile that account monthly and provide an income/expenditure report, as well as a year-to-date balance report, to the Chair and to the appropriate church officer. When the MT has separate funds to administer, a Treasurer should either have experience with and use basic financial software (such as Quick Books or Quicken) or be willing to learn. It's wise to require two signatures for checks written above a given amount, and to have that condition printed on the check face (e.g. *two signatures required for amounts over \$500*).

5. The Missions Education Coordinator oversees acquisition of mission resources, raises awareness of missions, and offers missions opportunities, including an annual missions conference.

6. The Prayer Coordinator collects, prays for and forwards to the Team and church, as appropriate, various prayer requests as relate to global missions generally and supported ministries specifically. This person may also solicit prayer requests from missionaries and forward them to intercessors.

7. The Hospitality Coordinator takes care of any hospitality and housing needs of visiting/supported missionaries. This person may be the same as the Secretary.

8. The Project Coordinator investigates the worthiness and feasibility of various projects suggested for church support. The Coordinator also monitors approved projects to see if project goals are being accomplished.

9. The Short-term Ministry coordinator screens and offers short-term missions opportunities to the church each year. This coordinator handles any funding applications, monitors preparations and fundraising progress, then provides and evaluates followup trip reports.

Missions Education

1. Missions resources abound for the ongoing discipling and training of the MT and congregation. It's difficult to keep up with the latest information, which is quickly dated, so continuing missions study is required. Those joining the MT should be willing to try to keep abreast of the field(s) of missions that the MT has chosen for concentration. The church should give the MT an education budget in order to purchase missions books and other media for a missions or church library, which enhances missions awareness. Particularly important is this for the church leadership and the youth department. Funds will probably also be needed to help attend important missions conferences. A bibliography of suggested resources follows.

2. The MT could start by first learning about missions itself, as necessary. To gain a sense of the history of AFAM missions, read in *African-American Experience in World Mission: A Call Beyond Community*⁴). Another excellent resource is *Profiles of African-American Missionaries*, 2012⁵.

- a. For a beginning MT, the Chair could assign various missions readings and ask for 5-minute highlight reports at the next meeting.
- b. Conferences are another excellent training resource. The Southern Baptist Convention offers extensive mission resources at the International Mission Board (www.imb.org). This same agency sponsors an annual Black Church Leadership Week, and some breakout sessions concern global missions.
- c. Not a conference, but a very solid and substantial missions course for laymen that can be taken for a semester at scheduled sites, or online or by correspondence is the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* course, with accompanying reader by the same name⁶. www.perspectives.org

Here is a free resource from an expert missions mobilizer: *How to Operate an Effective Missions Leadership Team* (David Mays) <http://www.davidmays.org/teambook.pdf> (free download)

Missions Education for Your Local Church⁷

1. As the MT determines its goals, and has some grasp of the current state of the world mission enterprise, the church, including her youth, should be taught missions. Global missions is almost uniformly neglected in the AfAm church, which has the ripple effect of missions being a non-option for youths. Even where it is taught, sometimes it is only a background for encouraging local missions. One AfAm denominational youth missions handbook actually minimized the global nature of missions. A handbook goal was “To teach that ‘mission’ includes our own land as well as foreign fields,” and “To make clear the term ‘missionary’ includes all Christians—not just those who actually go to foreign countries³.” The exact opposite needs to be taught in AfAm churches—that *mission* includes foreign lands, and that everyone is *not* a missionary. Christians are all to be witnesses to Christ and to evangelize, but not everyone is called to a cross-cultural ministry, which characterizes missions⁸.

2. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and Sunday School (SS) are inseparable, and she offers unusual missions resources to her SS teachers⁹. These include online mission opportunities so that classes can become involved in global missions. The SBC offers a “Missions Innovation Conference,” presenting global missions, women’s ministry and the church as innovator. You will need at some point to depart from traditional uniform international SS lesson plans to be free to focus for a time upon missions.

3. The MT could arrange for a showing of the “African American and Global Missions” PowerPoint seminar available for viewing and downloading from Reconciliation Ministries Network¹⁰. A wonderful resource is the “Destiny” videos, produced by the “Destiny Movement, Inc.,” if they can be obtained. Other seminars are available, although most of them are not contextualized for the AfAm church.

4. A missions conference, once your MT is organized and a budget is in place¹¹, will help unite the MT. It will expose your congregation to missions in a way second only to a short-term missions trip. To see the potential for such a conference, visit Christian Stronghold Baptist Church’s missions conference in Philadelphia¹². If your church already supports missionaries, try to determine when one or more of them will be near you on furlough as a guide (not a determiner) to scheduling your first one. Churches seem to reschedule these conferences the same time each year, so have it when it best fits your church’s calendar. You’ll have furlough information from the missionary’s annual report (see appendix). You could invite mission organizations and missionaries to which you want to expose your church, asking them to bring a display and perhaps some missions books for sale. Because role models are so powerful, simply letting the church see and hear an AfAm crosscultural missionary moves the church closer toward her mission goals. Testimonies from missionaries can be life-changing, and have yielded new missionaries. African Christian leaders are also prime guests, giving voice to the often-asked question, “Where are our brothers and sisters from America?” For an initial conference one year in preparation is considered prudent. Invite specific mission organizations whose focus is compatible with your church’s vision. Some mission organizations are eager to send representatives to such an event¹³.

- Among many ways conceived by churches to honor their missionaries is to offer various free services performed by church members according to their skills, during the missions conference. Services might include physicals, eye exams, a free office visit by other health professionals, car repairs, a manicure, a chauffeur, etc.
- In the AfAm church foreign missionaries are often considered less prestigious than those serving the AfAm community, despite the tremendous sacrifices of leaving family and culture and comforts to proclaim Christ globally. We can minister to these warriors by honoring them for their obedience to the Gospel.

5. Missions training for youths—see Stand4Kids at www.stand4kids.org for many missions resources. Children between 5 and 13 have a 32% likelihood of accepting Christ. Those over 18 years have a 6% probability, according to Barna¹⁴. Because children are most receptive to the Gospel, it’s the best time to begin to expose them to the possibility of serving Christ across cultures. Most youths think that being a pastor is the only way to serve Christ fulltime. The Church doesn’t need pastors who should really be missionaries.

- *Kids on Mission*¹⁵ produces missions videos for kids 5-12 that are augmented annually. Their website gives a global missions tour for children to take. Each video has 9 ten-to-fifteen minute missions segments, which could be used in SS.

6. Short-term mission trips are the best method of involving your church in missions. Although fewer have this opportunity, it is unforgettable. Vibrant missions churches encourage

their members to go at least once¹⁶. An estimated 1.5 million such trips are taken by Americans annually¹⁷. Participants gain empathy for the challenges faced by missionaries and God stretches their faith by forced dependence upon Him. Spiritual gifts are discovered. The “harvest field” is now real and the taste of spiritual battle stays in the mouth. You can involve your members by supporting the short-term Team financially and with small gifts for nationals and funds for specific projects. Some church teams have planted viable churches in one week by working with national church leaders¹⁸. The sending church raises funds needed for a no-frills permanent structure and house for the pastor and possibly funds to sustain the new pastor for two years. Sending building funds ahead so that the church structure is already built by arrival time, the short-term team conducts platform and personal evangelism to begin a congregation, in partnership with established evangelical churches.

- Experience in Chattanooga demonstrates that those who have evangelized on the streets and taught inner-city Bible clubs have been ready to serve in more difficult contexts, and more prepared upon arrival. They are also more ready to serve in such ministries upon return. Getting on a jet doesn’t equip for ministry.
- Funds to assist your church members taking such trips should be set aside in the missions budget. Carefully screen the sending agency for a good ministry track record (a list of organizations offering trips is below). Avoid trips that focus upon seeing (“vision trips”), rather than upon doing ministry, making sure that the short-term team actually contributes to Kingdom work on the field. The trip should not be an exotic, spiritualized vacation. We don’t want to drain time and energy from missionary hosts, and spend funds better used elsewhere in the Kingdom. Know what your ministry will be and if it fits the spiritual gifting of the Team.
- To maximize the impact of these trips, ask each participant to write brief highlights of the trip to publish in your church bulletin/publication and give prime time during the Sunday worship service for a verbal report to the congregation. Further opportunities for specific mission involvement could also be presented. If the church has funded all or part of the trip, ask the short-termer to complete a report form for the missions committee¹⁹. Make sure that all donors are thanked and given a brief trip report.

Missions Stewardship--Gathering Funds

1. Missions costs money. Money is not evil—the *love* of money is (1 Tim. 6:10). You can have neither a missions program nor missionaries without it.

2. What is “faith missions”? The great majority of cross-cultural missionaries globally (some 426,000²⁰) are not salaried. They, by faith, look for God to support them. Most missionaries have a support level determined by their mission organization (WEC is an exception). Sometimes this is excessive²¹. Most missionaries also request an annual commitment as a component of their support and missions generally require a certain percentage of those funds to be committed before sending the missionary. Additionally, missionaries overseas often have an outfitting allowance that covers airfare, buying appliances for overseas, shipment of their goods, and obtaining a vehicle and housing. When giving to a missionary, designate (not on the check) the missionary’s name and any other special purposes for the gift.

- ❖ Missionaries once overseas usually aren’t able to supplement their income, as can bivocational pastors in the US. Wishing to protect jobs for their own people, foreign governments may not allow such work, and it generally distracts from the tasks for which missionaries are sent. However, there are “tentmakers” doing “business as mission”

(BAM) who are highly skilled, such as engineers, who use their skills to penetrate for Christ a nation hostile to vocational missionaries.

3. How will we fund missions? This depends somewhat upon your church. If your church is part of a denomination, you may wish to fund, at least in part, missions through the missions agency of your denomination.

- a. For the last 50 years at least, Black denominational missions giving has been incredibly low generally, although some denominations such as COGIC support missions more than do others²². Denominational giving is probably the best indicator of the overall importance of missions in that denomination. If you are affiliated with a denomination and wish to give to missions through your denominational missions program, first determine who the denominational missionaries are and how they are funded. If you contribute funds for an individual, can you designate funds for that particular missionary's salary? If you give to the general denominational missions program, determine how the funds are spent. What proportion of funds given will actually reach the missionary or mission project, after any administrative charges? What kind of mission activity is being supported? Is the Gospel being preached or strongly supported? Is the denomination in dead earnest about furthering the Gospel globally? If not, then you may wish to give directly to missionaries and missions as God may lead.

Also beware of missions by proxy--simply paying missionaries from other countries to do mission work. It's fine to support excellent national missionaries, but not to the exclusion of sending our own. We are commanded to go into all the world, not to send others into all the world while we stay home.

- b. Some denominations sponsor primarily mercy/community development ministry. This is a valid Christian work, but some questions should be asked: is this work bringing glory to God in Christ and does the preaching/teaching ministry take priority over the mercy ministries in the denomination, as Luke 4:40-43 indicates it should? If not, then you can locate individual missionaries to support in other ways, such as through evangelical independent mission agencies, both Black and more inclusive. These are among "parachurch" ministries—ministries not directly governed by a church or denomination, with a specific ministry focus. Check their doctrinal statements and what proportion of funds actually goes into ministry²³.
- c. Some AfAm churches are committing a percentage of income specifically to missions, starting at ten percent. While this is a good starting place, the MT and church leadership need to decide how much should be spent upon the maintenance of the local church program compared with the great global needs and the poverty in which many Christian servants in and from other nations operate. God seems to bless the local church that is interested not simply in getting bigger, but whose focus is to glorify God and present to Him new worshippers by the spread and support of the Gospel. However, missions giving should not be motivated primarily by expected blessings from God for obedience, which is essentially selfish. It should be based upon obedience to the clear mandates of Scripture to carry the gospel throughout the planet and the desire to see God worshipped and glorified by every tribe and tongue.

Some churches have committed to sending outside its walls fifty percent of funds received, and they still grow. Seriously seek the Lord as to what He wants--at this point--your church to give. Then seek to increase it over time, by God's grace.

Remember to have separate MT fund income as distinct from benevolence fund income. Experience has shown that unless funds are collected every week for global missions, committed support will not be there when due.

- d. The "Faith Promise" plan of missionary support is effective for many congregations. While there are variations, this takes the form of an agreement between a giver and God that if God provides a certain amount or provides funds in a certain way, those funds will be given entirely to missions. No funds are promised, since giving is contingent upon God's provision—no provision, no giving. This is an exciting venture of faith, prayer and watching, and a tremendous boost to the church missions program²⁴.
- e. A church unwilling to give generously needs God's grace. This is not a financial matter, it is a spiritual issue. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 describes Macedonian churches in deep poverty, which were astoundingly generous. They first gave themselves to God, God gave them grace, and they literally begged for the chance to give. They were Gentiles and they gave to Jews in similar need, whom they had probably never met. So if your church is—putting it plainly—stingy when it comes to missions, particularly cross-cultural missions, ask God for overflowing grace.
- f. Your church may need to step back to focus upon biblical financial stewardship generally. You might consider Crown Financial Ministries resources²⁵. If most of the church is under bondage to debt, any giving will be hindered.

Mission Support—Stewarding Funds Gathered²⁶

1. Missionaries, contrary to the business world, must pay to serve, instead of being paid. Historically AfAm missionaries have been seriously impaired by the lack, for whatever reasons, of consistent financial support from AfAm churches in America. Some have had to abandon their work entirely in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The early twentieth century AfAm church support was little better²⁷. Many AfAm prospective missionaries are fearful that they will not be supported once they leave the country. Of 101 AfAm missionaries, fifty noted that finances either discouraged new recruits or noted the difficulties of fund raising²⁸. A study around 1950 showed that AfAm Baptist missionaries had allowances of half to a third of White missionaries in Africa²⁹.

⇒ Based upon your overall missions budget, the MT should decide: are we going to focus upon substantial support for a few missionaries or little support for many? Some churches post a long list of supported missionaries, but at rates of perhaps \$50.00 per month. This is a help to a missionary if it is regular, but it also poses problems. The missionary must report regularly to the church and complete various special reporting forms specific to the church. Then the missionary is expected to visit the church when on "home assignment." The cost of travel to the church sometimes consumes an entire year's contributions. Some churches give little but expect much—high maintenance churches for the missionary. There are other

forms of mission support, of course, such as prayer support, which is invaluable. 3 John 1:5-8 leads us to support missionaries in a manner “worthy of God.” Here is the reference:

1:5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.

⇒ What is “worthy of God” and within your capabilities? God is a most generous God and His gospel the most important message on the planet. This standard argues for a higher support level for fewer missionaries, but hospitality for all. The pagans aren’t scrambling to finance the Kingdom—it’s up to the Church³⁰. Whatever the level,

Matt. 24:45 Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food **at the proper time** [my emphasis]? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.

⇒ If we commit our church to fund a missionary, then we must be faithful year by year, and if for some reason we’re unable to continue support, communicate this clearly to the missionary. After the missionary’s annual report is examined (usually in the fall of the year) and support for each missionary is determined, communicate the amount of support (if you decide to continue funding) and when the church will send it. As with the rest of us, they can better plan if they know when funds will arrive.

⇒ AfAm churches sometimes respond better to one-time crisis appeals than to consistent giving. Consistent support is needed month-by-month, since missionary families must eat and pay landlords month-by-month. If the church will not or cannot provide, then don’t make a commitment to the missionary. An empty commitment usually means that the missionary is under-funded on the field. Churches failing to keep their commitment are deeply disappointing to the field missionary. Once missionaries return to the field, it’s very difficult to raise new support, so they are left hanging. Missionary support is generally paid monthly or quarterly.

2. What kind of missions should we support?

a. Your church will probably gravitate toward particular kinds of mission opportunities or to a country/continent. These are expressions of your church’s mission personality, reached by consensus and reflection and involvement. Often mission has to do with a target people—those we are trying to reach either to evangelize or disciple or in some other way to serve for Christ. Examples of a specific missions focus:

- Focusing upon missions to resistant peoples of a *geographic area*. For example, the area of ten degrees north latitude to forty degrees north latitude—or the 10/40 Window— includes perhaps the majority blocks of the largest cultural religions (Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists) in North

Africa, the Near East, Southwest and Southeast Asia. Or you may want to focus upon reaching a resistant or unreached people group *wherever* they are found. For example, some focus upon reaching a particular tribe, such as the Wolof in northern Africa, and support missionaries working with this people group.

- You may want to focus upon the least-reached of the unevangelized, as is the focus of Anglican Frontier Missions.
- Your concern may be mercy ministry (medical, to orphans, the abused, those with AIDS, families of martyrs) or more specifically micro economic development (MED), community development, etc.
- Support of national Christian workers
- Ministries that promote missions
- The MT generally will have a mix of priorities. You may decide to have target percentages of support for each type of ministry, as is feasible, among the church's mission priorities.

b. Keep in mind that mercy ministry tends to swallow the ministry of proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord. An unsaved person who has been healed and fed, as important as God regards that help (Matt. 25:35-36), will still die in sin. A saved person will die once but live twice. An unsaved person will live once and die twice. Our deepest rejoicing is for a name written down in heaven (Luke 10:20). Immediate needs tend to seem more important

c. What roles are currently most appropriate for American missionaries? Many national churches—churches in other countries—are now emerging where no church recently existed. Some roles seem to be more suited for American missionaries than are others at this point in history. Pioneering missions to peoples who have never heard the Gospel, training national Christian leaders, relief and development work, technical support (such as radio/TV/computerization and research), linguistics, and medical missions are particularly appropriate. Why? America has financial and technical resources that other nations lack. Missionaries have enviable educational opportunities in numerous scholarly evangelical and technical schools. Missionaries today are wise to serve under the authority of established indigenous (local) Christian churches.

- Except for pioneering missions that try to plant churches where none or few exist, church planting and evangelism are better done by local Christians who better know the language and culture, and who can operate well on a small fraction of what an American missionary typically requires. Exceptions are short-term teams evangelizing under national church leaders, and crusade-style evangelism. Foreigners tend to draw crowds. Discipleship is another ministry better contextualized by national disciplers than by Americans, generally.

3. With time a variety of missionaries, both experienced and prospective, will ask to present their work at your church. Some may downplay that they are looking for financial support—instead looking for prayer, but almost every missionary who asks to speak needs to “raise

support.” What do you say? Obviously your Pastor will need to give guidance as to what meetings would be available at which they may speak and a general policy. Let the speaker know beforehand whether or not support is possible.

- Let the Spirit lead you. Ask missionaries to send information about their ministry before inviting them. Check their website, if available, and their doctrinal statement to see if it is compatible with your own. Is their ministry something the church would seriously consider for support? If not, you probably need to decline the opportunity to speak. Let them know your response either way. Later on, if your interest increases, you might ask for personal references. Unfortunately, all “missionaries” giving impressive statistics about their work aren’t necessarily truthful³¹.
- After speaking, one or more persons in your congregation may be burdened to support the person individually. Screening those requesting the opportunity to present their work is crucial for this reason also. Based upon the principle that “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17b), allow church members to support individuals separately and apart from the regular church budget. God often burdens specific people with specific needs of others, as when He burdened the Macedonian gentiles with the needs of starving Jews in Jerusalem and when he burdened Titus and Paul for the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:5,16). If your church doesn’t extend financial support, they may thereby still get help and if you do offer it, this would be a supplement. Few churches or Christians give “too much.” In fact the average church member globally gives about 2% of personal income to “Christian causes,” assuming that only Christians are giving to those causes³². This agrees closely with giving by the average church attendee in the US.
- Whomever you have speak, show honor to the cross-cultural missionary. This honor is typically reserved for one serving at home. Because of these values, we can redress the inequality by giving honor to those who sacrifice the most, (including the highest esteem of their own culture), for the Gospel—an affirmative action, if you will.

4. **What are some criteria by which to select missionaries/ministries to support? What does your own church need to know?**

Christian character is the most important issue. The general character criteria for a pastor are appropriate for a missionary, as given in 1 Timothy 3:2-7. A missionary is exposed to unusual spiritual, cultural and financial stress and temptation. We would hope that the mission organization with which the candidate is affiliated has properly screened the candidate. But there are better and worse missionaries. Even if all were worthy of support, there aren’t enough funds in your church to support them all.

- We should not approach a missionary candidate with a *critical* attitude, but with a *discerning* one. Because a person is a sincere Christian or of a particular ethnic group or a particular country or doing a certain work or belongs to our denomination or to a favored mission agency doesn’t mean that you are called to support that individual. What does the Spirit say to *your* church? What are the church’s mission priorities? That person’s call, presumably genuine, doesn’t constitute an obligation upon you for support, even if the person grew up in your own church, if the Spirit and other evidence do not so lead. The church may put conditions upon support, such as requiring further training or discipleship or evidence of a faithful stateside ministry. If a person does not serve well in the US, the crosscultural field is far more difficult. Here are some additional questions

for considering a missionary candidate seeking financial and prayer support from your church:

- Is the missionary/couple born again? Ask for their testimony of salvation—both husband and wife if married--and listen for the basis of their salvation experience. Is their confidence in salvation based upon faith in Christ alone, or upon church/religious/good works? Some mission organizations are not evangelical and not all missionaries are.
- Is there humility and an obvious dependence upon Christ and the Holy Spirit for ministry?
- Whose kingdom is being furthered? Does he/she seem to be pursuing a personal ministry kingdom or the Kingdom of God³³?
- If the person has not grown up in our church, what do ministry references say about this person's fitness for Christian missions? What support is the person's home church giving (this is not determinative, since some churches are unsupportive of missions generally)?
- What ministry history does the candidate have? What missionary activities have already been engaged?
- If married, what is the attitude of the wife toward the ministry? What does she expect her role to be? Are the children saved? Are they well-behaved (1 Tim. 3:4)? How will the children impact their ministry? Will she be earning a salary on the field, and if so, how does this reduce the support level?
- What are the ministry goals? Are they clearly defined? Do those goals fit with the overall mission priorities of our church?
- Does this person have the academic credentials or special training to be excellent at the intended ministry? Does the person have ability to learn other languages?
- How much money is the candidate trying to raise in support (outfitting, and annual support)? Is this figure reasonable or excessive³⁴? A missionary who already had \$129,000 in annual support was trying to raise this to almost \$150,000, while based in the USA, and traveling to the Middle East and Asia about three times a year. His current salary was considered adequate and additional support not given.
- What mission organization or mission structure does the candidate have? Is this an evangelical mission organization? What financial accountability does the organization provide to donors? What are their goals and are they compatible with your own? What percentage of income to the missionary does the organization skim off? Many take 10-15% or more. Others take very little.
- What is the candidate's Christian doctrine statement—or that of the supporting mission to which the candidate subscribes? Is it sufficiently orthodox for our church to be able to support this person?
- What specific reporting accountability does the missionary have to his/her own mission organization? What debt does the missionary carry into the ministry, if any? Are churches paying off that debt through support?
- Is the person willing to submit regular ministry reports to the church, together with an annual report, according to our church's support guidelines? Will the person be available to report to the church in person from time to time?
- Is the person flexible?
- If the candidate has been divorced, was it on scriptural grounds or not? Was it

before conversion to Christ, or afterward? Are there marital issues that should be resolved before mission service?

- As the Team prays about the candidate, does the Spirit give a consensus either for or against support? You might consider unanimity in the MT as being the clear leading of the Spirit, and anything less as an indication to defer judgment or to decide against support.

5. The MT should have a financial support policy in place prior to meeting missionaries, so that they will not be swayed by the more eloquent or by emotions that disregard reality. Some churches have a two or three-tiered support system, with higher support for those who go into missions from their own congregation and less support for those whose home church is elsewhere. Churches wishing to strongly support missionaries who have grown up in their congregation and have responded to God's call may take on a major portion of support. This relieves the missionary of much travel and time to raise support (estimated by some AfAm missionaries to take an average of 13 months longer than for Anglo missionaries³⁵). However with a lack of a diversified support base, a new pastor could (and this has happened) completely stop support, forcing the missionary to raise new support. Having many churches for a support base means that probably more will be praying and poses less financial risk, but means wider accountability for the missionary.

6. Whatever the support amount, *please communicate this to your missionaries each year*, together with the months they may expect the church to send promised support. Some churches when asking for the missionary annual report give the missionary a summary of events in the supporting church's year. After the MT has received the missionary report, a letter is sent stating exactly what minimum dollar amount the missionary can expect in the new year and how often it will be sent. Missionaries can better plan their expenditures around this information. Having stated the support level, the committee treasurer needs to verify that the checks were sent as scheduled. Sometimes missionaries do not know even *if* they will receive support for another year until a check is received. If for some reason you are not able to continue support either due to situations in your church or unresolved issues in the life of the missionary, fairness requires notifying the missionary³⁶. After reviewing the missionary reports and service generally, the MT may decide to increase annual support, as the budget allows.

7. Independent missionaries—those not serving under an established agency—raise additional support issues. Foreign nationals seeking support often fall into this category, but so do Americans. One national leader seeking support boasted that he was not under a board. A mission agency provides missionary screening (valuable if the agency is evangelical) and an accessible doctrinal statement. It receipts gifts and if large enough, has an annual audited financial report. The larger agencies provide member care in ways such as a health plan, arranging overseas travel and shipping of personal items, counseling services, emergency evacuation procedures, and provision for retirement. Missionaries within a mission organization will generally meet together for spiritual renewal and edification, and they have a ready support network. A good agency will monitor and evaluate the missionary's work. The organization is easy to contact with questions and provides an overall accountability structure.

- These advantages notwithstanding, some people of God throughout church history have gone out alone as sometimes brilliant and dedicated missionaries. However, given

human nature, without strong accountability, even a sincere missionary can sometimes become slack or be unprepared for contingencies. If there are compelling reasons why the person is serving independently, and you can verify doctrinal, character and general missionary qualifications, and the person has a viable support network and accountability, you may wish to support such a missionary.

8. A caution about supporting national pastors. Arguments for their support include that they know their culture and language and can live far less expensively than can a foreign missionary. They aren't potentially hindered by foreign identifications. They usually minister best in local evangelism, church planting and in the pastorate. Conversely, it is difficult to evaluate the person's character, credentials and past ministry fitness. At the minimum references would be needed—preferably including US missionaries, due to ease of communication and generally shared expectations of other Americans. Accountability is problematic and sometimes supporters have discovered that a “ministry” is non-existent. If you can determine that a pastor has excellent character, reliance upon support outside his congregation can lead to pleasing the supporter, rather than his church, and result in both poor church giving, if they learn of this income, and ongoing dependency. At least one study has shown that support of church planters was less productive than nationals who were not funded³⁷. Supporting a national missionary doesn't affect national churches in the same way, since it does not hinder motivation of a congregation to support her pastor.

9. More churches are becoming effectually mission agencies, bypassing established parachurch mission agencies. Most churches don't have the staff to accept the responsibilities partially outlined above for the oversight of missionaries, particularly so of smaller churches without a fulltime missions pastor.

10. Retirement is another issue for which the MT should decide policy. In Numbers 8:25-26 provision is made for the retirement of priests who were physically unable to continue the heavy work of sacrificing animals. They could assist, but not do the heavy work. Most missionaries will be able to continue ministry in some form, including prayer, but can't continue as when young. At retirement (usually determined by their mission board) some churches reduce support to half the pre-retirement level. Others negotiate with the missionary to determine what the need actually is, after other income such as Social Security, private retirement plans, savings and other gift income are considered. Some missionaries are prepared and others unprepared. Budgets and needs change, so perhaps the best method is to determine the specific needs of the missionary at retirement and then to annually monitor their situation. The psalmist prayed: “Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone.” (Ps. 71:9). If we're fortunate, we'll become old, and would echo the same request. It is unchristian to abandon a Christian missionary who has spent many years in the service of God, but who can no longer maintain the pace, unless adequate retirement income is in place. However, a retired missionary—or any servant of God--should not go completely out of service, vacationing unto death.

11. Whenever a missionary is asked by the church to visit, the church should help defray travel expenses. The church could give a set amount toward travel expenses or ask the missionary to complete an itemization of travel expenses related to visiting your particular

church. A missionary may refuse the assistance, particularly if you have been generous in your support, but the church should not presume the missionary has sufficient funds. Unexpected visits by a supported missionary may be handled by giving a love offering after speaking, but there is no obligation to help with travel expenses. If a supported missionary is asked to give a series of messages at a conference, an honorarium may be offered.

Missionary care—“What do we do after we begin supporting a missionary?”³⁸”

1. At the least we can maintain contact and both solicit and publish their prayer requests. Email facilitates timely and widespread intercession.
2. Send regular church publications to the missionary.
3. Some churches and at least one denomination—the Southern Baptists--have an “adopt a missionary” program whereby a church member “adopts” a missionary for a period of time. The member contacts the missionary and ways emerge to encourage and bless. All that is needed to start this program is located in the creative book *Adopt-A-Missionary*³⁹. Missionaries to Nigeria had this to say from the experience:

So far, one of the greatest blessings is having a greater sense of *connectedness* with the *home team* through good communication with specific folks in the church. We have friends in all our churches, but as time goes on (i.e. as we get older) some move away or go on to be with the Lord. It is good to have new relationships begin. It is a blessing to any church or individual to be *closer* to their missionaries. This helps missionaries share in deeper ways⁴⁰.

4. A good MT seeks ways by which to improve missionary care and to monitor the overall needs and performance of the missionary. An annual report is one way to feel the missionary’s pulse. An example of this type report is found in the Appendix—one developed by a powerfully motivated and effective missions-minded church, Browncroft Community Church of Rochester, NY, and modified by Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church in TN. You can modify this for your own needs. Ask only for the information that you actually will use. If you don’t have the resources, then don’t ask if the missionary has any additional specific projects to consider, for example.

Some missionaries are reluctant to share their financial situation, since they are trying to lean only upon God to meet their needs, or for other reasons. Use the annual report together with a followup call to determine needs.

5. Missionaries on “home assignment” or furlough continue to need support. Sometimes their financial needs are greater due to the US cost of living compared to that on their field. Some churches have a house dedicated to families needing stateside lodging, setting a limit to the stay so as to be available for other such families. A year is now a long furlough, due to ease of travel. Missionaries at home need a vehicle⁴¹. You’ll find excellent suggestions on the web for how to care for a furloughing missionary⁴².

- ❖ The MT should decide whether or not a missionary will be supported while pursuing studies that will enhance future ministry. Will the training help in ministry and is the missionary committed to returning to the field? One church drops stateside study support

and invites the missionary to re-apply when returning to the field, due to having supported a student who didn't return. Other churches continue support⁴³.

6. Some churches provide the special blessing of an extra Christmas gift to supported missionaries, in addition to regular support (it is still reportable income for the missionary if supported regularly by the Christmas donor). This gift can be designated for Christmas. One church calls it "Christmas in October," the month that the gift is sent--so that missionaries can use it to provide for that season of celebration. Sometimes a Sunday school class provides the holiday gift.

Responsibilities of the Supported Missionary

1. 1 Cor. 4:2 "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." The context indicates that only God can really judge the motives of a servant of God. While that is true, the MT also looks for at least outward evidences that the missionary is being faithful to the trust given, because the MT, in turn, has been given a trust by the church and by God to be good stewards of His funds. Down through church history reports have come of people unworthy of their spiritual calling. Paul wrote of "false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ." (2 Cor. 11:13). We are simply "fruit inspectors," and we are told that we will indeed know people by their fruit. God will finally test the work (1 Cor. 3:7-15). A word of caution: missionaries have enough trouble with the world, the flesh and the devil to not have to deal with a chronically suspicious missions support team. But churches sometimes find cause to drop support.

2. We look for good fruit in ministry and faithfulness to the calling professed to have been received. How? The church should clearly state how often she wants to have a report from her missionaries. The missionary should not be judged by unspoken requirements. It's reasonable to expect at least quarterly reports from the field. With email, such reporting is incomparably easier than previously. For a translator deep in a jungle setting, for example, flexibility is needed. The church must have a missions committee email address for this purpose and someone who regularly checks the inbox. It's also reasonable to expect an annual report, as mentioned above, which covers matters important to your church.

3. Look for substance in communications. What change or progress is occurring due to the missionary's ministry? Who is being served? Is the missionary majoring on the majors of that ministry, or majoring on minors? What do those served say of the missionary? Is there good financial stewardship, or frequent emergencies and appeals for money? Details of a shopping trip on market day may be fascinating (very appropriate if learning the language), but we're looking for more at some point. We want to learn about the family, but not primarily.

❖ If the missionary, after requests for regular progress reports, fails to adequately communicate, determine if this is due to some physical or technical issue. If not, just as in a work situation in which an employee will not comply, after warnings, you may terminate support for that missionary.

4. A word about "success." Some soldiers of God sow on crusty soil and gain few if any converts by ministry's end. Others will reap where they have sown (1 Cor. 3:6-8). We look for faithful sowing and endurance in such situations. Our prayers can help bring divine assistance to

keep a missionary on the field who is suffering and discouraged⁴⁴. A special phone and/or email prayer chain can quickly provide prayer covering for urgent requests. Special encouragement is needed for those giving their all, but facing disappointing results.

Special Issues for AfAm Missions Teams

1. People in our church are opposed to global missions.

Unless you are in a church started by a missions-minded pastor, expect resistance to the support of global Christian missions. Even if your church is solidly behind missions, you may face a major gospel-versus-culture conflict with others in your church. The majority in the AfAm church may argue that the AfAm population has so many needs—“Why send resources outside our own community?” It doesn’t seem to make sense. AfAm Pastors and church members sometimes actively discourage those who believe God has called them to the mission field, pointing them instead to the AfAm field. Even many cross-cultural missionaries seem to eventually succumb to the gravitational pull of service within the AfAm community. For some that God is stirring, all you need do is to provide them resources. But from others you may expect ingrained antagonism toward sending money and persons outside of the AfAm community.

- ✘ During slavery most White missionaries would indeed care more for nationals on distant shores than for physical and spiritual needs of Africans in American bondage. Since emancipation the AfAm church, at least, has redressed this imbalance. The AfAm community is among the most religious on the globe, based upon percentages believing in God⁴⁵. In the US 94% of Blacks compared to 72% of Whites stated that having a close relationship to God was very desirable⁴⁶. Forty-six percent feel that they have a responsibility to share their faith, compared to 33% of Whites (2001)⁴⁷. Significant pockets needing Christ still do exist, such as in housing developments. We don’t suggest ministering only globally. Where a person lives on the planet doesn’t determine worth. Neither do we suggest an imbalance that focuses almost exclusively upon the AfAm community.
- ✘ The AfAm church is sorely needed on the world’s mission fields. Over a quarter of the earth’s population is still unevangelized (1,653,901,000 people)⁴⁸. The number of longterm (over 4 years) missionaries from North America is slowly declining⁴⁹. Jesus gave a mandate to venture beyond one’s own Jerusalem and Judea⁵⁰.
- ✘ With the election of an AfAm US president, the global influence of AfAm music and movie stars, and the rise of income to the black community, it’s cool globally to be AfAm. AfAm missionaries will have an audience. There has never been a better time for AfAms to go global.
- ✘ Sending missionaries makes sense because an omniscient God in Christ has seen fit to command it (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”--John 20:21). All the ethnic churches are to partner in such a way that every ethnic group is evangelized. Our “Jerusalem” is another Church’s “uttermost.” The Lord of the Harvest will ensure that every people group will have the Gospel, as we each obey.

2. Doesn’t Acts 1:8 say to take care of Jerusalem first?

You may hear a misinterpretation of Acts 1:8 in support of staying within the AFAM community. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be

my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (NIV). The “and” [Greek-*kai*] is a simple conjunction, not implying that we witness first in Jerusalem and when Jerusalem has sufficiently been evangelized, then we go to Judea, etc. We would have to read far more into the text than is there to assert this. New sinners are born daily among the approximate 42 million AfAms⁵¹, just as they are being born into any other ethnic group. The work of evangelization never ends, unless *everyone* turns to Christ, which won’t happen (see Matt. 7:13-14). If we wait for saturation evangelism (a case could be made that this point has almost been reached), we will never reach “the ends of the earth,” which are as important as Jerusalem in this text. Today a church is able to have spiritual investments in all four of the areas mentioned in Acts 1:8 through its local outreach and the support of various kinds of missionaries.

- ✘ “Jerusalem” would be our own community. Judea would be to the region or state, while Samaria implies near cross-cultural ministry. Samaritans held to a syncretistic blend of Judaism and idolatry, while claiming Jewish roots. Cross-cultural ministry itself has degrees of difficulty. Evangelizing Whites who also speak English is easier than trying to reach Hispanics in “Jerusalem”—a people seen as competing with AfAms for jobs, and having a different language. God has brought nations and languages and tribes and religious groups to America. It might be harder to work among some groups in America than in some foreign contexts. The uttermost places imply those hardest to reach—Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and unreached people groups generally.
- ✘ Barrett and Johnson list home missionaries and cross-cultural home missionaries [totaling 1,135,000], foreign missionaries to “World C” (evangelized non-Christians) and foreign missionaries to “World B” (unevangelized people) on a continuum⁵². Approximately 420,000 foreign missionaries serve globally, which includes only 10,200 pioneer missionaries to World A (non-Christians), as of 2001. The desperate need is for more pioneer missionaries, rather than for more home missionaries. God, however, is Lord of the Harvest, and the one receiving the call is best able to discern its nature. The question is what kind of missions does the MT want to support and in what proportion? Who are the really needy—those who either don’t have a gospel witness available or would have to diligently search for it, or those who have the Gospel readily available?
- ✘ In the AfAm church the global missionary is considered a second class servant, while the minister to the AfAm community is first class, just the opposite as in the White community. While any lost person is spiritually dead in sin and blind to Gospel truth, AfAm home missionaries at least don’t have to learn a new language and culture (it is at least a “near-culture”).

3. **Isn’t missions the White man’s responsibility?**

The New Testament, which contains our specific missions mandate, was completed around 90 AD, many centuries before the Angles and Saxons merged in England and before Western Europe or America existed as nations or started sending missionaries. The New Testament was written almost exclusively by Jews, who are a Semitic people, not by Anglos. The call to missions came long before there were many missionaries of any race. God is an equal-opportunity employer.

4. **Will our church suffer if we send money off for global missions?**

Quite the opposite. In God’s Kingdom withholding produces scarcity, rather than giving

- ❑ "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.", 2 Cor. 9:6
- ❑ "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. 25 A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.", Prov. 11:24
- ❑ "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it ["those to whom it is due", NASB], when it is in your power to act. 28 Do not say, 'come back later; I'll give it tomorrow--when you now have it with you.", Prov. 3:27-28
- ❑ "The Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35b
- ❑ "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." 2 Cor. 9:8-11
- ❑ God will prosper those churches that are concerned about prospering the Gospel of His Son worldwide far more than He will prosper those concerned only about their own needs and that of their own people. If those churches do prosper, it may or may not be due to God's blessing. God will reward churches that faithfully obey His command to go into all the world. A church that keeps 95-99% of income for operations and local ministry is on far shakier ground financially than one spending 50% of its income on missions.
- ❑ However, advancing the Gospel should not be sought simply so the church can grow or prosper. It should be pursued to better glorify God by gathering new worshippers, and to obey his command to go with the Gospel. Even missions can be pursued with selfish intent. We don't do good, to do well.

5. **Does the Black church even have the money to fund missions?**

A quick answer is to check out the church parking lot. AfAm *households* earned 803 billion dollars in 2008, and gave 1.4% of income (down from 1.9% in 1998)⁵³. Much more could be given to missions.

- ✘ Another approach is to determine what *percentage* of local church income goes to cross-cultural missions. Then compare that to the percentage taken by church operating expenses, for example. The AfAm community has the financial resources. The issue is how they are used.

6. **Our church giving is low—we can't afford giving to missions.**

The Barna Group found that per capita giving by Black adults was \$1094 in 2001. Barna also found that only 70% of those attending churches of less than 100 gave anything to the church. Additionally, evangelical donors—those whose beliefs are most in agreement with Scriptures—gave an average of \$3169 per person in 2001. Giving, therefore, reflects beliefs. A strong doctrinal stance apparently results in giving reflecting those convictions. The more liberal the church, the less the giving (liberals of all ethnic groups gave an average of \$406 in 2001)⁵⁴.

- ❑ According to a 2000 *Christianity Today* random survey of American churches, 12% of small churches gave nothing at all to missions. The churches that did gave an average of 16% (only 8% of this was for global missions)⁵⁵. God could rightly become indignant

over these churches who receive the Scriptures, God's fellowship and blessing, and yet give nothing or little in return to His larger Kingdom in the world.

7. **How do we know if our church is giving adequately?**

Financial writer James Berkley suggests as a very rough giving benchmark \$1,000 per year per member or \$20 per person on a Sunday⁵⁶. This is quite low. If the average church income is, for example, \$25,000, it would be less than five percent of income. Does our church need the grace of giving? Even an extremely poor church can be extremely generous, as the Macedonian church illustrates (2 Cor. 8:1-5). They gave because God's grace overflowed upon them (8:1).

- ❖ An issue of the finance committee can become an issue for the Missions Team. For example, does church debt or proposed church debt mean that mission giving is hampered?
- ❖ Does the church need a Christian financial seminar, or small group financial studies⁵⁷? Financial stewardship may need to be addressed concurrently with Christian mission. See also financial resources for church and clergy at: <http://www.rmni.org/financial-ministry.html>

8. **Won't missions compete with funds to pay the staff?**

It shouldn't. "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor." Gal. 6:6 (compare 1 Cor. 9:7-18; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). The church must see that the pastor and his family are taken care of as befits the Lord's work. According to expert church consultant Lyle Schaller, all personnel costs will be in the range of 50% of the average church budget (up to 60% in smaller churches and down to 40% in large churches)⁵⁸. The missions budget comes out of the balance after the pastor's needs are met. The missions budget may compete with other church expenses, so the church's missions priorities will emerge. Is it more important to pay for the annual men's breakfast, if it came to that, for example? Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." (Matt. 16:24-25).

SELECTED MISSIONS EDUCATION SOURCES⁵⁹

AfAm Missions/Missionaries

*AfAm Missions resources—print, web, Bible studies. Also do a search for "African American" at this site for more resources <http://www.urbana.org/feat.aamission.links.cfm>

*Bibliography—extensive, including periodicals--on AfAm Missions compiled by Van Walston <http://www.rmni.org/african-american-missions/history-and-research.html>

Black denomination links <http://www.Blackandchristian.com/pulpit/denominations.shtml>

Census Bureau's AfAm section <http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/NEWafamML1.html>

Fitts, Leroy. *Lott Carey: First Black missionary to Africa*. 1978. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press.

Harvey III, William J. *Bridges of faith across the seas*. 1989. Philadelphia, PA: The Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA.

*Jacobs, Sylvia, ed. *Black Americans and the missionary movement in Africa*. 1982. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press.

Grant, Paul. "A Legacy of Honor"—AfAm missionary innovations

http://www.urbana.org/_articles.cfm?recordid=238

Reconciliation Ministries Network—global AfAm missions is the major focus of this ministry
www.RMNI.org

Seals, Eugene, ed. *Waite: A man who could not wait*. 1982. Detroit: Parker Books. Biography of AfAm missionary Montrose Waite. Available from Carver Bible College, 404-527-4520.

The Impact Movement—a campus-based ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, with special focus upon discipling AfAms to accomplish the Great Commission
www.impactmovement.com

Walston, Vaughn, and Robert Stevens, eds. *African American experience in world mission: A call beyond community*. 2002. Pasadena, CA: Wm. Carey Library. ISBN: 0878086099. This is the best contemporary compendium on AfAm missions.

<https://missionbooks.org/products/detail/african-american-experience-in-world-mission>

Picture Media

“The Time is Now: A Call to African American Christians,” 11.5 minute production of Wycliffe Bible Translators, showing the impact of AfAm missionaries and the need for more. Item # 1000692, 1-800-992-5433.

General Missions

Brigada networks among Christians to reach the least reached <http://www.brigada.org/>
Caleb Project focuses upon the least reached—many resources <http://www.calebproject.org/>

Crossway Christian literature resources www.crossway.org

Evantell—Christian tracts <http://www.evantell.org/>

Finishers Project—for those entering missions as a second career: <http://www.finishers.org/>

Intercristo—career job placement in Christian organizations <http://intercristo.searchease.com/>

International Bible Society—various language Bibles, discounted
<http://www.gospelcom.net/ibs/>

Jesus Film Project <http://www.jesusteam.org/>

Joshua Project focuses upon the least-reached peoples <http://www.joshuaproject.net/>

Let Us Reason—How to reach Muslims <http://www.letusreason.org/Islamdir.htm>

Operation World focuses upon prayer and publishes a regularly updated daily prayer book for global missions by the same name. This site is needed for those in the Team and church who have a prayer ministry <http://www.gmi.org/ow/>

The Mission Station—gateway for conservative missions & resources
<http://www.missionaries.org/>

US Center for World Mission—extensive mission resources. <http://www.uscwm.org/>

World Religions Index—excellent info on major religions and cults
<http://wri.leaderu.com/>

GMI “Strategic Mission Research and Mapping” Many online resources www.gmi.org

Missions Book Sources

World Vision Bookstore —development issues, mercy ministries, etc.:
<http://church.worldvision.org/pastor-resources/missions.html>

Wm. Carey Library—hundreds of discounted books
<http://www.gospelcom.net/wclbooks/>

Suggested General Missions Books

- Allen, Roland. [1927.] *Missionary methods: St. Paul's or ours?* ISBN: 0802810012
- Anderson, Gerald H., ed. 1998. *Biographical dictionary of Christian missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publ. Co. ISBN: 0802846807
- Barrett, David, George Kurian, and Todd Johnson, Eds. 2001. *World Christian Encyclopedia*, ISBN:0195079639
- Barrett, David B. and Todd M. Johnson. 2001. *World Christian trends: AD 30-AD 2200*. ISBN: 0878086080
- Bonk, Jonathan J., 1991. *Mission and money: Affluence as a western missionary problem*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. American Missiological Society Series #15. ISBN: 0883447185
- Elliot, Elisabeth, *A chance to die: The life and legacy of Amy Carmichael*. 1987. ISBN: 185078146-X
- Grigg, Viv. 1990. *Companion to the poor: Christ in the urban slums*. Rev. ed. Monrovia, Cal.: MARC. ISBN 0-912552-69
- *Grubb, Norman, 1985. *C.T. Studd*. ISBN: 0875082025
- Johnstone, Patrick. 1998. *The church is bigger than you think*. ISBN: 1857922697
- Nida, Eugene A. *Customs and cultures*. 1954. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. ASIN: 0878087230
- Olson, Bruce. 1989. *Bruchko*. Creation House. ISBN: 0884191338 An incredible story of becoming all things to one people.
- Packer, J.I. 1991. *Evangelism and the sovereignty of God*. Downer's Grove, Il.: InterVarsity Press. ISBN 0-8308-1339-X
- Pierolo, Neal. 1991. *Serving as senders: How to care for your missionaries while they are preparing to go, while they are on the field, when they return home*. ISBN: 1880185008
- Pierson, Arthur T., *George Muller of Bristol*, Revell, [1899] 1999. Kregel. ISBN: 0825434645. Cared for over 2,000 orphans without asking anyone for money.
- Piper, John. 1993. *Let the nations be glad: The supremacy of God in missions* ISBN: 0801071240 Highly recommended
- Richardson, Donald Charles. *Eternity in their hearts*. Rev. ed. 1984, Regal ISBN: 0830709258
- Richardson, Don. 1975, *Peace Child*. Regal. ISBN: 0830704159
- Schaeffer, Francis A. 1971. *True spirituality*. Wheaton, Il.: Tyndale House Pub. ISBN 8423-7351-9. (Schaeffer's works generally)
- Tucker, Ruth. *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: a biographical history of Christian missions*. ISBN: 0310459311
- Van Engen, Charles and Jude Tiersma, eds. 1994. *God so loves the city: Seeking a theology for urban mission*. Monrovia, Cal.: MARC. ISBN 0-912552-86-7.
- Winter, Ralph D. and Steven C. Hawthorne, editors *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 3d ed. ISBN: 087808289 (1-800-Mission to order)

Missions Research

World Factbook, with current maps and country data

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

Directory of Christian Organizations--many listings, including missions:

<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/xn-dir2.html>

Islamic research: Islam Review <http://www.islamreview.com/>

MisLinks—Directory of agencies and missions topics, including great research sites:

<http://www.mislinks.org/>

Univ. of Texas map resources <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html>

Yale Divinity School Missions and World Christianity research links--extensive:

<http://www.library.yale.edu/div/MissionsResources.htm>

Missions Periodicals

Evangelical Missions Quarterly For contemporary non-scholarly discussion of evangelical Christian missions, plus book reviews—very good for the missions

*library <http://www.emqonline.com/>

International Journal of Frontier Missions, with downloadable articles, at

*<http://www.ijfm.org/>

MisLinks directory of web-based missions publications:

<http://www.mislinks.org/gathering/journals/>

Mission Frontiers magazine—bi-monthly and packed with missions resources

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/>

World Pulse is a bi-weekly global missions news and issues newsletter to keep abreast of

*Missions developments <http://www.worldpulse.org/>

Missions News

Missions Network News—daily global missions news, including audio clips, free:

<http://www.mnnonline.org/>

Mission Frontiers—portal for missions, Christian and secular news sites

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/>

Missions Email List

Brigada has a weekly email missions potpourri. Subscribe at www.brigada.org

Some African American Missions Agencies

- ✘ *Ambassadors Fellowship www.ambassadorsfellowship.com 719-495-8180
- ✘ Carver International Mission 770-484-0610
- ✘ COMINAD is an African American missions mobilizing network. Brian Johnson
b.johnson@cominad.com IAAMM@aol.com

Some of the Mission Agencies Seeking AfAm Missionaries

- ✘ Africa Inland Mission <http://www.aimint.org/usa/>
- ✘ Campus Crusade for Christ Impact Movement www.impactmovement.com
- ✘ International Teams www.iteams.org
- ✘ Middle East Christian Outreach <http://aboutmeco.org/>
- ✘ Operation Mobilization www.om.org
- ✘ SIM (Serving in Mission) www.sim.org
- ✘ TEAM <https://team.org>
- ✘ United World Mission www.uwm.org/
- ✘ Wycliffe (Bible translation) www.wycliffe.org

Short-term Missions Resources

*Adventures in Missions—short-term trips and articles www.adventures.org/
CultureLink provides training in various cities for leaders of short-term trips, together with manuals for leaders and participants. <http://www.culturelinkinc.org/>
Lingenfelter, Sherwood G. and Marvin K. Mayers. 1986. *Ministering cross-culturally: An incarnational model for personal relationships*. <http://www.amazon.com/Ministering-Cross-Culturally-Incarnational-Personal-Relationships/dp/0801026474>
Teams Commissioned for Christ, Intl. www.tcci.org/, has the “Go Prepared” training video series and many other resources⁶⁰

Short-term Mission Opportunities

- International Teams www.iteams.org
- *Reconciliation Ministries Network—South Sudan, Uganda, India
<http://www.rmni.org/global-and-short-term-missions/sudan.html>
- www.ShortTermMissions.com articles, database of trips, etc.
- Shalom Outreach www.shalomoutreach.org (serving African Americans)
- TEAM www.team.org

Some AfAm Churches Strongly Supporting Global Missions

- Christian Stronghold Baptist Church <http://www.christianstronghold.com/>
- Rosedale Park Baptist Church, www.at-the-dale.net
- Solid Rock Ministry, <http://www.solidrockg12.org/>
- Zoe Christian Fellowship, www.zcf.org

www.RMNI.org Jim@RMNI.org 8/14/13 Footnote links are valid as of 8/14/13

¹ Meeting the needs of other African Americans would be the responsibility of the deacons and the pastoral staff, including the associates, or a Home Missions Team could be established to respond to needs with the AfAm community.

² See <http://www.reconciliationnetwork.org/financial/ChurchBudgeting.pdf> for steps in creating a church budget.

³ Bill Gothard

⁴ Walston, Vaughn, and Robert Stevens, eds. *African American experience in world mission: A call beyond community*. 2009. Pasadena, CA: Wm. Carey Library. <https://missionbooks.org/products/detail/african-american-experience-in-world-mission>

Another resource for the history of AFAM missions and issues surrounding the under-representation of AfAms in cross-cultural missions is a doctoral dissertation available to print without charge at www.RMNI.org/dissertation

⁵ <https://missionbooks.org/products/detail/profiles-of-african-american-missionaries>

⁶ Information is at <http://www.uscwm.org/> The reader is now in its fourth edition, available on Amazon.com.

⁷ A list of missions education resources is at the end of this manual.

⁸ See www.fbhchurch.org/jbook1.html

⁹ www.sbc.net/teachers/Default.asp

¹⁰ Available at <http://www.rmni.org/teaching-resources/powerpoint-presentations/african-american-global-missions.html>

¹¹ Typically missionaries are reimbursed expenses incurred in traveling to the conference and honoraria given to the main speakers. Some churches have mission banquets, refreshments and child care and costs are involved in advertising.

-
- ¹² Christian Stronghold Baptist Church www.christianstronghold.com Pastor Willie Richardson. They want to assist other churches in developing their own conferences. The third weekend in November is the scheduled weekend for this event.
- ¹³ Among these are Wycliffe Bible Translators, SIM, and Campus Crusade for Christ, as well as AfAm missions organizations. See various agencies listed above.
- ¹⁴ www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PageCategory.asp?CategoryID-18, accessed 9/4/02, but no longer valid
- ¹⁵ <http://www.kidsonmission.org/> accessed 8/14/13
- ¹⁶ For example, Northland Community Church www.northlandchurch.net and Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church www.lmpc.org and Browncroft Community Church www.dnn7.browncroft.org
- ¹⁷ Michael Jaffarian, "The statistical state of the North American Protestant missions movement..." *Int'l Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Jan. 2008, p. 36.
- ¹⁸ This is true in Uganda, costing about \$25,000.
- ¹⁹ See the form used by Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church in the appendix.
- ²⁰ Todd Johnson & Peter Crossing, "Status of Global Mission, 2013, in the Context of AD 1800-2025," *Int'l Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Jan. 2013, p. 33.
- ²¹ See Bonk, Jonathan J., 1991. *Mission and money: Affluence as a western missionary problem*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. American Missiological Society Series #15.
- ²² See the denominational giving chart at: <http://rmni.org/afam/HistoryandResearch/Table1AFAMMISSIONSGIVING.pdf>
- ²³ The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) provides financial standards for larger ministries—over 1,000 belong: <http://www.ecfa.org/> The Better Business Bureau reports on large charities at <http://www.give.org/reports/index.asp> . Accessed 2/6/03.
- ²⁴ See Brown, Keith, *Faith, promise, and beyond : unlocking the resources of the church to help fulfill the great commission*, 1st ed. Morris Pub.; ASIN: 1575021013
- ²⁵ See <http://www.crown.org>
- ²⁶ The paper "Grace as a Principle of New Testament Missionary Support" is available at: <http://rmni.org/financial-ministry/giving/grace-and-nt-missionary-support.html>
- ²⁷ See pages 103-105 of my dissertation for documentation at <http://www.rmni.org/dissertation/chapter2.PDF>
- ²⁸ See pages 167-170 of my dissertation at <http://www.rmni.org/dissertation/chapter4.PDF>
- ²⁹ See page 104, <http://www.reconciliationnetwork.org/dissertation/chapter2.PDF>
- ³⁰ In my own experience, annual church support of \$6,000 has been at the generous end, while \$600 has been on the low end.
- ³¹ The writer was once asked to check on a missionary requesting financial help from a Christian foundation. After talking with the man in his office and reviewing the mission literature, I asked for a list of the missionaries supported by his organization. On that list were missionaries known to be actively serving entirely different mission organizations, yet were claimed by this person as serving in his organization. This man also apparently represented income from a pension as gift income to his organization. Satan masquerades as an angel of light.
- ³² Barrett, David B. and Todd M. Johnson, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2003," *International bulletin of missionary research*, January 2003, p. 25. This is the estimate for mid-2003.
- ³³ The full color publication of one ministry has monthly pictures of the founder, his son and their families to the point of ridiculousness.
- ³⁴ Feel free to contact mission organizations to determine what is reasonable support in a particular country, given the size of the candidates' family. Be careful to determine what is included in that support.
- ³⁵ The average of the time estimated by thirty-six AfAm missionaries, p. 244, dissertation.
- ³⁶ Due to potential legal issues, you may wish to keep any moral deficiencies general rather than specific in written form and to share this information only with those who *need to know* in the church.
- ³⁷ Allen, Wayne. 1998. "When the mission pays the pastor," *Evangelical missions quarterly* (34) #2, pp. 176-181.
- ³⁸ Here are many suggestions: <http://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/mspromo.html> accessed 1/23/03.
- ³⁹ Armstrong, Diana M. 1999. *Adopt-a-missionary: Ministering to those who minister on the mission field*. Winepress Publishing, ISBN: 157921195X To obtain a copy contact clydewa@volstate.net
- ⁴⁰ Armstrong, p. 16
- ⁴¹ The Macedonian Call Foundation, of Houston, TX, offers furloughing missionaries a rental car at cost. <http://www.macedoniancallsouthcarolina.com/>
- ⁴² See http://www.missionaryresources.com/missionary_furlough.html , accessed 8/23/04.
- ⁴³ The writer was blessed by strong support from supporting churches during doctoral studies.

⁴⁴ See the story “Holding the ropes” in the appendix.

⁴⁵ “In 1981, for example, Gallup International organizations conducted surveys on religious beliefs in twenty-three nations. One question asked respondents to rank the importance of God in their lives, with 10 the top score. The highest score recorded was by American Blacks--9.04.” Gallup, George, Jr., and Jim Castelli. 1989. *The people's religion: American faith in the 90's*. New York, N.Y.: Macmillan Publishing Company.

⁴⁶ George Barna, “African-American Adults and Faith: A National Perspective,” Part II, Table 2.2.2, 1996.

⁴⁷ Barna Research, “African Americans” <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=1> accessed 8/23/04, but not valid 8/14/13

⁴⁸ Barrett and Johnson. 2003. p. 25.

⁴⁹ 33,074 in 1996 to 32,957 in 1999. Siewert, John A. and Dotsey Welliver, eds. *Mission handbook: US and Canadian ministries overseas 2001-2003*, p. 34.

⁵⁰ Acts 1:8

⁵¹ http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb12-ff01.html

⁵² Barrett and Johnson. 2001. p. 31.

⁵³ <http://www.targetmarketnews.com/storyid01201001.htm> “The US African American Market” MarketResearch.com

⁵⁴ Barna, George. “Americans were more generous in 2001 than in 2000” <http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=110&Reference=B> accessed 2/7/03, but not valid 8/14/13

⁵⁵ Reed, Eric. “Where the money goes.” *Christianity Today*, Summer 2000, 21:3, p. 88.

⁵⁶ Berkley, James D. 1997. Is Your Church Fiscally Fit? *Leadership*, Summer, 57.

⁵⁷ Here are suggestions: Crown Ministries www.crown.org; Reconciliation Ministries Network www.RMNI.org; Lee Jenkins Financial Ministries <http://www.leejenkinsministries.org>

⁵⁸ Berkeley, 57.

⁵⁹ Website listings are valid as of mid-December 2002.

⁶⁰ Terri L. Hughes of SEND International had an excellent shortterm mission resource compilation at: [http://www.macproject.com/PDF%20Files/STM%20Resources%20\(General\).PDF](http://www.macproject.com/PDF%20Files/STM%20Resources%20(General).PDF) (no longer valid link) Some resources mentioned in connection with short term missions come from this document.

APPENDICES:

Some cautions concerning short-term trips and solicitations:

Trip members should beware of giving out their email, fax and mailing addresses to those not known and trusted. Americans traveling abroad in Africa are considered rich and generally are in comparison with Africans. Be careful about giving out home phone numbers, since with time zone variations calls/faxes may come in the middle of the night. Also beware of making “promises.” Sometimes people, out of hope, will construe a thought or desire to help to be a firm commitment. Unless you are promising, clearly state that you aren’t promising.

Occasionally people you hardly know will suddenly show up in America asking to visit. Christians are to show hospitality, especially to other Christians. Set certain boundaries to the stay—such as to the start and ending dates of the visit. You may have to set limits upon long distance phone calls. Sometimes Africans have stayed for weeks at a time expecting the host family to arrange church and other meetings to solicit help. The fact that the person is staying with you gives credibility to that ministry. If you do not know the person and ministry and decide to offer hospitality, do not feel obligated to set up those meetings. Because a person is a Christian or lives in a particular country doesn’t necessarily mean that the ministry represented is worthy of your support. There are those for whom we would gladly do all we can to advocate their ministry. Reserve such efforts for these people and show simple hospitality to others, as God may lead.

Beware also of visitors leaving accumulated baggage at your home, unless you are able to pay for shipping the baggage where needed. Sometimes such bags will be left at the last moment

with the sometimes unspoken assumption that you will send them afterward. The bags, if you carry them yourself, may also involve customs charges as you enter the country, particularly as regards electronics. Air transport is expensive and may not be good stewardship. If you have the funds and are willing—no problem.

Be careful also of bogus “needs” that may be presented to you. Check with the person’s pastor or other trusted contact to ensure that the “need” is real, because some presented even by “Christians” are not. Get whatever credentials you can. For example, a national led his host to believe that his family had a medical emergency back home, for which the host sent a Western Union money order. Later it was discovered that the national pastor had far more than enough to cover that need himself—he was saving it for a PA system. Another person presented a series of needs which turned out to be lies when the stories were checked by email with a trusted contact in the home country. There are godly and honest visitors whose ministries are deserving of support, and there are others. Ask God for a discerning spirit.

Involve the visitor in ministry, such as going to the sick, witnessing, mercy ministries, etc. Also, if available, allow the guest to use the Internet to catch up on their local news and try to take the visitor to at least one special “tourist” place, if possible. Another area of personal ministry might be to take the person to a clothing store and give a stated limit as to how much the person can spend (including any clothes for family members).

Holding the Ropes

“One story was told at that farewell meeting (of missionary Rev. and Mrs. Jonathan Goforth of China) which made a deep impression on all present....”

The story was of a young couple, when bidding farewell to their home country church as they were about to leave for an African field, known as The White Man’s Grave. The husband said, ‘My wife and I have a strange dread in going. We feel much as if we were going down into a pit. We are willing to take the risk and go if you, our home circle, will promise *to hold the ropes.*’ One and all promised.

Less than two years passed when the wife and the little one God had given them, succumbed to the dreaded fever. Soon the husband realized that his days too were numbered. Not waiting to send word home of his coming, he started back at once and arrived at the hour of the Wednesday prayer-meeting. He slipped in un-noticed, taking a back seat. At the close of the meeting he went forward. An awe came over the people, for death was written on his face. He said:

I am your missionary. My wife and child are buried in Africa and I have come home to die. This evening I listened anxiously, as you prayed, for some mention of your missionary to see if you were keeping your promise, but in vain! You prayed for everything connected with yourselves and your home church, but you forgot your missionary. I see now why I am a failure as a missionary. It is because *you have failed to hold the ropes!*”

Goforth, Rosalind. 1937. *Goforth of China*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, pp. 65-66.

Annual Missionary Questionnaire and Review

PERSONAL

Worker or Organization Name:

Date:

Agency

Location of service:

Current address:

Contact person at agency for financial matters:

Contact person at agency for personnel matters:

Your local/field phone number

Mobile number:

Preferred email address for our communication:

FINANCIAL STATUS

12-month budget goal recommended/required by your agency for salary/taxes/retirement/living \$_____/year

Any additional ministry/travel/education/project support recommended: \$_____/year

Approximate amount received from all sources the last 12 months toward the above budgets: \$_____/year

Total amount currently pledged toward your total 20__ goals—salary and ministry \$_____/year

Please be as complete as you can with all the figures above.

Please give significant reasons for any change in the recommended support level (from the 2013 level)

Describe your current support base (quantity): churches/groups_____ Individuals_____

Please provide the name / address of any other supporting church in our near region

Name / address of your original sending church:

Is this church still involved in your ministry?

Name / address of the church considered to be your home church:

Date of next regular home assignment:

Could you visit our church?

Would long-term (over one month) be needed in our area in the future? If so, please list dates:

US FAMILY EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION: (address and phone)

REMARKS (Please indicate any specific, urgent needs, special projects and / or comments. Use an additional sheet if needed, or if your support structure does not fit the above questions)

Please return to us by ----

REVIEW OF 20__:

1. Describe your main area of work over the past year.

2. What is your sense of ministry today? Would you say that the work is progressing well, maintaining, or struggling?

2. Does your current work reflect any change from your initial work? If so, describe how changes have occurred.

3. What is most encouraging in your work?

We'd like to hear about any answered prayers or special stories that you'd like to share.

4. What is the greatest challenge or struggle facing you?

6. Respond to the following concerning your type of work, target group, and geographical area. As indicated, please give percentages.

A) Type of Work/Ministry:

Church Planting.....	%	Evangelism / Introducing Christ.....	%
Theological Education.....	%	Discipleship / Training.....	%
Bible Translation / Literacy.....	%	Support (Medical, Admin, etc.).....	%
Relief / Social Action.....	%	Other (please describe).....	%

B) Type of people group* your ministry is serving:

- Un-reached or Least Reached** (Please name the group) _____%
- Reached *(Please name the group) _____%

* *particular ethnic or religious groups. In the case of US ministry, please indicate whether your ministry is targeted toward youth, international students, the inner city, etc.*

***people groups having little or no access to the Gospel or having no viable indigenous group of Christians that fellowship and reach out to others*

C) Geographical area served:

7. What are some of the tangible and / or intangible results the Lord has given you in your work this year?
8. Do you continue to agree with our statement of faith? If not, please explain.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 20__

1. Describe or list your goals and vision going into 20__.
2. Please briefly identify 3-4 major prayer concerns for which we could pray:
3. Would you like to be contacted by someone from our missions committee to discuss any of the above?
4. Are you anticipating significant work changes in the coming year? (location, ministry type / responsibilities, agency, retirement, etc.)____If yes, please describe.

Have any personal circumstances changed in the past year that we should know about?

5. Could a work team or ministry team be of any help to your ministry? _____
If yes, what type of team / number of workers?
6. How could we improve our relationship with you?

Courtesy of Browncroft Community Church, and Signal Mountain Bible Church, modified by Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church