



SYNERGY GLOBAL

MISSIONS MANUAL

Synergy Global is employing Missions Training/Awareness events, District Missions Trips and STL/BGMC/LFTL/LIFE fundraising endeavors as the collective expression of the Georgia District's mission to complete the global task of world evangelism.

"If there be any one point in which the Christian church ought to keep its fervor at a white heat, it is concerning missions. If there be anything about which we cannot tolerate lukewarmness, it is in the matter of sending the gospel to a dying world."

- CHARLES SPURGEON



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DEAR PASTOR/ MINISTRY LEADER

As a member of the Georgia District Missions Committee, I can tell you firsthand that our desire is to empower Georgia churches for greater impact in the world through local and global missions. We wrote this resource to provide you with a roadmap to launching or strengthening a missions movement in your church so that together, we can continue to excel as a district in fulfilling The Great Commission both locally and abroad.

Special thanks to these committee members for contributing to this manual:

- John Dougherty (Georgia District Church Resourcing Director & Co-Missions Director)**
- Joey Ellis (Stone Edge Church, Macon GA—District Co-Missions Director)**
- Mark Haston (Tribe Church, Atlanta GA)**
- Mike Holt (Nations Church, Athens GA)**
- Ben Steffens (The Church at The Groves, Albany GA)**
- Paul Thomas (Evangel Temple, Columbus GA)**

There are other pastors in our district who are also doing a fantastic job leading the missions program in their respective churches. They have spoken into this resource and we remain appreciative of their fantastic feedback.

As you will see in the pages of this resource, this is a practical guide from pastors in the trenches trying to do our part to impact more people for Christ in our community and world through missions. It isn't an exhaustive resource by any means. It's more of a springboard to spur on fresh vision and to give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to speak into your desire to take missions to the next level in your own context.

We pray this roadmap is a blessing to you. Know that we stand with you and believe that God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all we can ask or imagine when it comes to the advancement of His Kingdom through world evangelism.

For the harvest,

Mike Holt and the Georgia Missions Team



CHAPTER 1

**Introducing Assemblies of God Missions &
The District Missions Committee**

As we endeavor to do more for missions than we have ever done, let us remember the heartbeat of our movement known as The Assemblies of God. Our national website states,

“In 1914, the Assemblies of God was formed following a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Early AG leaders had an immediate concern for the lost, compelling them to take the gospel into all the world. This small, fearless group of men and women committed themselves in writing to ‘the greatest evangelism the world has ever seen.’ They believed both Jesus’ command to reach the whole world and His promise that they would receive the Holy Spirit’s power to do it.”

And since the days of the Azusa street revival and the birth of our movement that soon followed, God has honored His mandate on our fellowship to be one of the greatest vessels of missions in the earth today. In just over 100 years of existence, our fellowship has grown worldwide to 69.2 million constituents. Globally, we are the fastest growing denomination or fellowship in the world as a direct result of our calling to reach the ends of the earth with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Also, consider the following:

- Through the A/G worldwide, 1 new believer is added to the church every 52 seconds.
- 1 new minister is enlisted every 108 minutes through our fellowship.
- A new church is planted every 180 minutes.

These kind of supernatural results are a testimony of God’s hand on our movement, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit on our churches, and the funds that have been given to mobilize the church to the four corners of the earth. To date, right at \$204 million dollars has been given to fund the efforts of over 3000 Assemblies of God missionaries and associates commissioned to one task—the evangelization of a lost world. What an honor it is to be a part of a missional fellowship.

This chapter breaks down the nuts and bolts of how missions works in our movement.

Two Divisions and Key Terminology

There are two divisions of missions within the Assemblies of God. World missionaries are a part of “Assemblies of God World Missions,” commonly referred to as “AGWM.” Stateside missionaries are a part “US Missions” or “AGUSM.” Individuals who feel called to missions for their entire lives, also known as “career missionaries,” often strive to become a “fully appointed” missionary. Individuals who are committed to serving short term as they explore out a potential full-time calling to missions will often start as a “Missionary Associate” and serve under a fully appointed missionary for a season. Some missionary associates will remain in this status permanently or eventually become fully appointed as God speaks to them about a lifetime appointment. Both fully appointed missionaries and missionary associates raise their own budget through a process called itineration whereby the missionary seeks monthly support from churches and individuals. Here are some differences between a fully appointed missionary and a missionary associate as well as some differences between AGWM and US Missionaries.

• **Terms**—Career missionaries commit to one, four-year term at a time. After a term, world missionaries will return home on what is called “furlough.” This furlough usually lasts for about a year and gives the missionary time to rest, attend trainings, and raise additional funds. US Missionaries also serve one four-year term at a time and are also required to itenerate every four years to maintain a strong budget. Often times, US Missionaries continue working in their respective contexts and itenerate simultaneously. This dynamic isn’t encouraged by US Missions but often feels impossible to a stateside missionary to fully unplug from the mission to rest and raise funds. The usual term

for a missionary associate on the foreign mission field and U.S. soil is 2-4 years, although there are avenues for a 1-2 year commitment as well.

• **Finances**—Budget varies for both AGWM and US missionaries. Size of budget depends on location and family size. The average AGWM missionary raises \$8000-\$10,000 per month and must also raise a cash budget of \$25-50k, or more. This cash budget covers overseas travel expenses as well as a cash reserve for emergencies and unexpected overseas expenses. It typically takes a fully appointed missionary 18-24 months to raise their full budget. The typical US Missions budget is anywhere from \$5000-\$7000 per month and usually takes the missionary 12-18 months to raise their funds. All missionaries with the A/G must pay 7% of their budget back to the denomination to cover administrative costs. (This is actually one of the lowest percentages among all the major missions organizations in the world). All missionaries are also required to give half of their tithe back to their department as well. Fully appointed missionaries are allowed to call any A/G church within their district and seek out opportunities to share their vision either with the senior pastor individually or with the church at large. Missionary associates are allowed to fully itinerate (ie call churches, attend sectional councils, etc.) IF they are credential holders or are in the process of obtaining credentials. Most churches will, in some way, allow the missionary to share during a “missions window” and then consider taking the missionary on for financial support. Churches usually support missionaries anywhere from \$25- \$100 per month and do so by filling out a missionary’s pledge form. Missionaries must turn these pledges into the national office and rely on these pledges, as well as the pledges from personal friends and family, to hit the financial benchmark set by the national office to become “fully funded.” The itineration process for any missionary is one of the most challenging, yet

fulfilling aspects to their calling.

• **Training**—The road for all missionaries, either world or U.S. missionaries, begins with a process called candidate orientation in Springfield, MO. Individuals desiring to apply to become a missionary and attend candidate orientation must be approved by the district. Once approved, individuals attend orientation where they are educated in their respective mission field and taught how to raise funds. They are then released to start the itineration journey. Once fully funded, US missionaries begin their assignment immediately. Overseas missionaries could spend their first 2-4 years in language school if their calling requires them to learn another language.

Quick Statistics

AGWM

- Missionaries: 1837
- Associates: 852
- Total: 2689
- Maps: 338. Short Term Personnel: 15,269
- Total Missions Giving: \$203.8 MILLION
- 69.2 Million Worldwide AG Constituents
- Worldwide A/G Includes 256 countries, territories, and provinces (190 countries)

US Missions

- 1,027 Appointed U.S. Missionaries, Retirees, Candidates, and Spouses
- 715 Active Endorsed Chaplains (does not include spouses)
- 235 Career Associates and Spouses
- 889 Missionary Associates and Spouses
- 212 Missions Interns and Spouses

Missionaries are also able to secure funds for special projects and other needs (not related to personal income or salary) through some other incredible missions ministries in the Assemblies of God:

- BGMC—(Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge)

BGMC is the missions education program for all kids in the Assemblies of God. BGMC equips kids to know, to care, to pray, to give, and to reach the lost. BGMC has a two-fold purpose, to reach the children of the world and to create a heart of compassion in kids.

- LFTL—(Light for the Lost) Light for the Lost provides evangelistic resources for missionaries and missionary partners through five platforms: print, audio, video, internet, and technologies. Every SECOND, of every MINUTE, of every DAY someone, somewhere, uses a Light for the Lost resource!

- STL—(Speed the Light) The concept is simple: we give so others can speed the light of the gospel to a world in darkness. This is accomplished by providing the “essential transportation and creative communication” equipment for missionary evangelism. Through modern transportation, radio, television, print, audio, and digital equipment, our missionaries can help make Jesus known. Speed the Light is the student-initiated, volunteer, charitable program that provides much-needed equipment to missionaries across the nation and in over 180 countries around the world.

- Light the Way—Light the Way exists to unite women around the cause of missions giving for the victimized and marginalized. Together, they work to REACH the lost, RESTORE the broken, and RESOURCE ministries and individual women who are seeking truth. They fund ministries that provide resources to disciple women in every stage of life.

The role of the district missions committee

As you can see, missions is one of the centerpieces of the Assemblies of God. Our national office does a fantastic job facilitating the vetting process for our missionaries, equipping them to raise support, and providing the necessary training to fulfill their calling in the safest and most effective way. The role of the district missions committee is

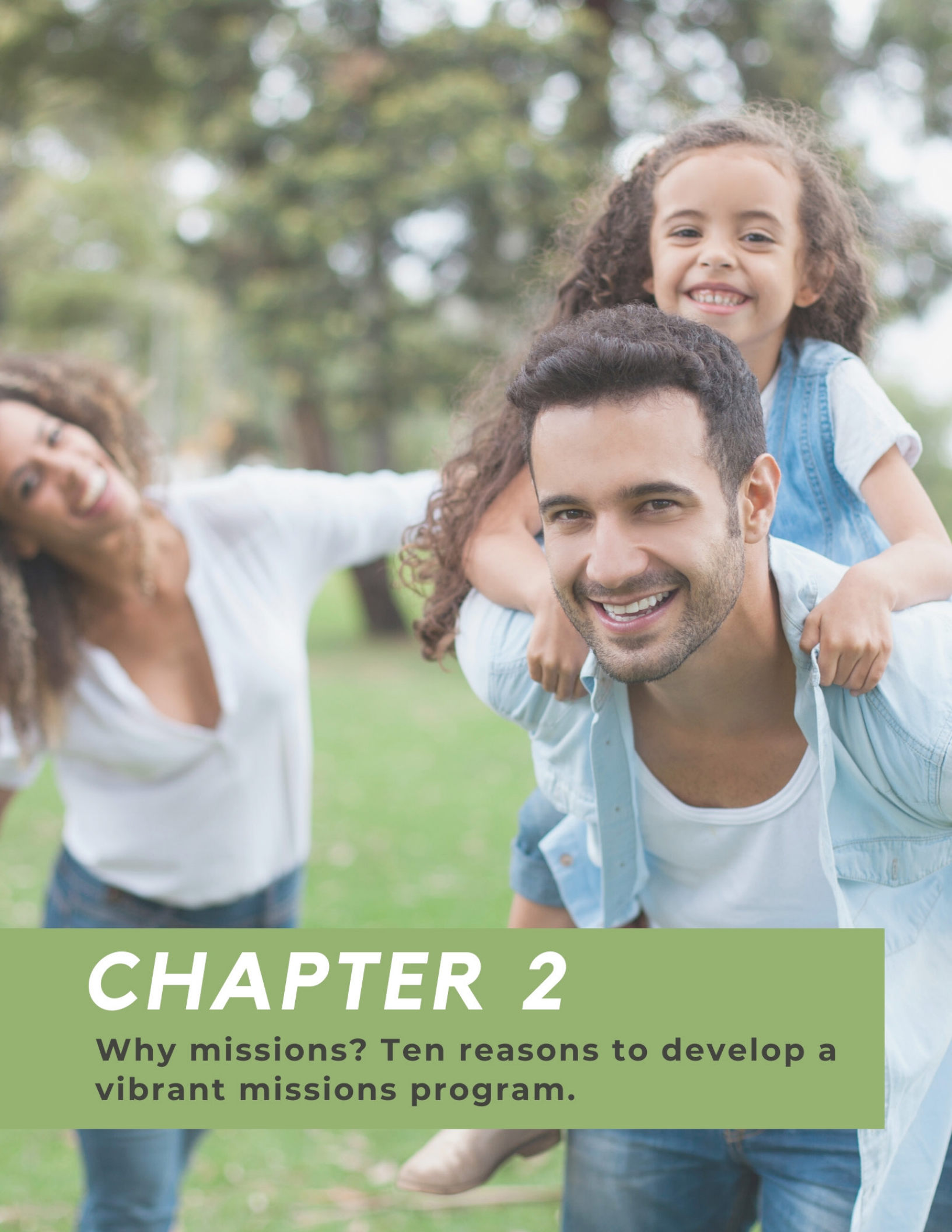
1. Facilitate the initial interview of missionary candidates and make recommendation to the national office.

2. Promote awareness within the district as to who the missionaries from Georgia are and the nature of their respective assignments.

3. Help to educate pastors on how to most effectively raise funds within their churches.

4. Pray for and encourage Georgia missionaries. (Each committee member has committed to provide support for a select number of missionaries from Georgia.)

5. Review requests from missionaries who are in need of special assistance (emotionally, relationally, financially) and to make recommendation to the Georgia District Resourcing Director as to how we can best meet these needs.



CHAPTER 2

Why missions? Ten reasons to develop a vibrant missions program.

Here are ten reasons as to why we should embrace a healthy and vibrant missions giving program in our local churches. Use these reasons to cast vision to your board, missions committee, and church at large. Add to the list, make it your own, and cast a compelling vision to move your missions program forward.

1). We should engage in missions because of the unfinished task at hand.

There are roughly 7 billion people on the planet, yet just over half of them (3.5 billion) have yet to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. This should grieve our hearts and stir up a holy zeal within us like never before. As Loren Triplett said, “You don’t measure yourself by your success. You measure yourself by the unfinished task.” Let’s allow our hearts to break again for the lost but also become filled with the hope of the gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ.

2). A strong missions program allows our people to participate in the end time harvest of God in the world.

Right now, people are coming to Christ by the multitudes in different regions of the world. For example, there is an incredible harvest of souls taking place in Northern Africa, one of the least evangelized areas of the world. When we understand what is happening worldwide and give our people a chance to participate in it, we create a momentum and excitement within our own church. A vibrant missions program causes the church to declare, “this is why we exist—the saving of lost souls!”

3). A strong missions giving program gives you a platform for local church outreach.

It allows you to say to your people that missions is, “here, there, and everywhere.” Your missions giving program serves as your ministry to everywhere, but also serves as a way to start

empowering your people to reach right here starting with their own personal world of influence. Through your missions program, you are able to teach your people that the Great Commission starts with their friends, family, classmates, and neighbors and extends to the unknown names of lost people on the other side of the world.

4). A strong missions program will give your volunteer base a HUGE win!

A successful missions program in a local church requires the help of volunteers—as do most initiatives within a local body. But there is something different when it comes to laypeople who help with their church’s missions program. On a spiritual level, it is an area of service that extends way beyond the four walls of the local church. This factor alone brings a greater sense of fulfillment to a volunteer to do something that stretches their heart beyond the usual activities of church life. On a practical level, there is nothing more rewarding for a volunteer than successfully executing a missions convention that yields financial fruit for the kingdom or providing care and prayer for missionaries that the church supports. You will find that God will knit the heart of your missions volunteers to His own heart in a unique way!

5). A strong missions program will grow the faith and expand the vision of your people.

The late, Reverend Randy Valimont used to say, “One church can change the world”—and indeed it can. When we set a compelling vision for missions, declaring that one church, regardless of size, could significantly impact the world through global missions, we stretch the faith of our people to believe God for bigger things.

6). A vibrant missions program serves as a catalyst for unity within the body of Christ.

Our call to missions unifies us as a movement and

as a local church. Remember, divisiveness has always been a weapon of the enemy in society and even in the church. Divisiveness diminishes and reduces an organization's most important values. As a church, we must not lose our voice and vision for the most important things to the heart of God—namely, the lost. A church's focus on missions and outreach gives the church a compelling purpose to bring them together in unity.

7). A missions giving church will experience the law of sowing and reaping on a church-wide level.

As it has been said, "if you take care of God's world, he will take care of yours." This is more than a catchy statement. It is a Biblical principle for the local church to remember and embrace. 2 Corinthians 9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. God does take care of His church as His church takes care of what matters the most to Him—the lost world. We reap the joy of sharing in God's global harvest, the unity of the Spirit that results from a missional vision, and even souls and financial blessing in our own context.

8). A strong missions program keeps us connected to our roots and the power of the Holy Spirit.

When the local church unites itself with God's original DNA for anything He has given birth to in the body of Christ, there is a blessing and anointing that flows from the hand of God to that local church. (Psalm 133:1-3) Missions, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is what the Assemblies of God is all about. And when we make ourselves about that mission, we invoke blessing upon our churches and an encounter with the Holy Spirit to accomplish such a task.

9). A strong missions program cultivates a

culture of generosity for a church.

If we can cause our people to see outside of their own world and capture a heart for God's world, believers will live and give for reasons beyond themselves. Giving to missions breaks a spirit of selfishness and creates a ripple of effect of generosity throughout the church. This generosity will be expressed in people more willing to give of their time through serving in the church, participating in the church's efforts to reach their own community, and sowing financially into the church's mission to reach the world.

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10). Last but not least, we should renew our responsibility to missions because Jesus said so.

Remember, missions is a matter of obedience! Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and preach the good news." Matthew 28:18 "Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations." The Great Commission is still great, and Jesus is still speaking it to the church today. Our missions program is an expression of us fulfilling that commission and increases the footprint and influence of our local church across the world. Let's make it our aim to participate in missions from a place of obedience to the Lord who has given us this great privilege. There are many other benefits to having a missions program in your local church. Spend some time with your staff, board, and missions committee to expand this list even more. Consider ways to communicate these benefits to your people. Most importantly, make this list a matter of prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to renew your own sense of passion for missions.



CHAPTER 3

Cultivating a dynamic missions culture (Ten pillars of a vibrant missions giving church)

Culture is key to everything within a church or organization. The goal of this manual is to help leaders cultivate a true missions culture that will sustain the church's support of missionaries throughout the year. Here are ten things to consider when it comes to establishing such culture:

1). Missional pastor = missional people.

Paramount to a thriving missions program is the heart of the pastor for missions. Remember, passion is caught more than it is taught. What our hearts beat for as a leader will become the heartbeat of those we lead. Start by allowing the Holy Spirit to birth fresh vision and passion in your heart and then prioritize this passion strategically within your church.

2). Intentional prayer for missionaries, specific mission fields, as well as significant events that take place in your community and the world.

A.B Simpson said, "Prayer is the mighty engine that is to move the missionary work." Through prayer, the passion for missions mentioned above is birthed. And through prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission is deposited within our churches. We can become intentional in praying for missions by:

- Briefly highlighting and praying for one missionary each Sunday during the offering.*
- Sending prayer requests from missionaries to everyone who financially contributes to missions. You can do this through a free account with MailChimp (www.mailchimp.com).*
- Highlight and pray over significant local and world events that take place at the conclusion of worship. (devastating acts of nature, school shootings, and others)*
- Make missions a regular emphasis of prayer in all of the church's prayer initiatives (annual fast to start off the year, weekly prayer meetings, and any other organized prayer campaigns in your*

church.)

3). A strong Missions Committee

Both the passion and the practices of a vibrant missions program must flow through a team of missions minded individuals who will help promote the church's efforts toward local and global outreach. Responsibilities of a missions committee could include:

- Reviewing the requests of missionaries for support and making recommendation to the senior pastor or leadership team.*
- Helping to plan and organize an annual missions convention for the church.*
- Communicating with the missionaries the church supports on a quarterly basis to offer prayer and encouragement.*
- Compiling, organizing, and summarizing the information from all missionary newsletters. Relay pertinent information to the senior pastor*

4). Cultivate a missions culture through continually exposing your people to missions.

Beyond an annual missions convention, churches should continuously keep missions in front of their people throughout the year.

- Monthly missions windows—Consider bringing in one missionary per month and have them share their mission field with your people. A lot of pastors refer to this as "Missions Sunday" when people also fulfill their monthly missions pledge. Give the missionary exact specifics in regard to how long they have to speak, ask them to emphasize a specific story from the field, and encourage them to bring pictures and/or a video to show during their presentation. There is no right or wrong amount to give a missionary when they come share their heart with your people, but a lot of pastors will receive an offering from the church.*
- Highlighting a missionary of the week in your church bulletin.*
- Highlighting a missionary in any church-wide emails that you already do to keep your people*

informed about key information.

- *Highlighting missionaries on your church's Facebook page and other social media platforms. (Be sure to have clearance from the missionaries you support regarding what you can and cannot broadcast on social media and the internet)*
- *Allowing missionaries to come on Wednesday nights and share their vision and the midweek message.*
- *Quarterly missions emphasis—consider doing mini-missions conventions throughout the year. This can be as simple as a special missions service with a meal afterwards.*

5). Cross-departmental focus on missions

Build into the culture of the church that everyone gives to missions—kids, teenagers, women, men, and seniors. Make sure the ministries of the church are embracing the missions arm applicable to them (youth=STL, kids=BGMC, women=Light the Way, men=LFTL). Specific to youth and children, consider matching the funds raised for STL and BGMC to help incentivize young people giving to missions.

6). Local outreach

One core value that could be embraced in a local church is that “everything is evangelism.” Remember, every Sunday service provides the opportunity for someone to come to Christ. For a season, give an altar call for salvation at the conclusion of every Sunday service and let your people know this will be taking place. Challenge them to bring their lost friends to church. Also, plan at least two other events each year that are evangelistic in nature. This can be city wide serve days or adopting one segment of your community to demonstrate the love of Christ to in practical ways. Compassion based ministry such as feeding the less fortunate are also great ways to involve your people in the Great Commission. Remember, the goal is to help your people see that evangelism

is here, there, and everywhere—Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

Did you know that Convoy of Hope has a Southeast Program Center located in Georgia? This center, located in Macon, provides our churches with resources to bless our communities with compassion initiatives such as food distribution and disaster relief. For more information, contact Eric Gordon, program director, at egordon@convoyofhope.org.

7). Missions Trips

We've all heard it said, and have even experienced the truth, that nothing will change someone's life like a missions trip. Give your people the opportunity to go on missions trips that will forever instill within them a heart for missions.

- *Start small, even with your own in-house “mini missions trips” to your own community which involve a Friday night prayer walk or drive and a Saturday service project.*
- *Offer the opportunity for your church to participate in an overseas missions trip. A lot of churches will rotate between a stateside trip one year and an overseas trip the following year. Consider making it your goal to see every teenager go on an overseas missions trip before they graduate.*
- *Plan a stateside missions trip with one of our parachurch organizations here in Georgia. Take a team to help with a construction project at a church through RV/Maps ministry.*
- *Plan a missions trip in America to someplace like New York City, Los Angeles, or an Native American Reservation.*

8). Missional small groups

Small groups are a powerful ministry in a local church because they provide Biblical community for people. However, with a little work and vision casting, small groups that build community can also minister to the community.

- *Consider having each small group adopt a community service project each semester.*
- *Challenge small groups to adopt the neighborhood where they meet and plan some kind of outreach such as a block party for that community.*
- *Assign one of the missionaries the church supports to each small group and have them commit to pray for, encourage, and send small gifts to the missionary's children on their birthday and Christmas.*
- *Explore other ways to turn your small groups into missional small groups that build community but also reach the community.*

9). Preach on missions and teach personal evangelism.

Consider providing a personal evangelism class for your people such as Bill Hybels *Becoming a Contagious Christian*. Do this for Sunday school, Wednesday nights, or even as a small group emphasis across all small groups. Remember, when we eliminate the fear of personal evangelism, we build the faith of people to believe God for world evangelism through our missions programs.

Here are five sermon series ideas that would help instill a missional mindset into your people:

- 1). *The nuts and bolts on sharing your faith*
- 2). *Building a Biblical worldview in the midst of today's culture*
- 3). *Understanding the major world religions*
- 4). *Apologetics (knowing what you believe and why—answers to our most common questions.)*
- 5). *Heaven, hell, and the second coming of Christ. You will be surprised by how interested your people will be in these topics!*

10). Host a dynamic missions convention each year.

A powerful missions convention can set the pace for your missions giving for the entire year. The whole next section is dedicated to hosting a dynamic missions convention.



CHAPTER 4

Hosting a impactful missions convention.

Churches who are excelling in missions continue to find great success in raising funds through faith promises collected during an annual missions convention. In today's church culture, many pastors are also electing to have two smaller, bi-annual conventions instead of one larger one—with one in the spring and one in the fall. And still others are finding that a significant missions event held quarterly where faith promises are received have the greatest impact.

1) Set aside funds for your missions convention.

If you don't have the funds in your general budget to cover the expenses of your missions convention, set aside 5-10% of your missions budget for an annual missions convention. Consider this the cost of doing business that will hopefully produce even more financial pledges toward missions.

2). Have quality, anointed, and mission minded speakers for your convention.

This can be a missionary, district official, or another pastor who is a good communicator, is able to weave Biblical principles of giving into the context of funding missions and can effectively share stories from the mission field. There is nothing like sitting under the anointing and heart of a missionary on the field who is effectively fulfilling the Great Commission in their context. Ask your friends for recommendations and don't be afraid to reach out and ask!

3). Expand your missions convention over two Sundays and consider focusing on missions for the entire month.

With the average Christian only attending church twice a month in today's culture, you almost have to focus on missions for an entire month to make sure everyone has the opportunity to make a faith promise. Perhaps consider spreading your missions convention over two back to back

Sundays. Some churches have a U.S. Missionary speak one Sunday and an overseas missionary speak the following Sunday. Others have a missionary for one Sunday and a district official or pastor speak the following Sunday. Whatever you do, make sure you have faith promises available for your people for four consecutive Sundays. Insert them in your bulletin, hand them out each Sunday, set them in the sanctuary seats, and even mail one out to everyone in your church at the beginning of your missions month. The goal is to make sure everyone in the church holds a faith promise form in their hands at some point during the month and hears a heart stirring missions message.

4). Have an international meal during your missions convention

Some churches have this meal following the second Sunday of their missions convention as a point of celebration where they announce their totals and make one last appeal for missions. Others will do it mid-week, on the Wednesday night between two Sunday morning missions services. Consider having all available stateside missionaries come to the missions meal and briefly share their assignment with each table. Allow them to rotate from table to table throughout the meal.

The food can be catered, or people can sign up to bring dishes from other parts of the world. Some churches will pass out recipe cards to anyone who wants to make an international dish or even ask small groups to adopt certain genres of international food for the missions meal. This type of meal gets your people involved, gives everyone a taste of missions (literally), and can be a lot of fun for your people. Announce the total faith promises at this meal, give one final appeal, and close with a meaningful moment.

5). Clearly explain the concept of the faith promise.

We will look closely at the faith promise form in the next section, but make sure you clearly explain the concept of the faith promise. One way to do this is by emphasizing the phrase on the form that says, “as the Lord enables.” A faith promise is a commitment to give a certain amount of money to missions each month as God enables us to do so. Of course, we must do our part such as adjusting our budget, making sacrifices, working hard, and continuing to tithe. But when we marry the stretching of our faith to the stewardship of our finances, we give God the opportunity to provide for our faith promise pledge in supernatural ways. Through our faithfulness and our faith in God’s ability to provide, we will fulfill our faith promise.... as the Lord enables us to do so!

6). Pray through a clearly defined financial goal and the number of missionaries you feel the church should support. Passionately communicate these goals to your people!

This one may seem obvious, but many churches come into their annual missions focus just “seeing what happens.” Instead, pull away and ask the Holy Spirit to deposit a goal in your heart for your church’s missions giving and the number of new missionaries to take on for support. Invite your missions committee into a season of seeking the mind of God as well. Together, be open and willing to allow God to stretch your faith when you start praying for this amount. And then communicate this prayed through goal to your church with heartfelt conviction and tears in your eyes!

7). Stretch your own faith and set an example.

We’ve all heard the phrase, “speed of the leader, speed of the team,” right? Equal to that statement is “the faith of the leader, the faith of the team.” Truthfully, we set the bar when it comes to missions giving in our church through our giving

and the faith we express behind our own missions pledge. Allow the Holy Spirit to not only speak a goal into your heart about the church’s corporate giving, but also to your own heart concerning your own giving. During your missions convention, communicate your own availability to the Lord to stretch you in regards to your own faith promise. Don’t necessarily share the amount of your pledge, but do share your own heart for missions, your own desire to do something financially significant, and your willingness to be stretched to another level of giving. You will find that others will follow in the spirit and example that you set.

8). Use visuals, stories, and testimonies throughout your missions month/missions convention.

Nothing speaks to the heart like a powerful story from the field. Whoever you have speak for you should be a fantastic storyteller and someone who brings pictures and videos with them to share with your people. However, make the entire month of missions the opportunity to “tell the story.” Do this by asking all of the missionaries you support to email you a brief story from the field. Highlight these stories in your weekly correspondence to the church (in your bulletin, during your offering time, or in a daily email campaign to your church leading into your missions convention.) Nothing inspires the heart to give like a story—so what can you do to share these stories with your people?

9). Immediately begin to cultivate the connection between your givers and the missionaries you are supporting.

Ideally, the day after your missions convention, everyone who made a pledge to missions should receive a thank you email from you. Express your gratitude for their willingness to give, clarify for them again how long their pledge lasts, and the different giving mechanisms available to them (online, text to give, church app) etc. Also let

them know that from time to time you will pass on to them stories and prayer requests from the missionaries you support—and be sure to do so! In fact, consider highlighting one missionary every two weeks in a brief email to your missions givers. Keep missions in front of those who have committed to give, and you will be more likely see them fulfill their pledge.

10). Refer back to your missions convention and missions giving on a regular basis during your weekly offering.

Some churches host a missionary once a month, call it “missions Sunday,” and ask their people to fulfill their pledge on this day. If that works in your setting, by all means, do it. Other churches are finding success just by mentioning missions briefly during every service. This is done by writing a simple “thank you for remaining faithful to missions” or a quick testimonial from the field into your offering script. Other churches are still finding success in passing a separate offering receptacle, like a half globe, “just for missions.” But the goal is to in some way, even in some small way, keep missions in front of your people each week.



CHAPTER 5

Exploring the overall missions giving philosophy of the Assemblies of God (and your church).

Chapter 5 may seem to be out of bit out of order to you as we turn our attention to determining your church's philosophy on missions. This is because everything you have read up to this point has been the established way that Assembly of God missions has functioned in the local church since its inception. But there has been, in recent years, a shifting in both practice and philosophy that we would like to address in this chapter. Keep in mind that it is the opinion of the committee that everything written up to this point is the "baseline practice" of most A/G churches today and should still be embraced in some form today.

With that in mind, let's review first the traditional model of missions giving in the local church...

Faith Promise Giving (Traditional model):

- Churches have an annual missions convention where faith promises are received.
- The commitment behind the faith promise is for one year.
- Churches bring in one missionary per month, or every other month, to keep missions in front of their people.
- A missions committee helps to determine the amount given to each missionary, serves as a liaison between missionaries and the pastoral staff, and helps plan the annual missions convention.

***Recent modifications to this traditional plan:*

- Churches have a bi-annual convention (two mini-missions conventions a year).
- The faith promise is for only 6 months at a time.

Percentage of Overall Budget Giving

This would still fall into the category of a "traditional" form of missions giving in A/G churches. Some pastors and churches strive to give 10% of their budget to missions (essentially a tithe of the undesignated funds that come in through giving). They do this to ensure that missionaries are

supported, to communicate to their people that the church is "practicing what they preach," and to also not solely rely on faith promises to undergird their total giving. Note: Some churches collect faith promises on top of this amount and in some cases do not utilize the faith promise concept at all. Instead, they challenge their people to give to a general missions fund that is calculated into the percentage of what the church does for missions. Generally speaking, it is safe to say that a vast percentage of Assembly of God churches primarily fund their missions giving through faith promises and supplement their total giving through a percentage of the church's budget.

"One Fund" or "Common Fund" Giving

One Fund giving is a philosophy of giving that is driven by the concept of a Faith Promise, but also allows the pastor and board to allocate these funds to other important initiatives in the local church that "build the kingdom."

Examples of how a pastor embracing One Fund giving allocates funds:

- Global Missions (World and U.S. missionary support and projects): approximately 65%
- Local Ministries Expansion (local outreach, church ministries enhancements, digital ministries): approximately 20%
- Next Generation Leaders (camp scholarships, student mission trips, and other opportunities for young adults, youth, and children to have life changing experiences with Jesus): approximately 15%

Churches that have embraced this model have modified their verbiage to reflect this shift. Again, the highest percentage of these funds is designated more to global and U.S. missionary support and projects than anything else. The categories of giving are fully disclosed to the church in the vision casting process, so that everyone embraces the changes and does not sense that leadership is taking 'missions' funds and using it for something

else.

So what's the answer?

Ultimately, the answer is "give to missions." That's the answer! If allocating a percentage of your church's budget to missions works best, then do it. If converting to a One Fund concept works best and will therefore allow you to actually raise more money for missions in the long run, do it. If sticking with the traditional model is still finding great traction in your church, then don't fix something that isn't broke!

A pivot back to something important:

We've mentioned the phrase "faith promise" quite a bit throughout this manual. But let's re-explore this anchor of most A/G missions giving churches and see it again through fresh eyes.



CHAPTER 6

Understanding and communicating the nature of a faith promise.

(Note: This is a message we have adapted entitled "What Is Faith Promise Missions Giving?" by Charlie Ellison)

Text: 2 Corinthians 9:7 "Every man according as he purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver." —

I am very excited about our Faith Promise Mission Conference that begins this Wednesday night. All our hearts should be stirred and challenged as we realize that through our participation in Faith Promise Missions many in the world who have never once heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ will have this opportunity. God help us to reach out to the lost world.

Before we look at what Faith Promise Mission Giving is, let's first see what it is not.

- 1). It is not a pledge; it is a faith promise. A pledge is solely based on what you deem able to do through wise financial budgeting and even sacrifice. A faith promise is an amount the Lord lays on your heart and then enables you to fulfill. Of course, financial budgeting and sacrifice is involved, but the nature of the faith promise stretches your faith and requires God's help to fulfill. In other words, it requires both discipline on your part and dependency on God to do His part to fulfill your faith promise.
- 2). It is not something that someone will call on you to collect. (Note to pastor: Give instruction here as to how someone can fulfill their pledge through either online giving, once a month during a "Missions Sunday at your church, etc.)
- 3). It is not ever to be taken away from your tithes and offerings.

What is the Faith Promise?

1. It is between you and God. Practically speaking, the church will know the sum total of all faith

promises collected, but we treat your commitment as ultimately between you and God.

2. It is waiting before the Lord for His instructions as to what He wants you to give in reaching the world with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. It must be carried on by faith that God will supply for other things which arise as you proceed in giving what you promised Him. (II Cor. 9:7-8)

What is the Aim of the Faith Promise Plan?

- 1). Its aim is to never glorify individuals or organizations - Only Jesus Christ!
- 2). Its sole purpose is to support the work of world evangelism, which is commanded by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Mark 16:15)
- 3). It is designed to bring us into a closer and completely dependent attitude upon God and a more blessed fellowship with Him.

The Faith Promise Plan Is in Accord with the Spirit of the New Testament

1. It is Scriptural. According to 2Cor. 8 and 9, the Apostle Paul practiced it. He would ask the churches to promise a certain amount and give them an allotted time to get it together then would come to pick up their gifts using them in the establishing of churches and winning the lost for Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 16:2)
2. It makes giving a spiritual thing and establishes true consecration as the only valid basis for such giving. We "purpose" in our heart to give as the Lord speaks to us. This is the Biblical pattern for giving a faith promise. (II Cor. 8:4-5 and 9:7)
3. It is an act of absolute faith and trust in the Lord.
4. It provides funds for missionaries which otherwise might not be available. Take confidence from the fact that we strive to be a vibrant missions giving church who prays about every missionary we support and amount in which we support them.

How the Faith Promise Plan Is Carried Out

1. Sunday morning, following our missions convention, you will be asked to indicate, on a

special card provided, what amount you will give weekly or monthly for the next year.

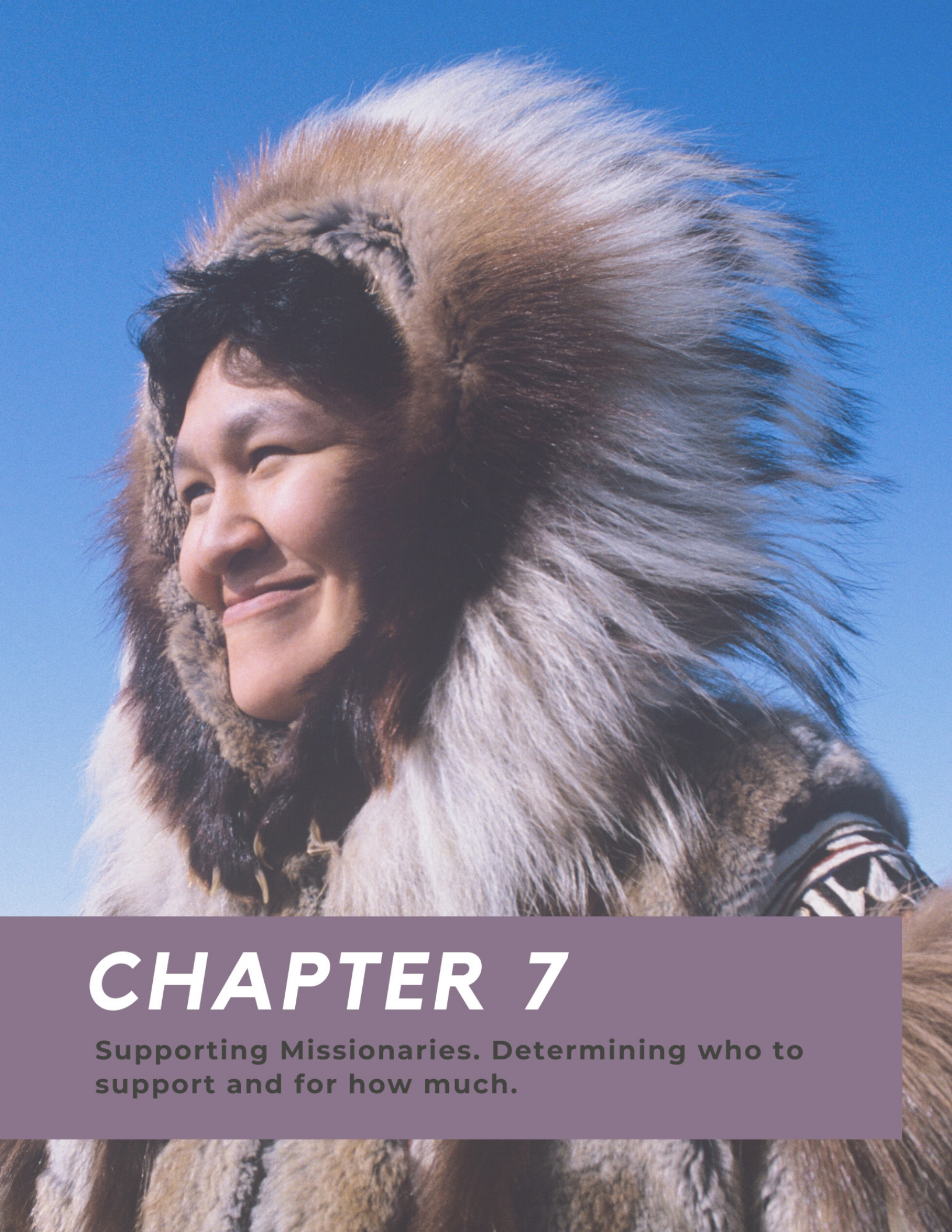
2. The money given through Faith Promise Missions will be recorded and the amount kept in a designated account.

3. The Faith Promise Missionary money can be placed in any offering plate during any service of the church and also online. However, it must be marked

“missions.” (Note: Pastor, specify these instructions again to your congregants)

Conclusion:

I trust that each of you will pray and ask what God would have you do or give to both increase our missionary giving and to increase your faith. Through your participation, many lost souls will be saved. Remember, faith promise giving is another expression of our obedience to Christ’s command to “make disciples of all people.”



CHAPTER 7

Supporting Missionaries. Determining who to support and for how much.

Once you have had a successful missions convention and now have faith promises in hand, the fun begins in determining who to support and how much. Here are some factors to keep in front of you when deciding the overall budget of your missions giving:

Strive to have a balanced approach in your giving—A powerful visual of missions in general is that of a large chain with many interlocking loops. On one end of the chain are missionaries who come in contact with the lost daily in some of the most extreme and unreached regions of the world. On the other end of the chain are missionaries who provide the vast amount of logistical and administrative support to their organizations. And between those two ends are people fulfilling their calling in so many expressions of missions that it would be impossible to list them all. However, it is important to note that every link in the chain is important and vital to the overall mandate of fulfilling the Great Commission. Try to spread out your missions giving along this spectrum.

However, also recognize your church's heart and passion—Understand that different missionaries will resonate with your heart and the heart of your church differently. For example, some churches seem to really get behind pioneering missionaries starting new works while others tend to give toward veteran missionaries. As you field requests from missionaries and get to know them, take note of which missionaries and how their respective assignments seem to naturally resonate in you the most. Don't exclude missionaries from other fields, of course. But do understand how certain missions contexts resonate differently within your church context. This will help you determine the kind of missionaries you bring in for your annual missions conventions, the kind of missions trips your church takes, and the allocation of your total missions dollars.

Geography—Many churches like to have an “even footprint” across all areas of the world. They support the same number of missionaries from each continent or region of the world.

World missions vs. home missions—Most churches try to make sure they are supporting stateside missionaries and world missionaries in equal fashion. This communicates that both are equal to the heart of God.

God things along the way—Always remain open to the Holy Spirit's leading when it comes to your missions giving. Who knows, you may bring a missionary in for a missions window and find the Holy Spirit challenging you to do something significant for them either with a large cash offering or an increased missions pledge. But you will always find that when God is in these kinds of moments that He is directing the heart of your people to be a part of a miracle for that missionary!

Determining how much to give:

This is a hard one as there really is no right or wrong answer. We've seen many different approaches:

The same amount for everyone—Some churches give the same amount to every missionary regardless of whether they are a home or foreign missionary and what their assignment is on the field. Usually, this is \$50-\$100 per month. Some churches do less, and some do more.

Differing amounts based on foreign and home missions—Their reasoning is because foreign missionaries have a larger monthly budget to raise.

Differing amounts based on fully appointed versus missionary associates—Again, the reason for the difference is based solely on the fact that fully appointed missionaries usually have a larger budget and tend to be on the field longer.

Different amounts based on the heart of your church—Some churches will give more to certain missionaries who resonate more with their own church’s passions and interests.

The Holy Spirit—Again, allow God to speak into this process!

Consider the following process when taking on missionaries for support:

1). Answer the phone when a missionary calls and find a “yes” to offer them! Pastors receive many calls from missionaries. This can be perceived as a slight inconvenience from time to time but understand that the local church is the launching pad for all of our missionaries. It isn’t a stretch to say, without pastors answering the phones, there would be no A/G missionary on the field today.

Furthermore, missionaries will tell you that they would far rather you answer the phone and tell them “no” or “not now” than to feel ignored. However, find the “yes” you can offer a missionary when they do call. If you can’t take them on for support, can you bring them in for a missions window even if it is months down the road? Can you offer to pray for them when they call? Could the Holy Spirit desire to speak a timely word of encouragement through you in even a brief conversation? Find a “yes” for every missionary!

2). Have a process in place to communicate to missionaries, and then execute it. Once you field the initial call from the missionary, what’s next? You may want to have a short questionnaire in place that every missionary fills out that you can present to your committee. Do you take missionaries on for support throughout the year, or do you only have one or two windows of time per year that you consider new requests? Whatever the process is, just communicate it clearly to the missionaries who do call. Work the process and either you, or a point person from your committee, follow up with each missionary.

3). Clearly communicate what you expect from the

missionaries you take on for support. How many newsletters would you like to receive each year? Would you like for each missionary to supply a short-personalized video for your church every other year?

Note: As you take on more missionaries, your inbox will fill up pretty quickly with missionary newsletters. Who will you forward these to and what is your expectation on that person communicating back to the missionary from time to time to acknowledge the work they are doing?



CHAPTER 8

Missionary care (how can we love, support, and pray for the missionaries we support).

(Note: content of this chapter adapted from material provided by missionary Dick Brogden, Live Dead Global Leader. Live dead exists to plant churches among unreached people groups through multinational teams—livedead.org)

The current system of missions requires missionaries to raise the support from numerous churches and individuals. It is not uncommon for missionaries to have between 150 and 200 supporters. This does mean a missionary has to maintain communication with a wide variety of friends, churches, and family. Missionary care then – to bless the missionary – should be supportive without being unduly demanding on their time and attention.

From a missionary perspective, here is a menu of options a supporting church can adopt that are helpful and a blessing to their supported missionaries.

1. Generalized Digital Communication

With the internet age, supporters and supporting churches can be invited to private Facebook pages for personal and ministry updates. Rather than the missionary having to write each supporter personally, each supporter can have an inside view of challenges and victories through the generalized communication – and back and forth comments there. Similarly, the missionary can go to the church Website or social media to stay in touch with developments and testimonies from the supporting church.

On special occasions and as requested, missionaries can make short 1 minute videos that are sent by what's app or messenger (often the easiest way to send video) to the church that are personalized for the congregation.

2. Monthly Prayer and Encouragement

Once a month a short email (two or three lines only) from the missions committee that reminds the missionary they are loved and prayed for

is encouraging. The email does not have to be answered by the missionary (remember missionaries get hundreds of emails that need attention and they struggle to find time to be with the lost), but it does reach out in love. The email can be as simple as this:

*Dear Rick and Jennifer,
We here at (Name of Church) love you.
This month of August, we are praying for you and Luke and Zack. You are not forgotten. If there is anything we can pray for, please let us know.
Much love,
Bob and Susan Smith
(Name of Church) Missions Committee*

Something like this simply reminds the missionaries they are loved and prayed for but does not require a response unless they have prayer needs. Missionaries can do their part too They can learn to keep a monthly list of prayer requests that I put on a digital sticky note on their computer. When asked, they can just cut and paste that list of requests into the return email. One missions committee has members write notes and prayers to missionaries as they pray together throughout the year. Then, over the course of the next year, when they feel prompted by the Holy Spirit, they send them.

3. The magic (09) number

In AGWM there is a provision to receive special personal offerings. There is a cap on this of \$13,000 a year. When the church sends an offering in to a missionary designated (09), this means the missionary can use it for whatever personal needs they desire without having to report on it or use it for ministry purposes. Whenever a church designates an offering (09) it is one of the kindest things that can be done for a missionary. Be ready to be kissed!

So what missionaries love (and what makes them

feel cared for) is when on a birthday, anniversary, Christmas, or special occasion they get an email from the church that says simply:

*Dear Jennifer, Happy birthday!
We put \$50 in your (09) account.
We love you,
Bob and Susan Smith
(Name of Church) Missions Committee*

Do something like this (occasionally) and the family will feel cared for. This may be the simplest and single most appreciated way that supporting churches show care for their missionaries.

4. Amazon Gift Cards

Another way to show practical care is through an electronic notice that you have given the missionary \$25 (or whatever amount) on an Amazon gift card. In the old days, churches used to send care packages. The digital age allows missionaries to purchase whatever they need online and send it to someone who is traveling to visit them. A generic gift card is nicer than a specific gift as it allows the missionary to get what is most needed.

5. Reaching out to children of missionaries.

Amazon gift cards are a nice gift for children of missionaries. Missionary Kids (MKs) or Third Culture Kids (TCKs) who have returned to college while their parents are on the field are often lonely. To have a church (on their birthday, or in August when books need to be bought) send an Amazon gift card or a cash offering is a huge encouragement and sign of care.

Remember, many missionary kids don't feel like they have a home church. Some generous churches take up the role of being a home church that scholarships these MK's in college. This rarely is a full scholarship, but your church can be the "home church" that provides a matching scholarship for certain Universities.

6. Helping returning missionaries settle when they come back for itineration

The two immediate needs that concern returning missionaries are a place to stay and a car. Some churches purchase a missionary home that they furnish and make available to missionaries for a year while they are on furlough. This is a tremendous way to show care. Missionaries can walk off the plane and into a fully furnished home with a fridge stocked full of groceries. If there is a useable min-van waiting in the driveway, even better – icing on the cake.

Missionaries can pay rent, and the rent can cover the mortgage, or if the church can subsidize the rent a little bit to lower costs for the missionary that is a further blessing. Other churches give \$700-\$1200 for a housing allowance for that year, providing for missionary housing without having to upkeep a missionary house.

Some supporters help in the purchase of a car by agreeing to buy back the car at the end of the furlough. For example, the church may have a member who sells used cars. He could offer the missionary a used car at a reduced price with the agreement that after the year he will buy back the car at 90% of what he sold it for. The pressure of having to sell a car at the end of furlough is lifted, they know they can drive the car to their last day, then drive to the lot and get 90% of their money back. This is a tremendous way to show care.

7. Tax Return and legal help

If there are accountants in the church who would be willing to volunteer their time to help missionaries file their tax returns, that is a tremendous way to care for missionaries. The work could be done pro bono, or at a reduced rate, or even at full charge, for just having someone competent and familiar with IRS rules for ministers and missionaries is a tremendous relief for missionaries.

Some missionaries might need help in drawing up a will. If the church has lawyers who could help

the families think through this and draw up the documents, that is a tremendous blessing.

8. Marketing and Mailing Assistance

Though print letters are increasingly a thing of the past in the digital age, some missionaries still send the occasional print letter. Offering to manage their mailing list, have your creative arts staff help design the missionary's newsletter, print pieces, digital design pieces, and even their prayer card would be a tremendous blessing.

Other missionaries might need to use the church address as their mailing address to receive packages or letters that they periodically collect.

9. Benevolent visits to the field when babies are born.

When a missionary has a baby on the field, the one family member usually most missed is the mother of the lady having the baby. Many families can't afford to travel overseas, if the church picked up the cost of the airline ticket for a mom to go help her daughter have a baby on the field, that is a huge message of care.

When you are visiting missionaries, taking them to a nice resort/hotel that their budget does not allow for is often a welcome treat.

10. Carrying gifts from families when you visit the missionaries on the field

Another kindness (especially when missionaries have young children) is to be the personalized UPS delivery person when you (or a team from the church) visit the missionaries on the field. If you solicit beforehand the addresses of family members of the missionaries, you can write them and say:

Dear Rick and Jennifer,

We are going to visit your son and daughter (brother, sister) in Morocco. We would love to take Christmas presents and Birthday presents to your

grandkids. Here is our church address.....if you UPS us gifts (attention Bob and Susan Smith, Missions Committee), we will collect them in a suitcase or two and deliver them to your family.

Much Love,

Bob and Susan Smith

The same thing can be done if you have a businessman in your church who travels internationally to the city where you have missionaries. If he can carry a suitcase of goodies and meet the family for a meal, praying with them, that is a messenger of care and love. You can ask the missionary in advance what is appreciated but usual requests are bacon, chocolate chips, magazines (Better Homes and Garden, Sports Illustrated), Ranch Dressing mix, Taco seasoning mix, Rotella for caso, seasoning packets, etc.

11. Paying for Counseling after crisis or trauma

Increasingly as missionaries deploy to dangerous and difficult places there is accumulated emotional toll. Occasionally there is more difficult trauma like rape, assault, prison, expulsion, or death. Insurance covers some counseling but there can be gaps. When missionaries need to come home for counseling or extended care, they sometimes are pressed financially to cover the needs. The church can take an offering to help pay for counseling. This is a very practical way to express care.

12. Personalized attention when missionaries visit your church.

Many missionaries comment on how thoughtful a gift basket in the hotel room is, making them feel welcome, providing some fruit, water, and snacks. A reminder of the schedule of the weekend (with a map to the church) is also much appreciated. Some missionaries like the privacy of a hotel, others miss having a home cooked Sunday meal at the pastors home, others miss staying with the pastor

or church people for the relational connection. Communicate with your visiting missionaries and ask them their honest preference—and honor their desires for lodging while with you.

Sometimes missionaries don't know the drill or lay of the land when they come to visit. A smiling couple to meet them at the door, help set up their table, walk them to the pastor's office, help them get the mic, make sure their audio/video needs are in place, assist them at their table after service, escort them to the different ministry assignments, and take them out to eat for lunch if the pastor or missions pastor is not available, is a great kindness.

One pastor has created a culture in their church that when missionaries are introduced to speak they get a standing ovation from the congregation. This affirmation can be healing as missionaries in many contexts are despised and their message is rejected over and over again. To be periodically in a setting where affirmation is showered on them (instead of hate, scorn, apathy, or hostility) is a huge encouragement.

When a missionary is finished speaking, ask them what their needs are, surround them, lay hands on them, and pray for them.

Conclusion:

It may be a good idea for the church to review the above, add their own thoughts, and create a checklist for hosting missionaries and blessing them in extra ways throughout the year. You could even survey missionaries and ask them which ones would be beneficial to them. Different missionaries have different needs and may be too shy to ask for help or even know the church has the capacity and willingness to help.