CHAPTER 7

SEND

Providing members with opportunities to hear and respond to God's call to vocational mission service.

Many Christians have a stereotype of missionaries as people who have superior skills and spirituality. In reality, missionaries are very ordinary people who have responded to God's extraordinary call. As we pray, learn, give, and go in response to the Acts 1:8 Challenge, the Holy Spirit often speaks to our hearts in specific ways. Sometimes we are sent on a Great Commission assignment as a result of the Spirit's activity in our lives.

NAMB and IMB define "missionary" as "a person who, in response to God's call and gifting, leaves his or her comfort zone and crosses cultural, geographic, or other barriers to proclaim the gospel and live out a Christian witness in obedience to the Great Commission."

Missionary assignments come in various shapes, sizes, and dimensions. Being "sent" into the harvest field is an exciting and rewarding experience. In many instances, missionaries are engaging people with the gospel in vocational roles such as teachers, farmers, engineers, and medical professionals. In some parts of the world, Christian workers must use creative approaches to gain entry into countries.

God has a great history of using simple, ordinary people in reaching others with the gospel. Making yourself available is the first step in being sent on a Great Commission assignment. Typically, God calls and sends those who are faithfully serving where they are planted. As we continue to be obedient in our service, the Lord opens doors of mission opportunity along the way. Our willingness to say "yes" to these opportunities is another important step in being sent. Once this happens, we are ready to become involved in one of life's greatest adventures.

It is an occasion for great celebration when someone is called from a local church to be sent out as a missionary. It should be one of the highlights in a church's history to have missionaries called and sent from their midst. That is New Testament Christianity revisited (see Acts 13:1-3).

Being sent by the Lord on a mission assignment may involve specific, short-term volunteer service. It also may involve becoming a vocational or career missionary. People from all walks of life-students, professionals, and retirees-find themselves being sent as missionaries. There are several opportunities for specific mission service in the four Acts 1:8 Challenge harvest fields. In each case, the assignment involves contributing to the process of evangelization and the establishment of new churches upon sound doctrine.

What follows are some of the opportunities and contact information available for this dynamic kingdom response. Create a file in which you place brochures, articles, business cards, Web site addresses, and other informational items about these opportunities. Assist and encourage individuals who are seeking to invest their time in mission endeavors to look through the file for ideas and information on how they may serve.

Sending to Samaria

For information on serving with NAMB, call 1 800 462-8657, e-mail call@namb.net, *or visit* www.answerthecall.net.

- Career missionaries are individuals who have answered a call to full-time vocational ministry. The missionary candidate must have a sense of call into mission service, possess adequate training and experience, and meet NAMB missionary policy and guidelines. This pathway is for a full-time worker, jointly appointed and supported by NAMB, the state convention, local association, and partnering churches. Career missionaries engage in evangelism, church planting, church and community ministries, and special ministries.

- US/C2 missionaries are college graduates who serve two years under joint appointment with the NAMB, state conventions, and associations. Students serve in areas such as church planting, church and community ministry, and resort ministries. In the case of couples, one or both may be considered as the primary worker.

- Nehemiah church planters are individuals who have been trained at a Southern Baptist seminary, have completed a short-term student internship while in school, and are jointly appointed by NAMB, the state convention, and association to plant one church or multiple congregations.

- Mission Service Corps (MSC) missionaries are self-funded missionaries who serve for four months or more. They work in an assigned ministry that supports the evangelism and church planting efforts of NAMB and its mission partners. MSC missionaries serve full time (an average of 20 hours per week) in their mission assignments.

- Summer and Semester Missionaries are students who have completed their freshman year in college. These students serve four to 10 weeks or one to five semesters assisting local churches, campus ministries, and NAMB missionaries with evangelism and church planting. They receive travel, stipend, and insurance from NAMB. Room and board are provided by the place of service.

- Innovators are self-funded college missionaries who have completed their freshman year in college. They work at secular jobs while assisting local missionaries and churches in evangelism and church planting. The term of service varies according to the ministry setting.

- Sojourners are high school students who have completed their junior year of high school. They work with missionaries and churches in evangelism and church planting projects in the United States and Canada. They receive travel and insurance from NAMB. Room and board is provided by the place of service.

Sending to the Ends of the Earth

For information on serving with the IMB, call the Initial Contact Coordinators at 1 888 422-6461, visit http://going.imb.org, *or e-mail* initial.contacts@imb.org.

- Career missionaries are the foundation of the IMB's mission efforts. They invest a lifetime in cross-cultural evangelism, church development, and church planting movements. They are skilled at using their professional, technical, and ministerial skills for sharing the gospel and leading the lost to Christ.

- Apprentice: All long-term international missionaries will serve an initial three-year term as missionary apprentices. Apprentices who are successful at learning the language, adapting to the culture, and the evangelism church planting team may become eligible to be reclassified to one of two long-term categories: career missionaries or missionary associates.

- Missionary associates are appointed to a four-year term (often renewable). This is an alternative to career for experienced individuals over age 30 who are called and gifted by God, but who do not meet career qualifications due to age, education, or personal preference to serve only one year.

- Journeyman missionaries are single, "twenty-something," college graduates, who desire to be on mission with God. These young adults must be willing to commit to a two-year assignment under God's leadership with a heart for evangelism that results in indigenous churches. For more information, visit *http://www.go2years.com/*.

- International Service Corps missionaries are at least 21 years of age and must also have education and experience that meet the field requirements. These men and women serve alongside career missionaries in a variety of assignments around the world. They are singles, couples, and young families who are willing to make a two- to three-year commitment and who desire to make an eternal impact on an ever-changing world. For more information, visit *http://www.go2years.com/*.

- Masters Program missionaries are individuals who are 50 years of age and older and are available to make a two- to three-year commitment to serve overseas, using the maturity, skills, and experience they have gained over a lifetime. For more information, visit *http:www.go2years.com/*.

The following questions will help you determine how your church currently helps people respond to God's call to career missions, as well as help you consider ways to improve that response.

"SEND" WORKSHEET

We present the overwhelming need for missionaries and encourage individuals to respond to career missions.

Ways we do this include: _____

_____

_____

Ways we could do this better include: (missionary speakers, share up-to-date mission needs, and statistics, etc.) _____

_____

_____

We offer opportunities for individuals to share their call to missions and affirm them in doing so.

Ways we do this include: _____

_____

_____

Ways we could do this better include: (testimony opportunities, attending/hosting commissioning services, etc.) _____

_____

We offer counsel and help to those people exploring career missions.

Ways we do this include: _____

_____

Ways we could do this better include: (identify spiritual gifts, formal career counseling, etc.) _____

_____

_____

Information is made available on the various pathways for service through NAMB and the IMB.

Ways we do this include: _____

_____

_____

Ways we could do this better include: (providing Web site and other contact information, making brochures and other printed material available, etc.) _____

_____

_____