



FOUNDATIONS
COMPANION GUIDE



INTERNATIONAL
MISSION BOARD



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INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

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Preface

AN OVERVIEW OF THE
FOUNDATIONS COMPANION GUIDE

PREFACE

A Message from the International Mission Board

We believe the biblical, theological foundations of missions are critical not only for missionaries, but also for the churches who send and support them. In view of Christ's command to make disciples among all the nations, pastors and members of churches alike need to know who missionaries are, what missionaries do, why the church must send missionaries, and how the church can help them succeed.

Consequently, we offer these foundations in hope that they will help not only missionaries but also pastors and church members play their God-given part in seeing the gospel of Christ known, the grace of Christ enjoyed, and the glory of Christ exalted among the nations, particularly among the billions of men, women, and children who have never heard His name. —*Foundations*, p. 5.



THANK YOU

FOR PICKING UP THE *FOUNDATIONS COMPANION GUIDE!*

The *Foundations Companion Guide* was created in response to requests from our Southern Baptist churches for a supplemental resource to accompany *Foundations*. This companion guide assumes that you've read, or are currently reading, *Foundations*.

The primary purpose of the companion guide is to help pastors, leaders, and church members learn how the principles of *Foundations* apply not only to International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries and overseas work, but also to their own congregations and communities as we reach the nations, together.

The *Foundations Companion Guide* is designed to help pastors and church members:

- Understand how *Foundations* informs what the International Mission Board does globally and how the local church can also be active in the six components of the missionary task locally.
- Reflect with others on and apply *Foundations* principles and concepts in action steps locally and globally.
- Gain and use a common vocabulary to assist in praying for and strengthening partnerships with IMB missionary teams.
- Focus on three components of the missionary task and create active practices or habits based upon Scripture to grow in the six marks of a transformed disciple, develop leaders, and cultivate the characteristics of a healthy church.

Our desire for this companion guide is to support pastors and church members as you serve alongside IMB missionaries and your overseas partners and play your God-given part in seeing the gospel of Christ known, the grace of Christ enjoyed, and the glory of Christ exalted among the nations (*Foundations*, p. 5). We also hope this companion guide will support local church leaders and members as you pray for your overseas missionaries and partner with the IMB and IMB missionary teams.

This guide is designed for you to work through slowly, taking time to pause, reflect, and plan next steps. It's not really about discussion without reflection or reflection without prayerful next steps and actions. We recommend working through the companion guide's eight lessons with another church member or a small group of members from your church.

OVERVIEW

Foundations Companion Guide

Each lesson will guide you through four parts:

1. **READ & LEARN:** This content-heavy portion expands upon principles or concepts you read about in *Foundations*.
2. **REFLECT & CHANGE:** This section transitions you into considering how the content of *Foundations* might be applied and implemented in your local church context. You'll reflect on strengths, challenges, and opportunities for your church and your church's partnership efforts with stateside and overseas congregations and missionaries—and how to further strengthen those connections.
3. **GO & DO:** In this section, you'll be invited to take small, yet specific steps toward application of the lesson content.
4. **PRAY:** At the end of each lesson, you'll be given prompts to guide you in a time of prayer.

You will notice how the “Reflect & Change” and “Go & Do” sections are divided into two categories:

1. For pastors/leaders
2. For everyone (for anyone in the church, including pastors and leaders)

The eight lessons of the companion guide do not cover every topic addressed in *Foundations*, but will periodically point you back to portions of *Foundations* for reflection and review, so we recommend keeping a copy of *Foundations* nearby. You may purchase a printed copy or download a free digital copy at the [IMB Store](#).

To access more *Foundations* resources or to talk with someone from the International Mission Board, visit imb.org or email us at info@imb.org.



Lesson 1:

Who We Are & What We Do

DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST SERVING
SOUTHERN BAPTISTS IN CARRYING
OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO



STORY

Some local believers and a missionary team partnered with a volunteer team from a church in the U.S. to look for new villages of an unreached people group. They looked for hours without success. Unsure of where to go next, they stopped and prayed. As they traveled down a dirt road, they saw a young woman wearing a bright yellow shirt from the volunteer team's state. They stopped to talk with her and learned she was from the people group they were seeking. Not only that, her husband was the village leader and invited them into the village where they spent the rest of the day making new friends and sharing the gospel.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Identify and explain who the IMB is and what the IMB does.
- Understand how the IMB relates to the local church.

INTRODUCTION

After meeting someone, we often ask, "What do you do?" We don't usually ask, "Why do you exist?" However, let's start with why the IMB exists and then consider who the IMB is and what the IMB does.

"God is our supreme passion and His glory is our ultimate motivation...We urgently need to capture the centrality of glorifying God in our lives and work."

(FOUNDATIONS, P. 35-36)

Why does the IMB exist? The mission of the IMB is to serve Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. And our vision is expressed in Revelation 7:9, where we read of a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, knowing and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every IMB missionary is sent out as a member of a local Southern Baptist church in North America. At the most basic level, an IMB missionary is a “sent one” who goes out from a Southern Baptist church in the power of the Spirit as a representative of Christ. The **Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®** and **The Cooperative Program** fund the work of the IMB and those sent out from our churches as we seek to make disciples of all nations.

 **READ & LEARN**

WHO WE ARE

Fundamentally, the IMB consists of disciples of Jesus Christ. We need to grow as disciples of Jesus through faithfulness to Christ and to the church.

Faithfulness to Christ | Effective gospel missionaries must walk faithfully with Jesus Christ, abiding in Him and growing as His disciples. Abiding in Christ is necessary for our personal lives as disciples and for our strategic effectiveness as missionaries.

Faithfulness to the Church | Every IMB missionary needs to be disciplined, examined, affirmed, and sent by a local Southern Baptist church in North America. We believe God uses the local church to disciple believers, to discern their giftings and callings, to train potential cross-cultural missionaries in the basics of Christian evangelism and discipleship, to assess their readiness for service, and to send them out to the nations (Ephesians 3:10).

Ideally, all who serve overseas should maintain a relationship of accountability and partnership with their sending church. Not all churches understand how to send missionaries or to partner well with them, so the IMB recognizes our responsibility to provide training to churches in missionary sending and support.

On the missionary field, IMB missionaries need active involvement in a local church, even as they seek to multiply new churches (Hebrews 10:24–25). This local church involvement can and will take a variety of forms, but should always demonstrate alignment with the theology, ecclesiology, and missiology of the churches they are planting. Whatever the form, no believer is above the need for involvement in a local church.

WHAT WE DO

The IMB exists to serve Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:16–20).

We will glorify God through:

- Biblical Faithfulness
- Fervent Prayer
- Walking in the Spirit
- Proclaiming the Gospel and Making Disciples
- Advancing the Church

We also work alongside other evangelical missionary organizations and evangelical churches who are committed to the gospel, engaged in global evangelization, and focused on making disciples and multiplying churches among those who need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

We work as teams, wisely stewarding the resources God has given us for the missionary task.

The IMB is committed to doing missions in teams. Missionaries need the fellowship, encouragement, and accountability that come with the presence of co-laborers, and it is unwise to go without it.

The IMB provides necessary training and support to every IMB missionary so they can fulfill their unique role with excellence and diligence (1 Corinthians 15:58).

GOD’S GLORY MOTIVATES OUR MISSION

As we play our parts on missionary teams and steward our resources, we do so because God is holy, majestic, exalted, and worthy of the praise of everyone and everything He created (Psalm 145:3). He is the sovereign ruler (Psalm 115:3) and judge of all creation (Psalm 50:6). All people everywhere are accountable to Him for every thought, word, and deed, and His justice is absolute. No evil, no sin, and no impurity can stand before Him.

We believe that God now commands all people everywhere to repent of their rebellion against Him and to trust in Jesus alone to save them and to rule over their lives (Acts 17:30). All who put their trust in Jesus are saved, but all who do not put their trust in Jesus are justly judged for their sins (John 3:16–18). There is no other means of salvation. We are convinced from Scripture that people must receive, understand, and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to be saved (Acts 4:12).



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: As it pertains to your own life and work or ministry:

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- Where does the local church fit into your life and identity?

For everyone: As you read through this portion of *Foundations*, do you notice how much of “who we are” and “what we do” at the IMB relates to and is a part of the ministry of the local church? Make a short list of what is the same and what is different.

SAME	DIFFERENT

For pastors/leaders: The IMB is not the only sending agency, but the IMB has a part or role to play in the Great Commission. The IMB pursues like-minded partners as it seeks to fulfill its mission. Besides your local church, make a list of other like-minded churches in your area. How might your church pray for other churches? Check with your Baptist association for a list of SBC churches in your area.



GO & DO

For everyone: Take a few moments to explore imb.org, giving special attention to the Pray, Give, Go, and Resources tabs on the website. Make a plan to tell someone in your local church who the IMB is and what the IMB does. As you explain, emphasize the similarities and differences the IMB has with local church life. Consider inviting them to join you as you read through *Foundations* using this companion guide.



PRAY

- Pray for everyone involved and affiliated with the IMB, for your local church, and for yourself—that faithfulness to Christ and His Church would mark everything we do.
- Pray the IMB would wisely and diligently steward its resources. Pray for the formation, protection, and fruitfulness of IMB missionary teams across the world.
- Pray God would continue to receive the glory as men, women, and children from around the world put their trust in Christ.
- Pray for your own church to fulfill its role in the Great Commission.

A large, leafy tree in silhouette against a sunset sky, with a village in the background. The tree is the central focus, with its branches spreading across the upper half of the frame. The sky is a mix of orange and pink, suggesting dusk. In the background, several traditional houses with conical roofs are visible, along with a few people standing in the distance. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Lesson 2:

The Purpose of Foundations for the IMB & Local Churches

**APPLICATION FOR LOCAL
CHURCH LIFE AND MINISTRY**

THE PURPOSE OF FOUNDATIONS FOR THE IMB & LOCAL CHURCHES



STORY

Although Foundations was created with the work of the IMB in mind, it contains many helpful principles that are useful in local churches as they seek to be and make disciples in the context of healthy reproducing churches. Foundations can also be a resource to give strategic direction to local churches sending mature disciples and partnering with IMB missionary teams.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Understand the purpose of *Foundations* and reflect upon similar guiding principles or convictions for local church ministry.

INTRODUCTION

For the IMB, the Scriptures are always our final authority and guide as we seek to serve Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission. *Foundations* is not to replace the Bible as our final authority, but rather to explain and clarify the missionary convictions and practices of the IMB. Rooted in the Bible, *Foundations* is to guide the stewardship, strategies, methods, tools, and decision-making of the IMB as it seeks to fulfill its Revelation 7:9 vision.



READ & LEARN

*“The word of God is our ultimate, controlling authority”
(FOUNDATIONS, P. 38).*

Foundations is not a new approach! Much of *Foundations* represents a consensus of convictions within the IMB and our attempts as an organization to answer critical questions that missionaries have asked for centuries. It defines our understanding of the specific role we should play within the broad spectrum of good things that Christians can do in the world, and is intended to encourage, strengthen, and bless the missionaries of the IMB.

Review the following six purposes of *Foundations*:

01

To Articulate

in clear terms our understanding of missionary identity and the missionary task to ourselves, to the churches that support us, and to the larger evangelical missions community.

02

To Enable

prospective missionaries and the IMB to know if the organization is a good fit for them.

03

To Shape

the training we give our missionaries and our supporting churches.

04

To Guide

strategic planning and decision-making.

05

To Define

the parameters of our stewardship of resources.

06

To Provide

the criteria for creating, evaluating, and strengthening strategies and tools for the missionary task.

Foundations is also consistent with the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* and is not intended to replace it. *Foundations* helps the IMB clarify its missionary convictions and practices.

*“In our church planting and teaching ministries, we will seek to lay a foundation of beliefs and practices that are consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000...”
(FOUNDATIONS, P. 78).*



REFLECT & CHANGE

While *Foundations* was not written for local churches, there is much that applies to local church life and ministry.

For everyone: What is your church’s mission statement? Or, asked another way: What purpose statement guides the life and practice of your local church? Gather together with at least one other church member and take a look at your church’s mission or purpose statement. Reflect upon how you fit into that statement. If you’re not sure, ask your church leaders to help as you reflect.

For everyone: How might you use *Foundations* to encourage your church to pray for and support IMB missionaries?

For pastors/leaders: How does your local church evaluate its life and ministry? Do you have guiding principles from Scripture that help you steward money, time, people's gifts and talents, and other resources? Who might help you make any needed adjustments or updates to those guiding principles?

 **GO & DO**

For everyone: Take a look at the Contents page in *Foundations*. With the purpose of *Foundations* in mind, highlight or list a few sections or topics of particular interest, and make a plan to dig deeper into these.

For pastors/leaders: In the next week, prayerfully review and clarify the purposes of your local church.

 **PRAY**

- Pray *Foundations* would continue to bring clarity and foster unity among IMB staff, IMB missionaries, and local churches.



Lesson 3:

The Six Components of the Missionary Task

CHURCH ENGAGEMENT AND
STRATEGY LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS

THE SIX COMPONENTS OF THE MISSIONARY TASK



STORY

IMB missionary teams seek to prioritize the missionary task as detailed in the section of Foundations: “The Missionary Task” (p. 93–121). A careful look at the six components of the missionary task shows us how local churches are also engaged in the components. Some churches are already using the six components to help shape the strategic ministry priorities of their church and IMB missionary teams overseas.

LESSON OUTCOMES

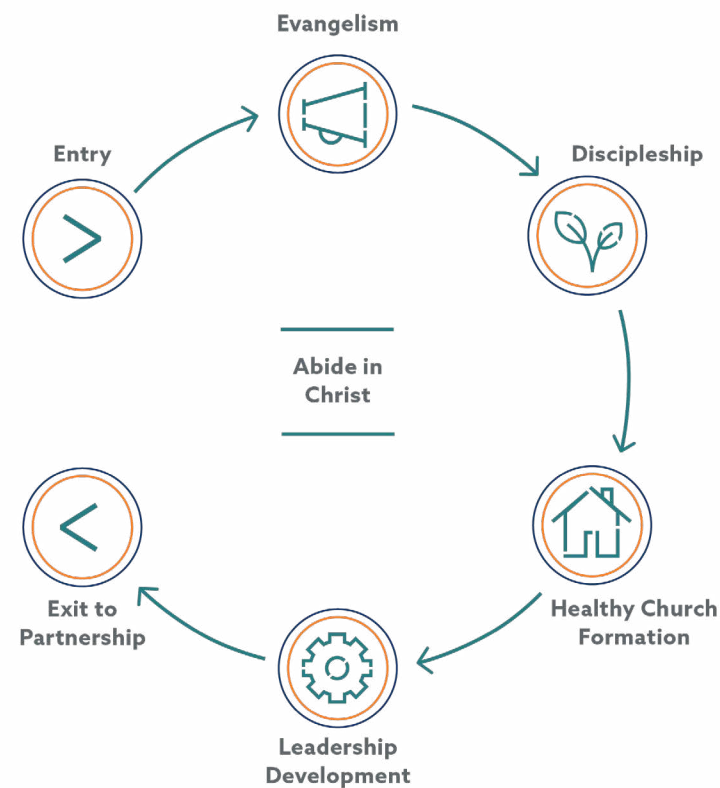
- Review the six components of the missionary task.
- Recognize how these six components overlap and are not always sequential.
- Reflect on how faithful Christians might look at their own ministries through the lens of these six components.

INTRODUCTION

We often think of the missionary task as evangelism alone or maybe evangelism and discipleship. We see in *Foundations*, and it’s supported by Scripture, how the missionary task has at least six components. We must not think of these six components as a chronological sequence of steps or stages in which one component is completely finished before the next can begin. Instead, effective missionary teams will usually find themselves addressing and readdressing several components at a time over the course of their time overseas.

READ & LEARN

The six components of the missionary task are listed below with brief notes. Please review the explanations for each component in *Foundations* on pages 93–121. As you review, consider which ministries of your church and your life fit into each of the six components. Reflect also upon your church’s missionary partners—local and global. How do the six components describe their ministries?



Prayer must permeate every aspect of the missionary task. It is not a separate component of the task, but rather an essential element in every part.

- **ENTRY:** In order to carry out the missionary task, we must have access to people who need to hear the gospel. This part of the task includes four elements: research, presence, identity, and communication ability.

- **EVANGELISM:** Evangelism is the responsibility of every follower of Jesus. Make sure evangelism is tied to discipleship; those who believe in the gospel should immediately receive training and encouragement to share the gospel with others.
- **DISCIPLESHIP:** The Word of God is essential to discipleship. Discipleship is more than the transmission of information; it is the transformation of every area of life. Discipleship that does not lead to the obedience of faith is not biblical discipleship.
- **HEALTHY CHURCH FORMATION:** The 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church are not a checklist for exit to partnership, but rather a summary of what a sustainable church should be.
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** Leadership development should have a strong connection to the life of a local church. One of the measures of completion of the missionary task is the development of those who can train other leaders and even systems for training those trainers within the churches in a given people group or place.
- **EXIT TO PARTNERSHIP:** Our goal is to complete the missionary task in each people group or place and then to exit with the new churches from that place or people as our partners in the ongoing task of global evangelism.

REMEMBER: A missionary team (or local church) is never really finished with evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and healthy church formation. Even after exiting, a missionary team continues to partner with, encourage, and develop leaders from afar, checking in from time to time to continue promoting healthy, local church doctrine and practices. IMB missionaries focus on various components at the same time.

REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: Have you ever met someone who is particularly effective in carrying out all six components? How might a team of people be more effective than an individual at the six components? Can you see how a missionary team might need to give special attention to several components at one time?

For everyone: Pause to reflect on how your local church is involved in these six components. Consider how these components may look in a variety of ministries within your church or your church’s mission partnerships. Which components are a strength of your local church? Where is more development needed?

For everyone: While the specific context will look different, how can these six components of the missionary task be present in every church and every Christ follower’s life—not just the IMB missionary team’s life?

 **GO & DO**

For everyone: Since later lessons of the companion guide will dive deeper into discipleship, church formation, and leadership development, this week we want to challenge you to think more carefully through the remaining three components: **Entry, Evangelism, and Exit to Partnership**. We also encourage you to consider this a group activity to be completed with other members in your church. This is a chance to get others excited about using *Foundations* and the six components to grow in faithfulness.

If you or your church would like further resources or training, please contact your Associational Mission Strategist (or Director of Missions) for your Baptist association or state convention.

- **ENTRY:** Prayerfully choose a person, neighborhood, or meeting place to enter with gospel purposefulness. Then, recruit a partner(s) and go meet people in this area. Listen to them. Learn about them. Make plans to visit or meet them again. If you need more Entry resources, contact us at info@imb.org.

- **EVANGELISM:** Who in your life needs to hear the gospel right now? Come up with a practical plan to share with them this week. Recruit a partner(s) to pray for you as you share the gospel with them. Do you need to refresh your gospel-sharing skills? How can you do that? Could you ask someone to join you as you share the gospel?

- **EXIT TO PARTNERSHIP:** Think about some of your current ministry activities. Who else might you train or involve now to “carry on” if you have to exit due to illness, relocation, or for another reason? Prayerfully include others in at least one ministry, training them, encouraging them, and sharing responsibility as you partner with them in reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

For everyone: In order to assess your understanding and application of the six components, see how many of them you can write down from memory (order is not important). Then consider how you might go about explaining them to a five-year-old.

For pastors/leaders: Make a plan with steps to reach out to people and resources who could help your church grow in one or two of the six components. Take the first step in the next seven to ten days.

OPTIONAL | For everyone: The New Testament, and particularly the history of the early Church as relayed in the Book of Acts, is one of the most helpful resources we have for seeing how the six components of the missionary task can be faithfully pursued and applied in a variety of contexts. Read Acts 20 with at least one other person, and then discuss the following:

1. How many of the six components can you find in Acts 20 (components that are either being referred to or are actually being carried out)?
2. Do these components appear in any particular “order”?
3. Are there things Paul says or does that surprise you? Does he say or do things that challenge your current understanding of the six components and how they should be carried out?
4. What does this passage tell us about the ministry activities Paul and his companions wanted the elders to prioritize?
5. What does this passage tell us about Paul’s ministry among the Ephesian believers? Refer to Acts 18–19 if needed.
6. What can we apply from Acts 20 that will help us encourage our ministry teams and churches to greater faithfulness in the missionary task?
7. What are other books or passages in the New Testament where we see the apostles and others involved in the six components?



PRAY

- Think about the missionaries your church serves and supports. Which of the six component(s) are they and their team currently prioritizing? Pray for them as they engage in those components.
- If you’ve talked with your missionaries lately, do they feel stuck on any of the six components in particular or are they struggling with any particular aspect of the missionary task? Pray through those struggles, and ask the Lord to give them success and help in those areas.



Lesson 4:

Convictions & Values

CORE CONVICTIONS
CORE VALUES
MISSIOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS

CORE CONVICTIONS, CORE VALUES, & MISSIOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS



STORY

People and local churches have values and convictions. Sometimes these are stated clearly. Sometimes they are assumed. In Foundations, the IMB chose to state explicitly our core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions. Many of these values and convictions were already part of our IMB mindset and practice. Now, they are clearly stated and we can remind one another of them and align with them more consistently. Many of our IMB core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions might serve to guide local church ministry as well as our IMB efforts.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Reflect upon the IMB's core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions. Then, engage in prayerful self-assessment asking God to show you areas where you need to grow and develop. Share that insight with a prayer partner and plan personal development steps in that area(s).

INTRODUCTION

We discussed earlier the answer to who the IMB is and what the IMB does, focusing on the mission and vision of the IMB and essentially answering the question, "Why do we exist?" Now, taking this a step further: how will we display this mission to the world?

Reflecting on this question brings us to the core of our organization or our churches and to the beliefs and convictions we value. Our core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions continue to establish the foundation of who we are and what we do as they guide us to **how** we will operate.



READ & LEARN

Below, you will find a summary of the core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions from *Foundations*. To read these sections in their entirety, go to pages 33–61 in *Foundations*.

Core Convictions

We will glorify God through:

BIBLICAL FAITHFULNESS

- 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is God-breathed...”
- The Bible is true, clear, sufficient, and authoritative.
- Our strategies and tactics must be derived from the principles of Scripture; and every teaching, method, and result must be evaluated based upon the principles of Scripture.

FERVENT PRAYER

- Prayer is central to all our strategies, and it must permeate through all of our work.
- We are unashamedly supernaturalist in our worldview, and we believe God works supernaturally through our praying.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

- Apart from the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, there can be no Christian life and no Christian ministry or mission.
- Since the Spirit who inspired the words of the Bible will never guide anyone to believe or do anything contrary to the Bible, we look to the Holy Spirit for guidance in the many areas of life where the teaching of Scripture gives general parameters/principles but no specific commands/instructions.

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL AND MAKING DISCIPLES

- Salvation from sin is the greatest need of every human being, and given the heavy realities of sin and judgment, we must be unapologetically evangelistic.
- Biblical evangelism should not just result in converts; it should lead to disciples—lifelong learners/followers of Jesus. It leads to the six transformations of a disciple.

ADVANCING THE CHURCH

- Making disciples means planting healthy churches.
- Although a number of different settings can contribute to a believer’s spiritual growth, the full measure of biblical discipleship and maturity happens in a local church.
- Four missiology implications:
 1. First, since missionaries themselves are disciples of Jesus who cross barriers to make disciples for Jesus, missionary training should be rooted in healthy local churches.
 2. Second, when we make disciples where there are no churches, the task necessarily includes church planting.
 3. Third, the most effective way to advance the gospel into the unreached world is to multiply churches that multiply churches.
 4. And fourth, discipleship requires churches in which each part, each member, works properly, so our aim must be healthy churches that exhibit the characteristics of a biblical church as soon as possible.

Core Values

As maturing disciples, we will work together with:

HUMILITY

- We will strive to mirror the humility of Jesus in everything:
 - + 1 Peter 5:5: “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”
 - + Philippians 2:3: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”
 - + Philippians 2:8: “And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

ACCOUNTABILITY

- To God, His Word, and other believers
- Organizationally and individually

INTEGRITY

- Honest, pure, upright behavior that should characterize the disciples of Jesus
- Pursuing holiness in every area of life and in everything we do

TRANSPARENCY

- Honesty fosters trust among co-workers and partners.
- Striving for clear, direct, simple communication where possible; only keeping information confidential when needed

SENSITIVITY (RACIAL, GENDER, CROSS-CULTURAL, ETC.)

- We are to love one another as Christ has loved us, and seek to love others well and build them up in our speech and other forms of communication—for the glory of God.
- Cultivating an atmosphere of respect and understanding in cross-cultural, multicultural ministry and rejecting any forms of racism or attitudes of cultural superiority

Missiological Convictions

We are committed to biblical contextualization and indigenization.

- **FOR THE MISSIONARY WORKER:** Our goal is to become acceptable outsiders, yet never give the impression we have compromised the gospel by adopting local practices/attitudes that violate Scriptural principles/teachings.
- **FOR THE GOSPEL MESSAGE:** We can and should use a variety of learning styles, communication genres, and media to communicate the message of the gospel (and these should match what is familiar to our host people when possible). Use appropriate spiritual language from the local language as able, but never downplay the gospel’s central doctrines—especially when they contradict local religion and cause offense to non-Christians.
- **FOR THE CHURCH:** The church should look, sound, and feel local, not foreign. Pursue all 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church.
- **CLASSICAL PRINCIPLES OF INDIGENEITY:** Self-governing/led, self-financed, self-propagating, self-theologizing

Our priority is reaching unreached people groups and places with the gospel.

- Distinction between missions’ focus (bringing the gospel to those

with no access to it) and local church evangelism (carrying on gospel work where churches already exist)

- We want to encourage local churches in other countries in their evangelism and church planting efforts, and avoid doing for them what God has assigned and empowered them to do. Where needed, we will help plant churches and develop leadership who can then continue this work after us in our absence.

We set goals for ourselves and not for God.

- God gives the growth in His own timing, but we can and should set goals for our own activities in entry, evangelism, discipleship, healthy church formation, leadership development, and exit to partnership.
- Labor intentionally, prayerfully, boldly, and expectantly for the fruit only God can bring about.



REFLECT & CHANGE

Oftentimes convictions and values are mostly assumed by everyone. Creating a list of our core values and convictions provides us with regular reminders of what we assume. Sometimes lists can be dry and uninspiring, however, lists can also be a way to prompt us to pray and can remind us of who we are and what we stand for in times of crisis or confusion.

For everyone: Why do these convictions and values matter, and how do they fit into the missionary task components? For example, one of our missiological convictions is: *Our priority is reaching unreached people groups and places with the gospel.* How does this fit with the “Leadership Development” and “Healthy Church Formation” components of the missionary task?

For everyone: Do any of these convictions and values seem unique to IMB work and not applicable to the ministry of the local church? Which ones? What convictions or values does your church have that are not included in the *Foundations* list above?

For everyone: At the IMB, we set goals for ourselves and not for God. Grab a partner and talk about the difference between setting goals for ourselves and setting goals for God. For example: in evangelism, we can set goals for ourselves to have gospel conversations every week, but only God can bring conversion.

 **GO & DO**

For everyone: Thoughtfully read through the core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions. Complete a brief self-assessment asking God to show you areas where you need to grow and develop. Share that insight with a prayer partner and plan personal development steps in one or, at most, two areas.

For pastors/leaders: Review the “core values and convictions” of your local church. Talk with other staff and leadership about them. If they need adjusting, make a plan to do that. If they need to be communicated again, take steps this week to remind your church of your core convictions. Or take steps to communicate to your church what the IMB’s core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions are and how they align with your church’s vision and values.

 **PRAY**

- Pray with a partner through the self-assessment you created in the “Go & Do” section, and continue in prayer as you take those next steps.
- Pray you would set goals for yourself and not for God. If you have held God “accountable” to a goal you set for yourself or God, confess that now and turn again in humble trust to Him.



Lesson 5:

Six Marks of a Transformed Disciple

EXPLORING SIX MARKS OF TRANSFORMATION IN CHRIST

SIX MARKS OF A TRANSFORMED DISCIPLE



STORY

Abner and Sarala* are currently living in a global city making disciples among unreached peoples as part of a growing church that is intentional about reaching all the peoples in their city. Abner and Sarala first learned to be and make disciples as part of a healthy church in the U.S.*

While in the U.S., they saw themselves as disciples sent to their workplaces and were faithful and fruitful ambassadors of Christ. Their local church came alongside them, trained them, prayed for them, and encouraged them when they were making disciples at work and in their neighborhoods. Abner and Sarala shared the gospel with their neighbors and co-workers, and then discipled new believers in relational ways that connected them to the local church.

Although Abner and Sarala now live far away from their U.S. church where they first learned and practiced discipleship, by God's grace they are able to still partner with their sending church. Using the discipleship processes and marks they developed alongside their sending church, Christ continues to use Abner and Sarala overseas as they live out and grow in discipleship, following Christ in a new culture among unreached people.

**Names changed.*

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Review how intentional discipleship in the local church aims at transformed disciples and not only converts.
- Recognize the local church’s role in developing disciples who are able to be sent.
- Reflect upon current discipleship approaches in your local church.
- Adjust and become more intentional in discipleship as appropriate.

INTRODUCTION

Are these statements **true** or **false**?

- The IMB’s extensive six-week orientation program is where candidates can be sent as they first learn how to make disciples and be a disciple.
- It’s relatively easy for someone to learn how to make disciples once they get overseas in a cross-cultural context.
- The IMB exists to help candidates pursue their passion to go overseas, whether or not those candidates are currently going and making disciples.

All are FALSE! Don’t expect people to learn at orientation or on the mission field what only a local church can teach them. The IMB needs your help equipping sent ones! Transformed disciples are made in the local church. The IMB sends those whom churches can affirm are currently being and making disciples in the context of a healthy local church. Your church can develop and assess your members as you establish processes to make disciples who are being transformed!

Discipleship & the 6 Marks of a Disciple



READ & LEARN

A disciple is a follower of Jesus. What is discipleship? Let’s think of discipleship this way:

- Purposefully intending to do another Christian spiritual good.
- The prayerful, intentional loving and training of Christians to be and make more disciples with gracious accountability on the basis of loving Christ-centered relationships with the resources God provides: His Spirit, His Word, and His people.

- Healthy disciples are believers who model well what it means to be a transformed follower of Jesus and who seek to “make” more disciples who show all six marks of a transformed disciple.

Charles Spurgeon said, “Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.” This could be adapted to, “Every Christian is either a [disciple-maker] or an imposter.”

It might be useful to think about disciples as the person or the people, and discipleship as the process by which the people are formed or made.

Discipleship is about a relationship with God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Abiding in Christ is foundational! The Holy Spirit gives growth as followers of Jesus take steps of obedience and trust God and His promises more and more. Those promises as well as encouragement and instructions for training in righteousness are found in Scripture: the Word of God.

Discipleship begins when our relationship with God is restored as we turn from a self-centered rebellious existence to a Christ-centered life.

6 MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

01 <i>Transformed</i> Heart	02 <i>Transformed</i> Mind	03 <i>Transformed</i> Affections
04 <i>Transformed</i> Will	05 <i>Transformed</i> Relationships	06 <i>Transformed</i> Purpose

You have already read in detail about the six marks of a disciple in *Foundations* (*Foundations*, p. 73–75). Now, take a moment to read and reflect on the summaries below:

1 TRANSFORMED HEART

To be a disciple, you must first be born again. Evangelism resulting in biblical conversion is the essential first step in biblical discipleship.

2 TRANSFORMED MIND

Disciples of Jesus are passionate about the Bible. It completely reshapes the way they think as the worldview of the Bible becomes their worldview. They approach the Bible with a precommitment to believe, understand, and obey everything it teaches. They learn the big picture of the Bible, and they interpret individual parts in the context of the whole.

3 TRANSFORMED AFFECTIONS

Disciples of Jesus grow to love what He loves, value what He values, and hate what He hates. Their affections are set on the things of God, and those affections grow to supersede the attractions of sin and the things of this world. They grow to obey God out of desire, not simply out of duty.

4 TRANSFORMED WILL

Disciples of Jesus obey God by obeying everything His Word teaches. They do not obey in order to make themselves right with God or to add anything at all to the work of Christ, but out of the faith, hope, and love that flow from the gospel.

5 TRANSFORMED RELATIONSHIPS

Disciples of Jesus love one another as Christ has loved them and love their neighbors as themselves. This love expresses itself practically in forgiveness and service even to their enemies. Their love includes their church, their families, the global body of Christ, the lost, and the poor.

6 TRANSFORMED PURPOSE

Disciples of Jesus share the gospel, disciple other believers, and engage in the global spread of the gospel to all peoples.

The local church is God’s chosen instrument for making disciples!

“Discipleship is the Christ-commanded, Spirit-empowered duty of every disciple of Jesus to evangelize unbelievers, baptize believers, teach them the Word of Christ, and train them to obey Christ as members of His church who make disciples on mission to all nations” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 76).

“While discipleship happens in a variety of settings, God provides the local church as the necessary setting and the primary relationships for the full measure of biblical discipleship this side of Pentecost. If there is no local church, it necessarily requires church planting” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 76).



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: Consider yourself and your local church: does our discipleship focus primarily on knowledge-transfer or are we also helping others be transformed in their heart, mind, affections, will, relationships, and purpose? What needs to change? How can it change? What are some practical, specific next steps you can implement now?

For everyone: Are there or how have you seen disciples making disciples in your church? How might you get better at encouraging others to do spiritual good to their brothers and sisters in Christ? Who models this well in your local church?

For everyone: What do I/we need to stop doing in order to give more time and attention to being and making disciples who display all six marks of a transformed disciple?

For pastors/leaders: How can you aim more of who you are and what you do as a local church so there is greater purposefulness in both being and making transformed disciples? Who or what resources might be able to help?

For pastors/leaders: Does your church celebrate intentional, life-on-life Christian friendships whose goal is greater Christlikeness? Do the “extra” programs on your church’s calendar take away time from regular life-on-life discipleship times or serve to help make the relational connections that can lead to life-on-life discipleship?

Discipleship in the Local Church



READ & LEARN

Biblical leadership is about modeling the way for others. We lead most effectively by example. To be a disciple (or follower of Jesus) is to help others follow Jesus and to show and tell others what it looks like to be a disciple.

Effective discipleship means being intentional and taking initiative in relationships to model, teach, and practice following Jesus well.

“If you aren’t helping other people follow Jesus, I don’t know what you mean when you say you’re following Jesus.”

—GARRETT KELL, PASTOR OF DEL RAY BAPTIST CHURCH

It is not just the full-time Christians or professional ministers who make disciples. In Acts and Paul’s letters, there are examples of marketplace Christians being and making disciples in the context of healthy, reproducing churches.

In the letters of Paul, new converts do not appear to have left their marketplace occupations. On the contrary, Paul sees them still working and earning wages, paying their taxes, and doing good in the community. In the New Testament, there is the Philippian jailer returning to his post, Lydia carrying on with her textile business, and Erastus combining his marketplace job as director of public utilities with helping Paul make and multiply disciples.

The local church is the relational community where disciples grow and serve and from where they are sent out.

The six transformations of a disciple remind us that Christian discipleship is highly relational; it cannot be done alone. Intentional training of Christians with gracious accountability on the basis of loving relationships in the local church is how discipleship happens.

Our Heavenly Father has given the local church all the essential tools needed to make transformed disciples:

- The Word of God
- The Spirit of God
- The People of God

(Matthew 16:24–26, 28:16–20; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 6:40, 14:25–33; John 8:31–32, 13:34–35, 14:15–26, 15:1–17, 16:7–15; Romans 12:1–21; Galatians 5:16–26; Ephesians 4:1–16; Philippians 2:1–18; Colossians 1:28–29, 3:1–4:6; Hebrews 4:12), Foundations, p. 104.

Who do we disciple?

At the IMB, we have learned from reading Scripture and missionary experience that discipleship can be very effective in groups. One-on-one discipleship is not the only way to do discipleship.

- Be intentional with groups of believers.
- Expect new believers to grow in faithfulness as they understand and apply God’s Word and share what they are learning with others.
- Disciple all Christ followers.



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: Are there champions for the six marks of a transformed disciple in our church?

For everyone: How is our church leadership modeling and overseeing the being, making, and multiplying of disciples that are growing as they are transformed in these six areas?

For pastors/leaders: Do we need to develop discipleship champions by beginning to disciple specific people? How might we do that? Who will be responsible for that? By when?

For pastors/leaders: How am I and how are we in my local church being intentional to disciple others by prayerfully purposing to do them spiritual good, to equip them to do the work of ministry, to provide appropriate challenges so they learn to depend upon Christ through the Holy Spirit? Do we aim for all six marks?

For pastors/leaders: Is your discipleship time primarily taken up with those who feel called to full-time vocational ministry? What about the “Lydias” (Acts 16) and “Gaiuses” (John 3) in the church? How can you help fellow church members live distinctive lives as Christ followers in their workplaces?

For pastors/leaders: Does our approach to discipleship provide life-on-life relational discipleship?

Local Church Discipleship & the Missionary Task



READ & LEARN

Missionary = A disciple sent out who makes disciples from among the nations.

- A missionary/sent-one must be a growing, healthy disciple.
- A missionary/sent-one must know how to disciple others who disciple others.

At the IMB, we have observed some of those sent out by local churches—even recommended by local churches—are not yet growing, healthy, faithful, and fruitful disciples. Some applicants describe a “call” they have to work overseas, but have yet to demonstrate faithful, fruitful ministry as part of a local church here in the U.S. They sometimes have almost no cross-cultural experience. They haven’t been intentional about reaching out to internationals or immigrants as part of a local church ministry. Even some of those already sent out have not been disciplined, nor do they have real experience discipling others.

Our local churches have a vital role to play in the missionary task by developing, equipping, and sending out disciples and disciple-makers who are directly engaging in Great Commission work. On a local level, this includes releasing people out to your city to minister to lost neighbors, co-workers, and family members. Believers won’t do overseas what they do not do at home. The starting point for missions must begin in local churches and local communities.

Before they are sent across an ocean to make disciples among the nations away from your church, disciple them and observe their faithfulness and fruitfulness in your local church context.

The IMB depends on our SBC churches to assess, develop, and disciple people well and to send out faithful disciples. The IMB’s orientation and training process can equip them in cross-cultural skills, but the local church is the discipleship center for candidates who are sent out. The churches send the IMB faithful disciples, and the IMB connects them to unreached peoples and places to be and make more disciples.

Disciples who are sent are those who model well what it means to be a follower of Jesus with a transformed heart, a transformed mind, transformed affections, a transformed will, transformed relationships, and a transformed purpose.

We need our churches to make disciples who are making disciples and to send them out well-equipped to abide in Christ and His Word, teaching and displaying the Word to others through the power of the Holy Spirit as they are encouraged and prayed for by your church.



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: What might happen if people who make disciples do not connect how the six transformations relate to all six aspects of the missionary task?

For pastors/leaders: How does your church's current mission strategy support and ensure a healthy discipleship process cross-culturally? What or how could it improve?

For pastors/leaders: How do our church leaders and church members rightly model what we would want to see reproduced in other Christ followers and local churches?

For pastors/leaders: How can we improve on modeling and training disciples who relate to and engage with people very different from themselves?



GO & DO

For everyone: Review your "Reflect & Change" sections and choose one or two next steps. How will you act on those next steps? For example: Reach out and encourage those champions who are already discipling well in your church.

For pastors/leaders: Talk to someone about a simple plan for modeling and training towards the six transformations of a disciple and begin implementing a simple approach or plan.



PRAY

- Pray slowly through the six marks of a transformed disciple, pausing particularly on ones where you may feel a stronger pull towards the world and away from Christlikeness.
- Pray churches would disciple their members faithfully.
- Pray the IMB would equip the disciples sent to them from local churches well for cross-cultural ministry overseas.



Lesson 6:

Leadership Development

KNOWING, BEING, DOING

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



STORY

Developing leaders is a core missionary task for IMB missionaries and for local churches. The Bible gives us a model of leadership development focused on character transformation as well as faithful implementation of knowledge. Healthy leadership development pays attention to knowing, being, and doing.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Recognize that healthy churches develop their own leaders of various kinds and transfer leadership to emerging leaders.
- Reflect upon and apply the “**Know, Be, and Do**” categories for leadership development in the local church.
- Adjust leadership development practices accordingly.

INTRODUCTION

We often default into looking for local church leadership from outside our church and not within. We often outsource leadership development to conferences or other resources. What if we sought to work within and disciple believers with the expectation that God would raise up leaders from within our local churches? What if our default posture was to disciple everyone in our local church as if they could become church leaders one day? When making disciples of all believers becomes a local church priority, IMB missionaries have found that God regularly provides leaders.

Healthy churches need healthy biblical leadership. And biblical leadership promotes the health of the church. Because these are overlapping components, we will consider leadership development first and then healthy church formation (please note how *Foundations* walks through Healthy Church Formation before Leadership Development).

Like discipleship, leadership development is a relational process. Books and courses may help, but leadership must be modeled and the baton handed from one leader to the next. Scripture tells us what leaders must know and do and the kind of character and person they must be. Often in the New Testament, leaders are developed from within the local church and some of those qualified leaders are then sent out to begin other churches or train local leaders.

Foundations of Leadership Development

(FOUNDATIONS, P. 114-118)



READ & LEARN

- "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).
- "...imitate me (Paul) as I imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

God's design is for us to lead by emulating Christ as we lead others to do likewise. At its most fundamental level, leadership development is part of the discipleship process. In that sense, some people may be gifted for leadership but still need mentoring.

In the New Testament, Jesus intentionally spent time alone with His disciples. At times, He moved away from the crowds and spoke directly to the disciples. He sent them out and then provided feedback when they returned. He did all this to prepare them for their future work.

In the same way, Paul sought to develop leaders for the churches he planted and surrounded himself with co-workers, teaching them and giving them opportunities to teach and lead existing churches. He knew he would not stay in those locations forever, so he trained and equipped others to lead in his absence. The New Testament shows leaders preparing for ministry in a variety of ways.

Foundations encourages missionaries to disciple all believers well as if they all could become leaders. In time, we should expect some of the men who are disciplined to become overseers or pastor/elders and some of the women to become ministry leaders.

Why not disciple all men and women to faithful, exemplary Christian living, and some will become leaders who serve and influence many others to be and make disciples in the context of healthy reproducing churches?



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: In your experience, how have leaders been developed for the local church? How might the local church be a more active participant in leadership development?

For pastors/leaders: How can you ensure emerging leaders are being disciplined, assessed, and trained within the context of the local church even when some development is outsourced to seminaries or Bible schools?

Biblical Qualifications for Developing & Training Leaders



READ & LEARN

As we develop leaders in local churches, we prioritize two offices described in the New Testament—pastors/elders/overseers and deacons. That being said, we also recognize there are many in the New Testament who led in local churches in a variety of unofficial but essential ways. For example, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul (Acts 18:18; Romans 16:3), hosted a house church in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19), and corrected faulty theology (Acts 18:26), but the New Testament never gives them a specific title.

We believe both men and women have vital roles in the ministry of the church. While the role of pastor/elder/overseer is exclusively assigned to men in the church and not to women, leadership in the local church is not exclusive to the overseers and elders (1 Timothy 2:11-12) (*Foundations*, p. 116). Titus exhorts women to be teaching and training other women, and the pastors are to be equipping the flock, young and old, male and female, to be sharing ministry to build up the local church and reach the lost.

There may be as many as eighty co-workers mentioned by Paul or Luke, including a number of women designated as "co-workers," "ministers," and even "apostles." Phoebe, Euodia, Syntyche, Apphia, Priscilla (Prisca), and Junia exercise leadership locally and serve as traveling co-workers or sent-out ones. Assisting Paul in a variety of ways, these women serve as benefactors providing resources and lodging or hospitality. Others host gatherings in their homes of the local church.

When Scripture speaks to general qualifications for leaders, it primarily addresses issues of spiritual maturity and exemplary living. For example, Moses’s father-in-law encouraged Moses to find “able men...who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe” (Exodus 18:21). In Paul’s letter to Titus, he wrote of the need for elders to be above reproach, not arrogant, or greedy for gain (Titus 1:5–9).

Of special note is the need for elders to be doctrinally sound (Titus 1:9), able to teach the Word (1 Timothy 3:2), and not a recent convert (1 Timothy 3:6). While the directives in 1 Timothy 3:1–13 and Titus 1:5–9 are specifically written for evaluating potential elders and deacons, the principles apply to those who serve in numerous types of leadership positions. In 1 Peter 5, the elders are exhorted not to be domineering but to be examples to the flock.

Qualified pastors/elders are essential to the missionary task and the qualifications for these are clearly explained in Scripture in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We see in the New Testament (Acts 14:23) that the apostles appointed elders in every church while deacons (servants) seem to be chosen on an as-needed basis.

Disciples who lead in the local church have demonstrated faithfulness and fruitfulness in **being** disciples, **knowing** Scripture well, and **doing** ministry.

- **BE** an example to others of what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus.
- **KNOW** the gospel and Scripture and doctrine well enough to teach truth and refute error.
- **DO** the work of the ministry—praying, explaining the Word, evangelizing and discipling others, teaching and modeling for others what it means to be a faithful follower of Christ with a heart for the nations.

We want to raise up more pastors/overseers who challenge their churches to fulfill the Great Commission. As we develop local church leaders, we look to the clear qualifications in Scripture. Those leaders have a biblical “office” like pastors/elders and deacons. We also develop other leaders (without a biblical “office”) based upon general biblical principles and practical wisdom. Both kinds of leaders are essential for healthy church life and for reaching the lost by planting new churches. All kinds of leaders are needed as we engage in the six components of the missionary task.



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: Except for the ability to teach faithfully, the Christian character qualifications for pastor/elder/overseer are simply the character of a mature Christian disciple. How might you pray for and seek to develop or grow these character traits in yourself and fellow church members?

For everyone:

BE: What kinds of leadership development activities can a person engage in to develop the character needed to serve in a church leadership role?

KNOW: What opportunities does your church provide for people to know the gospel well and study deeply in Scripture and doctrine so they can teach truth and refute error? How might your church confirm a person’s gospel understanding, doctrinal knowledge, and ability to refute error?

DO: What are the skills required of the pastor/elder/overseer or to be a leader within your church? How could you and your church provide opportunities for church members to develop and test these skills?

For pastors/leaders: Which other Scripture passages could be read and applied as you disciple believers to embody the characteristics listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1?

Identifying & Developing Local Leadership for the Missionary Task



READ & LEARN

“One of the characteristics of a healthy church is biblical mission. As we develop leaders in local churches, we also prioritize training missionaries” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 114).

Here at home, our SBC churches should be identifying and developing leaders who will challenge their churches to fulfill the Great Commission. But that’s not all. As part of the missionary task, we also aim to train up another type of leader as well—leaders who can be sent out. As we will see in the next lesson, one of the characteristics of a healthy church is biblical mission. As we develop leaders in churches, we must also prioritize identifying and developing those whom we will send out as cross-cultural missionaries among the nations nearby and overseas.

These sent-ones shouldn’t just include your “average church member.” They should include your church leaders—even the most faithfully fruitful and most valuable among your church members. Be sure to observe not only those who teach and are outwardly leading ministries, but also those who are consistently present and humbly serving behind the scenes. When sent out from Antioch in Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas were not the average church members but some of the most faithful, humble, and consistent in that local church.

Similarly, on the field, the normal role of a cross-cultural missionary is not to plant a church and then pastor it, but rather to plant a church and seek to raise up, nurture, and train local leaders—as modeled by the apostle Paul (Acts 14:23).

“Therefore, we [IMB missionaries] will foster local leadership and walk alongside them as needed, but we will not seek to establish ourselves as the long-term leaders of indigenous churches we plant overseas” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 111).

Whether at home or on the field, we aim to develop and encourage leaders who emerge from among the local believers and who have an “eye for the nations” from the start.

Have you ever thought about leadership development as a relay race?

A wise relay team knows that the true key to success is not how fast its runners are, but how well they’ve mastered the baton hand-off. Dropped batons and bumbled handoffs add crucial seconds to a team’s time—seconds that can make the difference between winning and losing.

In kingdom terms, the true key to success is intentional, thorough leadership development and theological education from one generation of leaders to the next. Guiding those individuals through the process of leading those new churches cannot be an afterthought if the goal is a flourishing, organic spread of the gospel among lost peoples and places through healthy, reproducing churches.

What are you doing to “pass the baton” by developing and encouraging the next generation of pastors, deacons, cross-cultural missionaries, writers, Bible teachers, theologians, church planters, etc.?



REFLECT & CHANGE

Reflect on these questions with a local and global mentality.

For everyone: Are there leaders in your church whom God has clearly given an eye and heart for the nations? How have they been equipped and able to put this passion to work within the local church, the community, and beyond?

For everyone: If you are a faithful leader in a local church who desires to be sent out, have you talked with other church leadership about what that could look like?

For pastors/leaders: How might your church prioritize developing leaders who can be sent out?

Ideas for Leadership Development

IDENTIFY faithful, available, teachable church members and begin to implement a life-on-life relationship with them. Invite them into aspects of your pastoral ministry. Plan times to meet with them and invite them along to share the gospel in your community. Train them to share the gospel well. Then give them practice sharing as well. Help them learn how to read, understand, apply, and teach the Bible in a simple, helpful way.

DEVELOP a small cohort and work through Scripture together—read, discuss, and apply books on pastoring or ministry leadership and enduring. Pray for and provide opportunities for ministry and oversight or leadership with feedback. Be iron sharpening iron. Walk alongside humble, teachable church members and do ministry together, trusting the Holy Spirit to equip others and work through them in your local church.

BE ALERT as you pray for your congregation. Who is humble, hungry for the Word, and eager to obey and put into practice what they are learning? Who is regularly sharing Truth with others and already discipling others? Set aside time each week to meet with, encourage, and do ministry together with such persons. Rearrange your schedule in order for you to do ministry activities together. Share leadership responsibilities when able to.

TAKE small steps together to cross cultures in your local area. Reach out together to internationals.

BEGIN a biweekly cohort and invite faithful, fruitful members to meet regularly to learn, pray, and practice ministry skills for cross-cultural witness. Read Scripture together, go out in the community together to meet internationals, and show and tell the gospel. Read books about cross-cultural ministry and church planting and apply this to your time sharing with those you meet. Work through the IMB's Deepen Discipleship course together (imb.org/training).



GO & DO

For pastors/leaders: Prayerfully identify and create a list of trainable members or people you know well who are growing in Christ but need more intentional character or leadership skills development. Share that list with appropriate people in your local church.

BEGIN to research how other local churches are developing leaders from within. Reach out to your association and state convention leadership to connect to other churches and pastors in your area.

For everyone: Pause and brainstorm ministry activities or opportunities that would help you or other disciples grow in leadership as you faithfully take steps towards cross-cultural discipleship. Then turn that list into your prayer guide for the next month or two, and partner with one or more fellow believers.



PRAY

- Use the list of ministry activities or opportunities you created as a prayer guide in the "Go & Do" section for the next one to two months and partner with one or more fellow believers.
- Pray that your local church leadership would continue growing in all three of the Know, Be, and Do categories. Then pray the same for yourself and ask God to give you opportunities to trust Him more as you step out in obedience to Scripture.



Lesson 7:

Healthy Church Formation

DOCTRINE, LIFE, PRACTICE

HEALTHY CHURCH FORMATION



STORY

The IMB wants to plant churches that understand and apply what the Bible says about healthy church doctrine, life, and practice. Healthy churches are more likely to reproduce healthy churches and mature disciples.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Understand how the IMB aims to plant and develop healthy churches. Prioritize, understand, and practice how to model and coach church leaders/overseers to identify the healthy church gaps and address these gaps through modeling, teaching, training, and pointing to examples.

INTRODUCTION

When we think of church, sometimes we think only of the Sunday gathering or the worship service. The missionary task is about planting healthy churches, and not about planting a worship service or a once-a-week gathering.

Jesus, the Head of the Church, wants His bride to be healthy and holy. Healthy churches bring God great glory as they live out the Great Commandments and the Great Commission. Healthy churches matter to God and they matter to the missionary task. The Scriptures give us instructions for planting healthy churches that will plant more healthy churches. Healthy churches will have a passion for multiplying more healthy churches.

READ & LEARN

"Making disciples means planting healthy churches...so our aim must be healthy churches that exhibit the characteristics of a biblical church as soon as possible"
 (FOUNDATIONS, P. 43, 44).

The 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church flow from the Great Commandments and the Great Commission. Take a minute to read over the 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church in the following visual.



"The 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church are not a checklist for exit but rather a summary that describes what a sustainable church should be" (FOUNDATIONS, P. 110).

"As we plant churches, our doctrinal foundation will align with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000"
 (FOUNDATIONS, P. 110).

Look again at all twelve of the characteristics. Some of these are displayed when the church gathers and others when the church scatters, and some characteristics are shown all the time as church members live the life of Christian disciples 24/7 wherever they are!

No church is fully healthy in all twelve characteristics. Churches tend to pass through seasons of greater or lesser health. *Foundations* reminds us to keep aiming for greater health and to be teaching and training towards healthy churches.

Since twelve characteristics can be challenging to manage, let's group the twelve into three "buckets"/circles. Take a minute to look at the next visual called "Church Circles."

This is just one way the twelve characteristics could be arranged. How would you organize or rearrange them?

CHURCH CIRCLES

Gospel Word & Worship

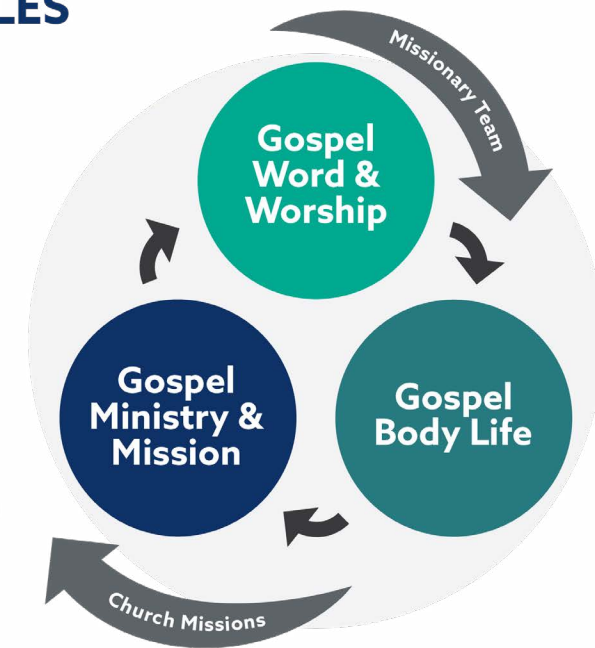
- Evangelism
- Prayer
- Worship
- Preaching & Teaching
- Giving

Gospel Body Life

- Membership
- Fellowship
- Leadership
- Accountability & Discipline
- Ordinances

Gospel Ministry & Mission

- Discipleship
- Mission



In reality, these aren't three independent circles but three overlapping circles as you can see below:

CHURCH CIRCLES

Gospel Word & Worship

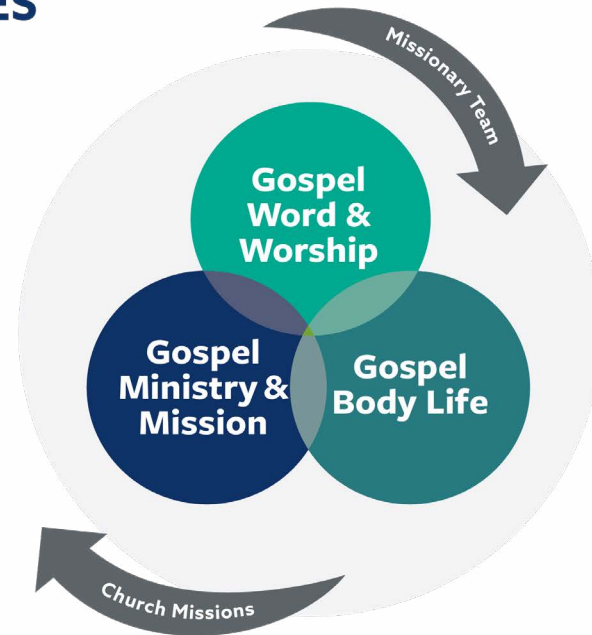
- Evangelism
- Prayer
- Worship
- Preaching & Teaching
- Giving

Gospel Body Life

- Membership
- Fellowship
- Leadership
- Accountability & Discipline
- Ordinances

Gospel Ministry & Mission

- Discipleship
- Mission
- Prayer
- Worship
- Preaching & Teaching



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: Think about what each of these twelve characteristics means. You may want to refer to *Foundations*, p. 80–83. How are the various characteristics connected? Are any of them related to one another? Would you prioritize any of them?

For everyone: Which of the twelve characteristics refer mostly to the church gathered for corporate worship and ministry? Which are more about the church scattered to be and make disciples all week long?

For pastors/leaders: Which of these qualities/characteristics do you think your church is exemplifying well right now? In which area(s) does your church need growth?

For pastors/leaders: Thinking about your church partnerships overseas: Which of these characteristics have you seen exemplified well in them? Which of the characteristics are areas of growth in the overseas churches you partner with? How could you support them in these?

Women & the 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church:

As we discussed in Lesson 6 on “Leadership Development,” we believe that while the role of pastor/elder/overseer is exclusively assigned to men in the church (1 Timothy 2:11–12), women play an integral role in the formation of healthy churches.

“We believe both men and women have vital roles in the ministry of the church” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 116).

“...we strongly affirm that women must be evangelized, disciplined, fully incorporated into the church, and developed appropriately as leaders” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 116).

Given the variety of ministries for women in healthy church formation, as you consult Scripture and reflect on these questions, keep in mind how men and women contribute to healthy church formation.

For everyone: How might men and women work together in ways consistent with the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* to strengthen local churches in some or all of the twelve characteristics?

For everyone: How do women missionaries and women leaders (particularly those who lead other women) work towards healthy church formation?

 **GO & DO**

For pastors/leaders:

How might you or your church model and train toward one to two healthy church characteristic gaps you have identified?

Put together a Scripture-driven approach suitable to your context and make plans to share this with other church leaders.

For everyone: Using the three circles/buckets or all twelve characteristics, create a simple prayer guide for your church and any churches you directly partner with.

 **PRAY**

- Use the prayer guide you created in the "Go & Do" section to pray for your church and any churches you partner with.
- With these twelve characteristics and three buckets in mind, pray for the continued growth of your church and the churches you partner with overseas.
- **For pastors/leaders:** In the "Reflect & Change" section, you considered which healthy church characteristics you have seen exemplified well in your overseas church partners and where they might need growth. Take a moment to thank the Lord for their strengths, and pray for their areas of development and ways your church can partner with them to strengthen those.
- **For pastors/leaders:** In the "Reflect & Change" section, you considered which of the characteristics of a healthy church you think your church is exemplifying well right now and which areas need growth. Praise the Lord for the strengths of your church, and pray through how He may lead your church to grow in other characteristics.



Lesson 8:

Praying, Sending, & Partnering

CONNECTING WELL WITH
LOCAL CHURCHES

PRAYING, SENDING, & PARTNERING



STORY

When the IMB connects well with local churches, both the IMB and churches benefit and there is often greater fruitfulness and faithfulness. Partnering with IMB missionary teams is a great opportunity to apply Foundations principles and concepts in prayerful, strategically-purposeful ways.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- To understand and reflect upon IMB guidelines for partnerships with others in the missionary task and to pursue more effective partnerships by applying the six essentials to existing and future partnerships. To engage more purposefully and fervently in prayer for partnership efforts.

INTRODUCTION

This section applies mostly to pastors, missions staff, and missions advisory teams or committees. Nevertheless, when more Christians understand how mission partnerships can effectively work, they will pray for and support those partnership efforts more fervently.



READ & LEARN

“IMB missionary teams pursue partnerships with individuals, churches, ministries, and other organizations on different levels depending on the different components of the missionary task” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 129).

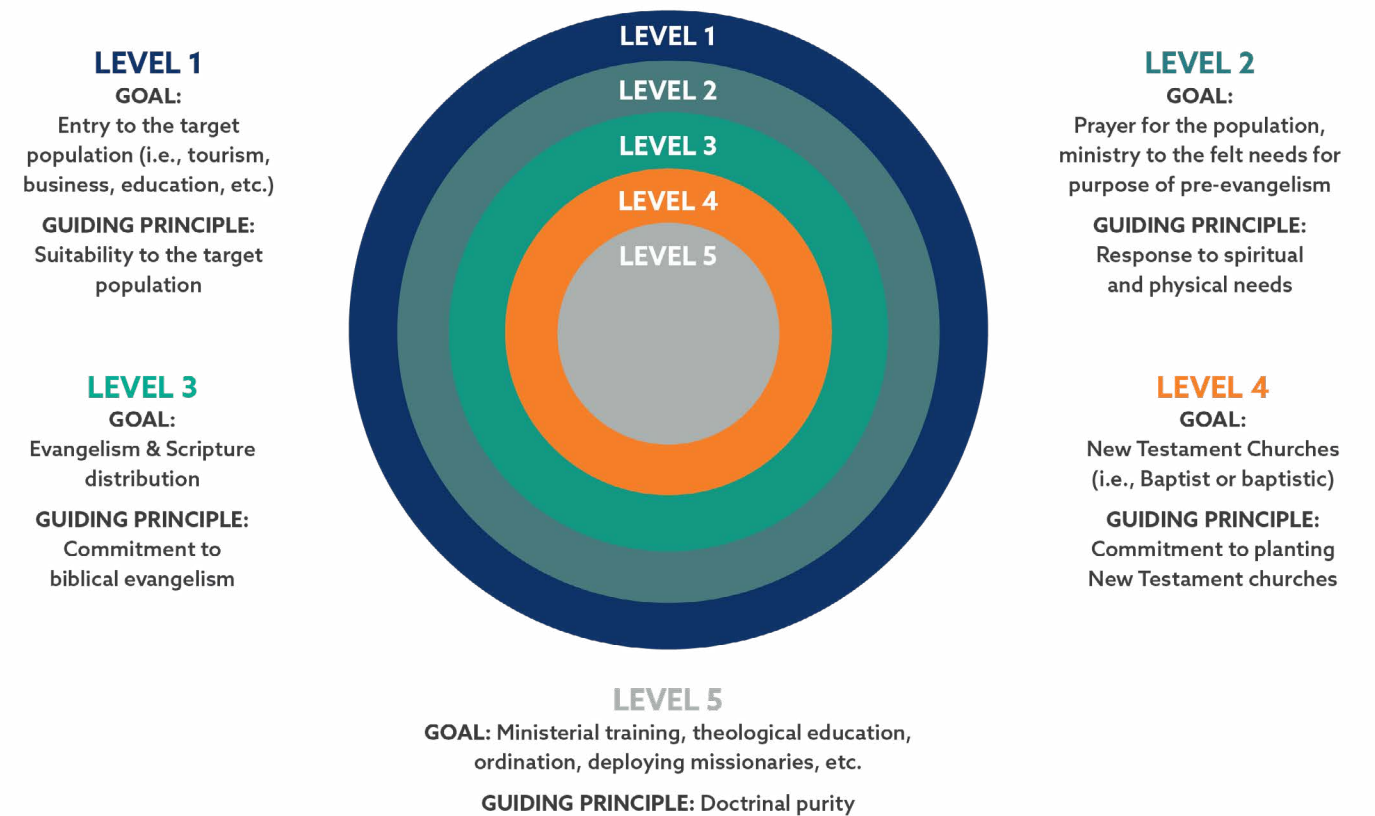
The process of getting an IMB team to an overseas field location requires significant amounts of partnership—not just between IMB and those missionaries, but between those missionaries and their own local sending churches, between the missionaries on the team itself, and between the IMB and other like-minded evangelical missionary organizations and evangelical churches who are committed to gospel proclamation, disciple formation, and church planting around the world.

When the IMB team has finished its work in their field location and is preparing to exit to partnership, that exit does not mean abandonment. While our full-time presence in those churches is no longer needed, we are still committed to walking alongside them in a new phase of partnership. We will continue to support the local leadership as they identify, equip, and appoint leaders who will faithfully shepherd the church. As we press on together to complete the Great Commission, we will continue to help these churches implement processes whereby they can be intentional in developing their own leaders and in sending out some to start new churches both in their own context and cross-culturally.

From the beginning to the end of the missionary task, whether stateside or on the field, healthy partnerships are vital to the gospel’s advance throughout the world. For the IMB, these partnerships include collaboration between IMB missionaries engaged in the missionary task and like-minded local churches, organizations, human needs ministries, seminaries, etc. Depending on the different parts of the missionary task, the depth of these partnerships will be pursued on varying levels. The visual on the next page shows some of the varying levels, goals, and guidelines that the IMB considers in its partnerships with non-IMB entities:

IMB RELATIONSHIPS: LEVELS, GOALS, & GUIDELINES

IMB missionaries relate to non-IMB entities at different levels depending on their goals and needs. These relationships range from expedient to external in their significance. The deeper the level, the greater its significance.



Notice that in deeper levels of partnership, the IMB expects fuller doctrinal and missiological agreement about the missionary task. For example, the IMB would partner in church planting or leadership development with others who agree with the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* and who would align with the *Foundations* document.

“The IMB is committed to planting healthy churches that multiply. We will follow the ‘Church’ definition and guidelines in church planting, in the way we report on our work, and in teaching national believers and other partners. As we plant churches, our doctrinal foundation will align with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 110).

Why are missionary task-focused partnerships important to the local church?

- Allow partners to benefit from the experiences and giftedness of others.
- ‘Leverage’ or multiply the effectiveness of giving. Gifts don’t work alone, but every amount given works in coordination with many times that amount from others.
- Maximize efficiency, minimize waste, and can reduce duplication of efforts.
- Have a high probability of lasting results (the missionary task getting accomplished!).
- Provide a wide variety of options for people to serve strategically in appropriate ways off-site and onsite, and in a project where different gifts and resources work together on the missionary task.
- Provide ways different partners may all feel ‘ownership’ as they contribute to the missionary task.
- Help link a congregation to measurable help for specific people.

We should clarify what these principles are and what they are not. They’re not things directly commanded by Scripture. But neither are they mere observations or “best practices” about what seems to make partnerships work. Instead, these ideas flow from biblical priorities for churches and church planting.

Six Essentials of a Healthy Missions Partnership

(AN EXCERPT FROM MISSIONS: HOW THE LOCAL CHURCH GOES GLOBAL BY ANDY JOHNSON)

1 SERVANT-MINDED

Are you seeking to serve workers overseas or to be served by them? Many churches seem to view missions partnerships as a way to enhance their own “missions program” rather than as an avenue to serve Christ by serving His missionaries engaged in the missionary task.

It’s easy for even a right sense of thankfulness and confidence to translate into a prideful assumption that you know what’s best in another culture. Sometimes a church leader who knew almost nothing of the language or customs of another culture tries to “take charge” in order to “help” an overseas worker “do evangelism better” and “grow the church.” Too often this advice has been based on pragmatic, consumer-driven ideas that are

unbiblical and human-centered in any culture. Even when the advice was genuinely wise and biblical, pushing it on a missionary carelessly or too quickly made it unappealing. When making partnerships (especially those focused on church planting), don’t assume theological agreement. Honestly discuss issues like evangelism, discipleship, healthy church, and leadership development before entering into a partnership.

It takes humility to partner well with others in the missionary task. Work in other contexts is often very different.

2 PASTOR-LED

A pastor must not only preach from the whole Bible; he must also pray often from the pulpit for the work of the missionary task in other places. This helps the church focus not only on its own needs and neighborhoods but on the global gospel.

John Stott said: “I came away saddened, sensing that this church worshiped a little village god of their own devising. There was no recognition of the needs of the world, and no attempt to embrace the world in prayer.”

When a pastor himself travels to support the work of missions, he should take key leaders along. In this way, others also learn and grow in their understanding of the missionary task around the world.

3 RELATIONSHIP-BASED

Partnerships work better when based on personal relationship with workers and not just on projects.

In most cases, churches would do better to choose one or a few workers engaged in the missionary task and go deep in their relationship to that place and those people. When you partner with workers overseas, make sure that your congregation also gets to know them and serve them.

4 COMMITMENT-CENTERED

Prayerfully commit to the missionary task workers with whom you partner. Sometimes churches mean well but lose interest in a partnership when situations on the field limit their involvement in short-term trips or projects. Be willing to serve a team of workers in any way they find helpful. When short trips are not helpful, be willing to partner in other ways.

Prayerfully commit to the long haul. Effective missionary task work on all six components of the missionary task can be slow and takes time.

Celebrate thoughtful biblical faithfulness, even if fruit is slow in coming.

As you encourage faithfulness, you and your church can help your partnering workers to persevere in proclaiming the good news—even when the results come slowly.

5 CONGREGATION-WIDE

The pastor may lead, but the whole congregation—not just a few leaders—actually owns the partnership. You want the average member to understand something of the focus and direction of the church’s partnership. Prayer updates and regular communication about the partnership are key.

6 LONG-TERM FOCUS

Most fruitful and humble partnerships will be long-term. It takes a while to do the missionary task well and faithfully.

Plan short-term trips with the long-term in view. Find out how you can plan a trip that supports the field worker team as they work on all six of the missionary task components. Make your partnership more about the long-term missionary task work of the partner team and less about your local church mission enthusiasm or engagement.



REFLECT & CHANGE

Take a look at the “IMB Relationships” visual again.

For everyone: In what ways is your church fostering a culture/mindset of partnership? In what ways could you be growing in that?

For everyone: As you partner with missionaries, are there other churches in your area or in your state with whom they have a relationship? Have you considered reaching out to partner with these other churches to support your missionary?

For pastors/leaders: If you currently have missionary partnerships, how would you rate yourself on these six essentials? Where could you do better? What are one or two next steps you might take to improve? Who

else can you involve as you take these steps? How can you communicate these to the mission team at your church?



GO & DO

For everyone: Consider next steps in learning more about how to partner with IMB missionary teams. You may consider ways you can encourage and strengthen your current partnerships by participating in one of your church’s vision trips to its supported missionaries and teams overseas. If your church doesn’t currently offer this, you could help plan a vision trip with the field team’s priority needs in focus.

For pastors/leaders: If you do not currently have missionary partnerships, what are some key takeaways from this lesson that might direct you and your church as you seek to develop healthy partnerships? Consider consulting other churches, your association, or your state Baptist convention about their current partnerships. What are your next steps when it comes to partnership? Take those next steps. And please contact the IMB at info@imb.org if you need help partnering with an IMB team.



PRAY

- Pray the IMB would build and sustain healthy partnerships with sending churches in the states and planted churches overseas that result in gospel advance through all six components of the missionary task.
- Pray your own church would build and sustain healthy partnerships with other like-minded churches (both local and overseas) and organizations.
- Pray we would always be embracing the world in prayer.



Conclusion

DEDICATION TO THE
MISSIONARY TASK

CONCLUSION

Reaching the Nations, Together

As we partner together, we can advance God's kingdom through our dedication to the missionary task. You and your church can be actively involved in each component of the missionary task locally while partnering with missionary teams and sending missionaries from your church to engage in the missionary task globally.

Through our partnership, we can pray for our missionaries and for all people who have yet to hear the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We can intentionally disciple leaders within our church to share this gospel hope with those in our community and around the world. We can develop leaders here and everywhere who have a Revelation 7:9 vision. We can commit to sending and sustaining an IMB missionary presence that leads to missionary engagement through the missionary task. And, one day, we will rejoice to see a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, knowing and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ as we reach the nations, together.





Partnering Together

RESOURCES FOR TAKING
YOUR NEXT STEPS

PARTNERING TOGETHER

IMB Training Courses

As you prepare to train your local church, IMB Training equips churches with essential tools for raising up faithful cross-cultural missionaries. As you've discovered through this companion guide, so much of missionary training is basic discipleship—loving and following Christ. IMB Training resources work with the discipleship efforts of local churches. Our materials and courses are practical, current, and culturally informed. We draw upon the experience and wisdom of practicing missionaries from around the world to equip local churches to fulfill God's calling at home.

Visit imb.org/training to find additional training courses focused on discipleship, the mission of God, the mission of the Church, the missionary task, short-term trip training, and more! Visit imb.org/pray to take the course, **A Voice for the Nations: A Course on Prayer**.

Below are descriptions for some of our featured courses available for free online:



GET TO KNOW THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD (IMB)
Learn how SBC churches are sending and sustaining a missionary presence—through the International Mission Board—that leads to missionary engagement through the missionary task. You will discover what's unique about the IMB, hear more about our vision, mission, and organizational structure, and explore ways your church can partner with us to impact lostness through the missionary task. Join us as we give ourselves to this mission every day—reaching the nations, together—so all tribes and peoples and languages will know and worship our Lord Jesus Christ.



DEEPEN DISCIPLESHIP
Deepen Discipleship is a six-month, interactive discipleship process and course that will prepare Christians for both local and global disciple-making in the context of local church community. This course provides an overview of the New Testament and is meant to be done in community, preferably with fellow church members. This aspect is important because it's the committed community of a local church that best enables connections for both loving God and loving others well.

Available in English and Spanish as an online course or as a downloadable and printable PDF.



SENT TO THE WORKPLACE

As Christ followers, we have been sent as His ambassadors to our workplaces, whether that’s the marketplace, at home, or as volunteers in our communities. This eight-week course will challenge you to rethink your work from God’s perspective. You’ll learn how your work matters to God and has eternal significance. You will practice basic missional and cross-cultural skills to “show and tell” the good news by the way you work, what you say, and in how you respect your co-workers and neighbors. Ideally, you will take the course alongside a small group from your church, reading the lessons individually and then meeting together each week for discussion and accountability.

Become a Missionary:

We want to partner with Southern Baptist churches as we reach the nations, together.

Visit imb.org/go to discover a variety of ways for you and your church to become a missionary presence among the nations.

SHORT-TERM:

Take a one to eight-week mission trip with the IMB. Short-term trips are a great way for church groups and individuals to be involved in the mission.

MID-TERM:

Serve overseas from two months to three years with the IMB. There are opportunities for families, couples, singles, and college students.

LONG-TERM:

Serve overseas for three or more years with the IMB.

“Together, we get to do the most important work in the world to address the problem of lostness. Together, we get to share the good news of Jesus with people and places who have never heard the gospel. Together, we send, sustain, and support missionaries to be steadfastly present around the globe to share that message and plant healthy churches.”

—DR. PAUL CHITWOOD, IMB PRESIDENT

Team Roles:

TEAM MEMBER:

Team Members are missionaries who are fully-funded by the IMB, and, as IMB employees, receive full benefits and services. Team Members participate full-time in the missionary task.

TEAM ASSOCIATE:

Team Associates are self-funded (i.e., non-IMB funded) IMB missionaries who come alongside an IMB missionary team through their jobs, as retirees, or as ministry professionals. While most Team Associates do not give their primary focus to the missionary task, they contribute to the overall church planting strategies of an IMB missionary team and engage in the missionary task as they are able in their respective platforms. Team Associates are assessed and approved both by the IMB and their sending church and serve a minimum of one-year. They also receive a variety of benefits, as well as access to consultation services on a number of issues.

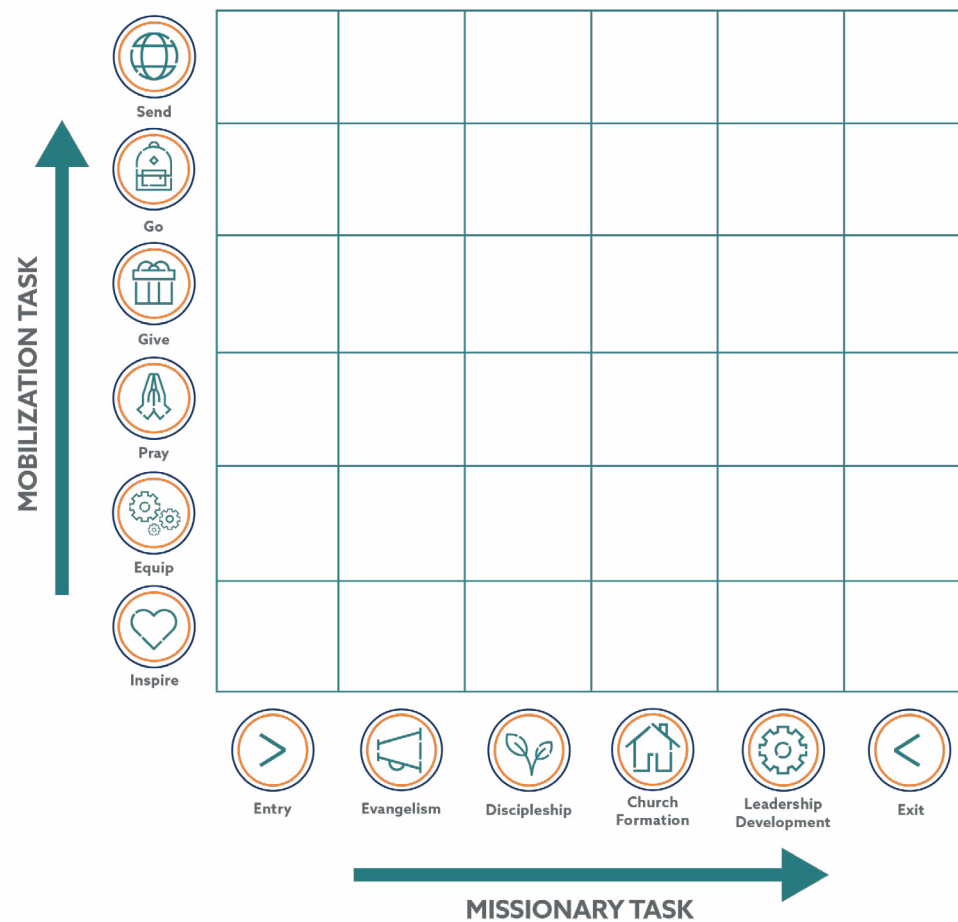
FIELD SUPPORT:

Field Support personnel are missionaries who are fully-funded by the IMB to provide a critical support service on behalf of the IMB in an international location. Field Support missionaries engage in the missionary task, but their primary responsibility is to provide a professional service and support to IMB missionary teams.

The Missionary Task and The Church's Mobilization Task

As you consider the various ways your church can mobilize to be a part of the missionary task, the IMB Mobilization Team can help your church partner more effectively as you mobilize for the missionary task. Take a look at the chart below that shows the relationship between the missionary task and the church's mobilization task.

The church's mobilization task includes things like inspiring your people to know God's mission and to be a part of the mission of the Church, equipping your church through training and discipleship, praying for unreached people groups and missionaries, giving to missions, going on mission trips or getting involved in your community, and sending missionaries as you partner with them.



Try to map your church's involvement in the mobilization task to the six components of the missionary task.

● Where is your church doing well?

● Where are there gaps?

For example, consider the intersection of “Go” and “Evangelism.” Most people in your church think of this intersection when you mention a mission trip. Some may hear this and opt out and not even listen further. How might you consider each box to think of people you’re not involving? How might you inspire and equip your members to play their part in learning, praying, giving, going, and sending so that together we enter people groups or places, evangelize, disciple, join in seeing disciples formed into healthy churches, and develop effective leaders before exiting to an ongoing partnership?

This chart is a tool to support you as you help every member consider the place and role they might play in addressing God’s mission. As you consider next steps, think about reaching out to info@imb.org and tell us about yourself, your church, and your needs. We would love to serve you!

NOTES

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