
Going Global

*A Guide for Deepening Your Church's
International Mission Program*

Serge Grace at the Fray

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Contributing Writers: Matt Allison, Josiah Bancroft,
Lindsay Kimball and Patric Knaak

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SECTION ONE

Using This Material

1 | Introduction

Welcome to *Going Global*

For more than 30 years, Serge has helped individuals and churches engage in global mission. We began as a mission-sending agency, but quickly realized that becoming a missionary doesn't exempt a person or from the trials and failings of being a sinful and broken. So, early in our history, through the work of our founder Dr. Jack Miller and others, Serge developed a foundational focus on the need for the gospel in our own lives, even as we reach out to take the message of God's grace to others.

Many people's first encounters with Serge were through the mission's teaching ministry or *Sonship* materials and mentoring program. At times, we've even been better known for Christian renewal efforts in the U.S. than for international mission work. Yet the heartbeat of Serge has always been global mission—knowing Christ and making Him known. By God's grace, we've helped thousands of individuals and churches experience the transforming power of the gospel in their own lives and move into tangible expressions of this transformation through cross-cultural mission work.

Over the years, we've worked with individuals who are seeking to discern God's call to mission, churches seeking to deepen cross-cultural engagement, and church planters who want international kingdom endeavors to be part of their church's DNA right from the start. From this unique vantage point, we've developed convictions and resources about how to best develop a local church-based global mission program. We've also made plenty of mistakes along the way!

Going Global is an effort to collect some practices and key ideas we've developed—or seen developed by others—and invite you to walk along with us to learn from what others have done well and to also avoid common pitfalls.

Who Is *Going Global* For?

We've written this material with one key group in mind: pastors, staff, elders, deacons and/or key lay leaders of a local church who are responsible for guiding and leading the church's "global mission" efforts.

You may be the planting pastor of a new church who is wondering where to begin or if your church can even risk having a mission program. You may be a mission committee chairman who is volunteering because you're passionate about kingdom expansion, or maybe someone who was "volunteered" to lead a short-term team because you were on a team last year. No matter who you are or where you're coming from, you share at least one common trait: you are going to spend time, effort, and money to help those in your church reach out and love people from another culture, in another country in the name of Christ.

Format

This is not a program or step-by-step manual to tell you how to "do mission." Its sole purpose is to help you engage in mission better from a Christ-centered, gospel perspective, in light of your own context and calling.

Going Global is arranged topically. As you have need and interest in a particular area, simply find the appropriate chapter and jump in. For the most part, we've left the theological heavy lifting to others. Instead of diving into the theology of mission and God's purposes for kingdom expansion, *Going Global* focuses on the tangible, hands-on questions and issues that confront local leaders.

Overview

Going Global is divided into three major sections:

Section One | Using This Material (Chapters 1-2)

- **Chapter 1: Introduction**
- **Chapter 2: The Organic Connection Between Renewal and Mission** explains how the gospel at work *in* you motivates and empowers the gospel flowing *out* of you to reach others who don't yet know Jesus.

Section Two | Understand and Refine Your Calling (Chapters 3-5)

- **Chapter 3: Where Is God Calling You to Go?** contains reflection questions to help you and your leadership team more clearly discern where God is leading your church in terms of international outreach.
- **Chapter 4: Seven Key Components of Effective Mission Programs** overviews the best practices we've observed in mission programs.
- **Chapter 5: Where Are You Currently?** takes Chapter 4's insights and refines them into a series of diagnostic questions to help you see how your church's current practices align with the best practices of other churches.

Section Three | Practical Help for Living Out Your Calling (Chapters 6-12)

Chapters 6-12 tackle a host of practical topics and questions ranging from the proper role and best use of short-term trips, to caring for the missionaries your church supports and sends.

- **Chapter 6: Everyone Gets to Play—Forming Great Short-Term Teams**
- **Chapter 7: Here Am I, Send Me—Identifying, Training, and Sending Missionaries from Your Church**
- **Chapter 8: Working Together—The Roles of a Mission Agency and the Local Church**

- **Chapter 9: Money, Money, Money—Developing Sustainable, Focused Funding for Mission**
- **Chapter 10: Caring for Your Missionaries—Keeping Workers from Shriveling Up, Burning Out, Cursing God, Badmouthing You, and Then Dying**
- **Chapter 11: We Can Help—Ways Serge Can Partner with Your Church to Deepen Your Mission Efforts**
- **Chapter 12: On Mission—A Serge Journal/Devotional for Your Short-Term Mission Trips**

Guiding Principles

A few guiding principles set the stage for everything in *Going Global*. The first is laid out in *Chapter 2: The Organic Connection Between Renewal and Mission*. Simply put, if the good news of the gospel isn't going in, it won't be going out. Without a vital, growing connection to Jesus—where you receive and experience His grace every day—reaching out to love others who don't yet know him will always feel like a duty. Outward-facing mission will never become the passion of your heart. Likewise, if you want your mission program to be powered by the gospel, then the *why* and *how* you do what you do matters just as much as what you *actually* do. Because what mission really comes down to is the deep love relationship Jesus has with you and your people. No program, regardless of how well conceived or efficiently run, can replace seeing and modeling God's grace in action in the lives of His people. Jesus calls, feeds, sustains, encourages, and grows us specifically so He can work through us. This is true every step along the way, the gospel is not just the message proclaimed to unbelievers.

The second set of guiding principles is captured in *Chapter 4: Seven Key Components of Effective Mission Programs*. There is no one right way to engage in international mission work. Churches come in various shapes and sizes. They have different callings, passions, and abilities to partner and support. However, the seven elements of effective mission programs are common to all churches that readily engage in mission and produce tangible fruit.

If you focus on the contents of these two chapters without engaging the rest of the guide's content, you'll still have a highly effective, sustainable culture of making disciples around the world. However, if you miss these crucial pieces, you'll likely struggle to help people grow to be more like Christ as they engage in mission. This is true regardless of strong church financial commitment, a dedicated and well-organized mission committee, or highly involved people.

Change is Hard

All change is difficult. It takes time. No matter the state of your church's mission program, there are probably things everyone wishes you were doing differently. There is no shortcut to discerning where God is leading and where He wants to stretch you beyond your current comfort zone to bring you to deeper places of repentance and faith with regard to mission.

As you begin (and as you continue!), don't forget to regularly stop, take a deep breath and remind yourself of these realities:

- **God loves you!** He loves you way more than you know. Right now. Today. This minute.
- **God loves your people!** And that's a good thing, because you'll feel ready to throttle someone at some point in this process. It's okay. When you're feeling frustrated or discouraged, spend some extra time talking with your heavenly Father about *His* plans for *His* people.

- **God loves the lost way more than you do!** It's His kingdom, His power, His plan, His resources, and His responsibility for results. Relax. Breathe. Enjoy.
- **Start where you are.** It's unreasonable to expect that you will build a perfect program and then start putting it into practice. Start where you are and improve as you move along. God delights in using imperfect people and imperfect plans to accomplish His perfect objectives.
- **There is no perfect program, church, or leader.** Just keep moving. Make mistakes and repent. Apologize when you need to. Refocus on Jesus and keep stepping out in faith. Your program may never be as organized or provide the "huge results" you prayed for. Yet, if you are intentional along the way about loving Jesus and others, you'll do just fine. (Granted, you won't do that perfectly either. So, again relax, and turn to Jesus.)
- **One size doesn't fit all.** Feel free to adapt, change, modify, update, or re-create anything to make this material more relevant to the needs of your church. If you find something that really works well, let us know so we can include it next time!
- **Good leaders know when to take their hands off the stick.** Navy pilots—rigorously trained for thousands of hours to fly multi-million dollar airplanes off the decks of multi-billion dollar aircraft carriers—are taught to do one thing when they are "launched": *take their hands off the stick*. There is so much power in the ship's catapult system that even the slightest pull on the control stick could crash the airplane. The Spirit of God is powerful and mighty. He wants to accomplish amazing things in and through you. Sometimes your most important role is to take your hands off the stick so He can work freely.

So What Does it Look Like to "Go Global"?

As you get started, consider a case study of what a church's mission work might look like. Over the years, many churches we've worked with have seen similar events unfold. This story is just one picture of how God can creatively and actively work in and through a church. It also shows what it looks like when a church's global work develops incrementally, but faithfully, over time.

Steve is the church planting pastor of Grace and Peace, a new church in a growing area of a medium-sized city. The church grows through the influx of young couples and corporate transplants who are new to the area. Within two years, the church has an average of 150 worshipers on Sundays. One of the new elders, a young doctor named Frank, participated in a life-changing experience by serving on a short-term medical team during his residency. After Frank shares about his experience, Grace and Peace begins to support the Joneses, a long-term missionary couple from the team Frank visited.

Frank keeps the congregation involved with the Joneses by sharing their prayer needs and updates on their work. Several members begin receiving the Joneses' prayer updates, and a few decide to support them financially on a regular basis. Meanwhile, Frank volunteers on weekends at a local clinic. Frank and his wife Nikki begin involving church members in ESL tutoring alongside the clinic. The Joneses visit Grace and Peace during their furlough and invite the church to send a team the following summer to serve sick children at their hospital. The short-term team is made up of Pastor Steve, several medical professionals, and volunteers from Grace and Peace's ESL and Sunday School ministries. After the trip, several of the short-term team members feel called to do more in the church's ESL ministry. They decide to plan a Vacation Bible School for the following summer that will include children from the ESL program.

Pastor Steve notices during the trip that one of the nurses, a young woman named Patti, seems deeply moved by her experience. He invites her to share with the whole congregation about the

team's experience. It dawns on Patti how easy it has been for her to feel secure in her identity and skills as a nurse. However, during her time working in a mission hospital, she had to depend on Christ in a way she had not before. She felt stretched beyond her abilities again and again. For Patti, the gospel suddenly feels like good news again!

Following Patti's powerful presentation to the congregation, several members feel moved to pray with Patti about the possibility of her joining the Joneses as a missionary. Through the guidance of the Joneses' mission agency, Patti is appointed as a missionary and begins to raise support to return to the hospital the following year.

The summer team from Grace and Peace continues to join Patti and the Joneses for a number of years. Several other leaders in the church follow Frank's example and engage in partnerships with international mission teams, at times building off of their experience in local ministry. As Grace and Peace grows, several other members also explore becoming missionaries. Summer teams form with a focus on building and sending teams of youth, young adult, and professional members. Eventually, with multiple teams each year, Grace and Peace holds a mission conference each spring involving summer teams.

Several college students who grew up at Grace and Peace decide to spend summers as interns or short-term team members with missionary teams. A few join teams as permanent members after graduating college. Even after Steve follows a call to plant another church in the U.S., Grace and Peace's congregation continues to see their local and global mission efforts flourish.

Some of Grace and Peace's story is universal. Specifically, their global mission effort was rooted in prayer and the gospel, driven by relationship, and built organically over time.

As you consider the Grace and Peace story, consider whether your church is in the beginning, middle, or end of this journey. A simple place to begin is with the self-assessment tool in Chapter 5. Every church using this guide is in a different place of engaging global mission. The practical steps can and will vary in order and expression from church to church. Rather than discouraging churches who feel "behind the game" in developing a robust mission program, our goal is for this guide to be a hopeful, practical tool for taking small next steps.

Wherever your church is today, be encouraged. Whether a young church plant praying faithfully for a handful of missionaries or a large, well-established church actively sending out more missionaries every year, you have a role in sharing the gospel with a lost and hurting world.

2 | The Organic Connection Between Renewal and Mission

More Than What You Do

Every pastor wants people to genuinely love the broken and lost of this world, to reach out in tangible ways to bring the message of God's love and redemption. We see this pattern in the New Testament, and it is the calling of every church. However, it's a real challenge to do this consistently and to do it well.

Mission is about *so much more* than what a person does. Ultimately, mission is an expression of people becoming more like Christ. It isn't just about doing the things Jesus did, though it's never less than that! Becoming more like Christ means growing in such a way that we begin to want what Jesus wants, delight in what Jesus delights in, and see others as Jesus sees them.

We pursue others in love because we know how much we've been loved by our Father. In a very real sense, mission embodies the idea of "grace through you." Whether it's giving to missionaries, sending workers or reaching out to neighbors across the street or around the world—in mission, we follow Jesus' example and command to lay down our lives for the sake of others, particularly those who do not yet know Him.

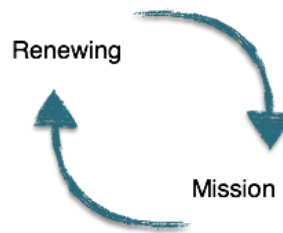
This external reality never works itself out for very long, or very well, apart from the internal transformation God's grace brings. Your church will never live out its missional calling unless, at the same time, it is drinking deeply of the gospel in ways that allow people's hearts to be continually transformed by God's love.

Lessons Learned

If the gospel doesn't deeply move into the hearts of believers, it will not be made consistently known to those who haven't yet heard it. The Serge story bears witness to this fact. In fact, our renewal ministries—Serge Resources and Serge Mentoring—began because our early missionaries were fighting so publicly, they discredited the very message they had come to bring. This experience led us to develop what eventually became the *Sonship* curriculum. *Sonship's* focus is the daily need for believers to be renewed in the gospel in order to love those God brings into their lives.

Serge has retained a deep commitment to helping individuals, churches, mission organizations, mission networks, and parachurch ministries learn to live out the gospel. We are convinced there is an organic, mutual relationship between our own personal spiritual renewal and acts of godly and missional obedience.

Personal and corporate gospel transformation is the sustaining force for missional living. As we step out in faith to engage in mission, we are consistently led back to our need for Christ.



When we experience our Father's love afresh each day and live a lifestyle of repentance and faith, we are fueled in missional living, regardless of expression. The outgrowth may be teaching Sunday School, serving the poor and disenfranchised, serving on a short-term team, engaging as a long-term missionary, or reaching out intentionally to unbelieving neighbors. This is the impetus behind Serge's teaching and publication work and our mentoring and training ministries.

How to Integrate Renewal and Mission

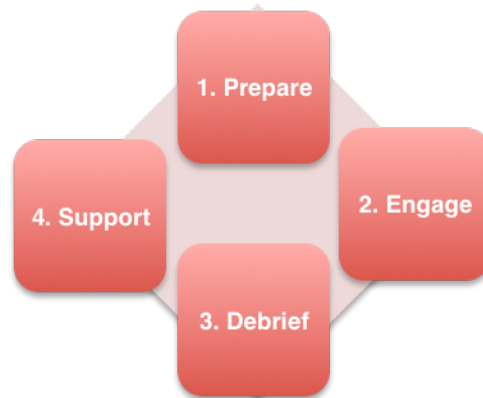
Long-term, the most consistent results of integrating renewal and mission happen when:

- A key public leader models what it looks like to be transformed by the gospel and participate in missional engagement. This leader also advocates and invites others into this process.
- Churches offer an intentional pathway for members to follow to nurture missional engagement that is empowered by personal, spiritual renewal. The pathway is used year after year to create a "base culture" of gospel centrality and missional engagement.
- Missional discipleship emphasizes a one-to-one (or very small group) model for deeper discipleship, and also has offerings for earlier stages of Christian maturity.
- Staff and/or leadership are clear on the church's vision for renewal and mission.

Developing a Pathway to Nurture Missional Engagement

Ideally, the best practices outlined above will create fertile soil for growing engagement in local and global mission. As people become more captivated by who Jesus is, their desire grows to bring his message of hope, redemption, and making all things new. However, those desires need tracks to run on—tangible, practical ways to begin to put transformation to work.

We recommend four broad categories to help churches encourage and deepen spiritual formation and missional engagement:



1. Preparing for Mission Through Renewal

Desired Outcome: To create repeatable opportunities within your existing discipleship ministries to encourage and prepare people for deeper missional engagement.

Possible Formats:

- Existing small groups.
- New, limited-duration small groups designed to prepare for specific ministry engagements (e.g. short-term teams, those serving in women's/men's ministry leadership).
- Ongoing adult education classes or Bible study groups.
- Retreats specifically designed to spiritually prepare people for missional engagement.
- One-to-one discipling or small group mentoring for those engaged in specific ministries.

Serge Publications That Can Help:

- 101: *The Gospel-Centered series (various studies)*
- 201: *The Gospel Transformation series (Gospel Growth, Gospel Identity, Gospel Love)*
- 201: *Grace Through You* (forthcoming)
- 301: *Sonship*

Serge Mentoring and Other Resources That Can Help:

- Small-group leader training focusing on developing deeper, more transformative small groups (3-4 hours, on site).
- Kickoff events with a Serge speaker to highlight gospel transformation principles and missional engagement.
- Mentored *Sonship* programs for key leaders and disciple-makers (16 individually mentored sessions done via video conference; roughly 6-9 months to complete).
- Discipler Training for key leaders and disciple-makers (12 group sessions done via video conference; roughly 6-12 months to complete, depending on schedules).

2. Mission Engagement

Desired Outcome: To get members of your church engaged missionally (i.e. motivated and sustained by renewal in the gospel) in serving and outreach ministries.

Possible Ministries:

- Short-term mission trips—as individuals and teams.
- International internships and apprenticeships.
- Ongoing local mercy ministry.
- Local outreach.
- Evangelistic friendships.
- Any ongoing service ministries of your church.

Serge Publications That Can Help:

- 101: *The Gospel-Centered Life* (done as part of the mission team experience)
- 101: *On Mission* (forthcoming)

Serge Resources That Can Help:

- Serge offers a variety of short-term team experiences, summer apprenticeships, vision trips and prayer conferences. Serge's Mobilization Team is willing to work with your church to help you find or create a cross-cultural ministry trip to meet your needs.
- Serge also offers long-term missionary placement with our teams and is willing to work with your church to develop individuals or teams to deploy with us.
- Serge missionaries are often available to speak at mission conferences and events, and can work with churches to create sustainable partnerships.

3. Debriefing the Experience

Desired Outcome: To help church members who have been engaged missionally process what they are learning, deal with difficulties, and find deeper places for ongoing service and leadership.

Possible Formats: A few sessions in a small group or retreat setting, specifically designed to help those who engaged in a missional event to unpack their experiences. Key debrief topics include:

- How their service revealed their sin/need for Jesus
- How their experience connects to a gospel growth paradigm
- How they believe God worked in and through them
- How to engage ongoing mission opportunities
- How to report back to the larger church body and thank supporters.
-

Note: A combination of debriefing with a mentor, as well as peer-to-peer shared experiences, is a crucial part of making sure this process leads to long-term, positive results.

Serge Publications That Can Help:

- 101: *The Gospel-Centered Community* (done with a service team)
- 101: *The Gospel-Centered Life at Work*

- 101: *On Mission* (forthcoming)

4. Support Future Efforts

Desired Outcome: To help church members who have been engaged in ministry continue to encourage, support, and engage in missional living.

Possible Ways to Continue Supporting a Missional Lifestyle:

- Identify and pursue kingdom passions discovered during the “Engagement” stage.
- Become an advocate, inviting others to participate in future opportunities.
- Increase kingdom prayer engagement.
- Reorder stewardship priorities to enable more generous giving to kingdom causes.
- “Adopt” a team, missionary, or cause to support.
- Use calling, connections, and influence to advocate for kingdom values and work.
- Consider the next level of personal engagement in mission.
- Become a mentor for future preparation stage participants.

Serge Publications and Resources That Can Help: All publications and resources listed in the “Prepare” category can also be used in the “Support” category.

No “One Size Fits All”

Every church has unique aspects to its calling, culture, audience, and opportunities. In light of that, Serge tends to shy away from a “franchise model” solution for integrating renewal and mission. Instead of offering a one-size-fits-all program, our approach is to highlight best practices and outline helpful pathways, many of which are supported by Serge Resources and Serge Mentoring. You can refer to the “Deepening Renewal in Your Current Discipleship Offerings” section in Chapter 11 for a more detailed list of ways we can help. We’d be happy to help you evaluate your current discipling ministries, find appropriate resources, and develop an organic pathway that will benefit all of your mission and service ministries.

SECTION TWO

Understanding and Refining Your Calling

3 | Where Is God Calling You to Go? Discern the Unique Dreams, Gifts, and Passions of Your Church

Purpose of the First Assessment

God delights in doing amazing things—things we often think are impossible—in order to bring people into His kingdom.

The purpose of this first assessment is to give you and your team an opportunity to dream about what God may be calling you to in regard to global mission. Set your “how could this ever happen?” thoughts aside, and spend some time talking with God about the way He would like to be at work in and through you and your church. As you get a clearer sense of God’s call, other parts of this guide will help you translate this calling into concrete action steps.

Don't rush through this section. Even though there are only a few questions here, they are intended to be wide-ranging and give you the chance to think, pray, listen, dream, and dialogue both with God and with key stakeholders of your mission efforts. The goal isn't to have an answer for each question, but rather to begin to gain a sense of where God is calling your church to engage more deeply in mission.

You may want to read through the questions and jot down some initial thoughts and then take a few weeks in prayer and discernment about the issues presented here. Without a growing sense of God’s calling toward specific work, partners, timing, and methods, most church mission efforts remain stunted or decline. Your leadership in this area is invaluable, and it begins by discerning how God is directing your steps.

Invite others to answer these questions, too. A foundational part of leadership is to understand clearly who God has brought together in your congregation. How has He gifted them? How have they grown their particular kingdom passions? No two churches are exactly alike in this regard. In fact, no single church is in the exact same place it was five or 10 years ago.

Vision is rarely determined by vote, but it is almost always confirmed by consensus. Each key international mission stakeholder should speak into this process. This could include paid staff, elders/deacons, an international mission leadership team, and those who express a clear interest in global mission (and ideally have been engaged in giving, going, and sending others). You may wish to ask others to:

- Complete the questions below and submit their answers.
- Provide feedback on ideas you and your team are developing.
- Engage in face-to-face conversations to offer their opinions and input.

The more intensively you solicit their feedback, the greater investment others will have in the process and its outcomes.

Where is God Calling Us to Go?

1) What are your hopes for mission work in our church?

2) At this age and stage in the life of our church, what is our unique ministry or calling?

- How does international mission engagement currently serve that calling?
- Ideally, how would you like to see international mission work serve that calling in the future?

3) What gifts has God given our church in terms of giving, going, and sending that could be well used in international mission engagement?

- Is there a specific type of mission work (church planting, mercy ministry, Bible translation, etc.) our church is passionate about?

 - Is there a specific part of the world our church is particularly drawn to or connected to?
- 4) The gospel never flows out of us unless it is first flowing into us and transforming us. Overall, how would you rate our church's disciple-making and spiritual formation ministries?
- Where would you like to see God's grace more deeply transform our church?

 - How well are our disciple-making and spiritual formation ministries connected to our ministries of mission and outreach?
- 5) What are some of our past successes in mission? Why do you think they were successful? What is the same or different in our church now?
- 6) What are the three biggest obstacles to our church being more engaged in mission? Where do you have doubts God will work to free our church from these obstacles?
- 7) If you could wave a magic wand, five years from now, what would mission look like at our church in terms of:
- Our international mission efforts?

- Where we are working in the world?
- Types of mission activities or missionaries we partner with?
- Connecting international mission work to our local mission work?

4 | Seven Key Components of Effective International Mission Programs

Different Church Stories, Common Elements

There is no one right way to establish an effective mission program. Each time Serge helps a church start, reboot, grow, or strengthen its international mission program, it's a unique journey influenced by the gifts, needs, callings, and passions of all the people involved. It isn't easy work. But two things always seem to emerge.

First, churches experience the joy that comes from seeking God's face and direction in mission. Despite fears of inadequacy or failure, a peculiar freedom takes root. After all, we are not alone. Our Father loves the world. Jesus gave himself for sinners like us. And the Holy Spirit has come to take the gospel into the world! When we believe these things, and churches believe them too, it becomes easier to put aside the things that so easily dampen and sidetrack our efforts and instead trust God to use His people to grow His kingdom.

Second, over the years and across locations, we have seen common traits emerge from effective mission programs. While it looks and feels a bit different from place to place depending on the people and churches involved, programs that have a sustained, lasting impact always seem to include the same essential elements.

The Role of Leaders: Discerning How Everyone Is Involved

The Spirit of God calls believers into mission, equips them with spiritual gifts, and assembles them together into churches where these gifts support each member and demonstrate the good news of the

gospel in the community. Shaped by the people and gifts the Spirit brings together, each church uniquely affects its surroundings. Each develops its own voice and sense of calling.

When leaders believe the Spirit is at work in this way, their roles begin to shift. They understand their primary calling is to help others recognize what the Spirit is doing and to identify the role He is building for them in mission. Leaders encourage, identify, and organize the gifts the Spirit brings, focusing the church so it speaks the gospel in new ways to the culture around it.

Faith and focus are critical to this process. As people believe gospel promises for themselves, they grow in strength and conviction that God will not only change them but also use them for His kingdom despite their flaws, sins, and unbelief. As the gospel looms larger in individual lives and in the collective life of the group, the church stops being defined by smaller concerns (our own “kingdom building”), and is defined instead by an expanded view of God’s kingdom.

The church learns together what it means to be blessed by God’s love and in turn to bless the world. Their primary identity becomes “beloved sent ones” who proclaim the same grace and mercy they have received to those who, like them, need the forgiveness and healing of the cross.

That can sound abstract. It’s about being led by God’s Spirit, so it isn’t always linear or easily seen. It’s a mysterious and beautiful process that has happened time and time again throughout the history of God’s people. Remember, God put you in a leadership role in your church because He intends to use *you*. He has given both you and your people just the right mix of gifts to accomplish the things He is calling you to.

How do you get started? Hopefully, you’ve already read and completed with your team the initial diagnostic survey in *Chapter 3: Where is God Calling You to Go?* If not, please take some time to do so.

Once you’ve completed the survey, read through the remainder of this chapter. As you read the seven components, remember this isn’t a “to-do” list. Churches are all different. You and your leaders have a broad range of gift mixes. Not everything on this list will apply to where your church is at the moment. The point of collecting these observations is to help you get a feel for what you are already doing well, what may need to be strengthened, and, in some cases, what may need to start.

Chapter 5 will walk you through another set of diagnostic questions to help you determine which of the seven common practices are already strengths for your church, which ones are in need of strengthening, and which ones have not yet been established. While we want these three chapters to feel practical and tangible, they aren’t infallible. It’s quite likely that God is going to reveal some things about you and your church we don’t touch on here. That’s great! The greatest value will come from you and your leaders intentionally listening to God and each other as you seek to grow the extension work of your church.

Seven Elements of Effective Mission Programs

1 | An effective mission program reflects the gospel dynamic between personal renewal and mission effort.

The gospel is God’s message of reconciliation and renewal to the world. We all want to see people across the globe come to faith in Jesus Christ and, through him, find a relationship with God. But the gospel is also for us! It provides both the motivation for engaging in mission and the manner in which we pursue mission.

The Motivation for Engaging in Mission: In order for local ministries and global mission to even *exist*, the gospel must stay fresh in the lives of all church members. The goodness of God's grace motivates and empowers us to follow Jesus into a lifestyle of faith and repentance, loving those who don't yet know Him. In particular, the costs and rigor of global mission will always push us back to the triune God for help, forgiveness, support, and encouragement.

The Manner in Which We Pursue Mission: The same gospel we take to the world also forms and guides the manner in which we pursue mission. Regardless of the model you choose for organizing your church's mission work, the gospel changes our tones and relationships with one another and with our partners. We are always called to be Christ to others. You can uniquely represent him to missionaries, to your fellow committee members, and to your church.

2 | An effective mission program needs a leader communicating a clear, shared vision.

The pastor plays a leading part in a mission program as a central, visible communicator of the church vision. As the pastor engages the congregation, it is vital to communicate a clear vision of how the church engages God's mission. Practically speaking, this means that:

- **The gospel should inform every part of the vision.** Losing a central gospel message results in the church becoming disconnected from the reality of its calling. Smaller substitutes become central. Programs become empty activities. A mission life centered on Jesus and the good news of grace will prevent strategies, opportunities, programs, institutions, personal preferences, or opinions from becoming the driving force of local and global mission efforts. Leaders should seek to keep the gospel at the center of their vision and work in practical and clear ways:
 - Gospel ministry means reconciliation. Church leaders must engage in local ministries of reconciliation, discerning the church's context and community needs.
 - Every part of church ministry (Sunday School curriculum, mercy ministries, worship liturgy, etc.) should have clear gospel content with practical application of grace to everyday life. Programs should reflect the church's desire to know Christ and make Him known. Pastors need to ensure centrality and clarity of vision in each of these areas.
 - Elders and other leaders should model lives being transformed by the gospel before the congregation and a watching world.
- **Prayer leads to vision.** A leader emulates Jesus's ministry model when he or she pursues the heart of God in prayer and leads a congregation to do the same. Since prayer connects to God's grace and power, every part of mission work should be characterized by dependent and expectant prayer.
- **The Spirit forms the church and guides it into its unique mission. Vision simply reflects this reality.** Church leaders recognize the gifts the Spirit brings, fitting them together to make a unique response to God's mission, both locally and globally.
- **To ensure a shared vision, the pastor and other leaders will often travel to see and engage in cross-cultural work.** Engaging in vision and mission trips allows pastors to gain perspective and motivation for leading mission and keeping the local gospel presentation from being enculturated. The gospel's movement is much bigger than we think!

3 | An effective mission program is integrated with the entire missional calling of the church.

A church's missional calling should be characterized as *integrative* rather than *segregative*. Rather than splintering into multiple programs with mission being viewed as "one among many," all local and global ministry expressions should unite under one central, missional calling. This ensures the programs (or ministries) within a church operate symbiotically instead of independently.

In our present cultural context, this might specifically be applied to youth ministry. Drawing youth ministry into a more interdependent and integrative expression in the church rather than allowing it to satellite (operate independently of the church's wider ministry), will shape and strengthen the future of the church.

Likewise, all parts of a healthy mission program (sending short-term teams, receiving international visitors, supporting long-term missionaries, creating international partnerships, sponsoring development projects, etc.) work together as a whole. They don't compete with each other for time, money, or attention. The intent of an effective program is not simply to argue for its priority and a piece of a budget, but to communicate its centrality to God's mission for the church.

4 | An effective mission program requires a focused team or committee to implement the clear, shared vision of the leaders.

While the pastor and elders discern the church's calling and set the vision, it is important to have a mission team that will own and apply that vision in tangible ways. Primarily, this means leaders empower the mission team to identify and engage people in global mission to fulfill the vision.

Trust between the leadership team and the mission committee is essential and takes time to build and maintain. Without it, committees feel stuck and can't move ahead with implementation, and the leadership team will feel frustrated that specific initiatives don't seem to match the gifts and calling of the church.

A few best practices help the relationship run smoothly and effectively:

- **An effective mission committee is often led by the senior pastor.** Alternately, a person who shares the vision discerned by the leadership may be appointed to effectively mobilize people around that vision.
- **Ideally, some committee members should be pursuing mission themselves or have served as missionaries.** However, former missionaries need to submit their ministry passions to the needs and vision of the church. It's all too easy for former missionaries to misshape committee mission work to suit their own ministry projects and passions.
- **The mission committee should find effective ways to engage people in global mission by praying, giving, encouraging, going, etc.** Evaluating what is effective will require the committee or team to watch for results of their work, to listen to people's feedback and track the lasting impact of the committee's work. Part of the evaluation might include asking some bigger questions:
 - Is the gospel at the center of all mission strategy and work?
 - Is there unity of vision for the work being done?
 - Does the mission work produce results that are appropriate for the church?

- Are we seeing some results from our support on the field? (Evaluating field progress needs to keep in mind the needs, difficulties, and culture on the field. Progress in Guatemala will look different than progress in Austria.)
- **An effective program looks for ways to display the tie between local and global mission.** For example, a local ESL program might be joined with a short-term team doing ESL as a part of a global mission team's outreach.
- **Good partnerships are a key part of seeing local and international outreach benefit each other.** Partnering well with others and having an inclusive, open approach can help your congregation stay engaged in global mission.

5 | An effective mission program mobilizes and releases both money and people for increased mission work.

The leadership team of a church and a mission committee demonstrate the value they place on the work of world mission by regularly finding and releasing money and people needed to push the vision forward. God will provide what each church needs in gifts, people, and resources for the part of world mission to which he calls them. But like everything else in the church, these come by faith and sacrificial giving, not merely out of an easily recognized surplus.

This isn't easy. Investing in mission can feel difficult as local and global needs vie for attention, workers, and finances. Often, the pastor or leadership team needs to take the initiative in framing the issues associated with investing in mission to produce healthy results. For instance, many mission committees slip into the default mode of asking, "How big is our slice of the financial pie?" Instead, leaders need to consistently teach people to ask, "How can we grow our financial stewardship and recruit more people for all mission work?" In other words, how can we help make the pie bigger rather than fight over the size of the pieces with other church ministries?

As a church seeks to mobilize more resources for mission work, "making the pie bigger" often involves things like:

- **Integrating local outreach and global mission.** Seeing local and global outreach as a single expression of the church's calling, makes it easier to avoid pitfalls like ineffective short-term teams, or becoming a church that has an either/or approach to local or global mission. Local outreach and justice/mercy ministries should be supported by the mission team, who can:
 - Help find volunteers for local and international outreach.
 - Make useful connections between local outreach and global mission work.
 - Connect those who have a passion for giving with appropriate ministries.
 - Model the unity of the missional calling of the church as they promote both local and global mission efforts.
- **Pursuing the unique benefits that come from each type of global mission work.** Short-term and long-term work will attract different audiences, participants, and funding sources. Likewise, people will be attracted to different types of mission work (church planting, evangelism, justice/mercy ministry) and different parts of the globe. An effective mission committee looks for ways to "increase the pie" in each of these areas.
- **Supporting long-term mission work and missionaries.** In many cases, long-term relationships and sustained work provide some of the most effective mission work. As people get to know long-term missionaries and develop relationships with them, their interest in going, giving, and praying increases.

- **Uniting short-term mission work to long-term teams and trusted international partnerships.** This keeps people focused on the unique calling of the church, while still encouraging new people to come aboard, instead of dividing energy and resources.
- **Recognizing that giving often comes from new sources.** Some will only respond to global mission work, or a particular mission need. That's okay! Often, as people begin to give in one area, they begin to give in other areas, as well.
- **Valuing the importance of giving to global mission.** A strong global mission program often captures people (and their resources) who are not passionate about local ministries. Likewise, there are people with a heart for global mission who will respond with deeper generosity when given the chance. In each case, the total resources being freed up for mission work increase, often allowing previously allocated money to be redirected.

6 | An effective mission program benefits the church's overall health by preventing it from becoming too self-focused.

It is all too easy for churches to become self-focused instead of other-oriented in ministries and plans. An effective mission program helps check this tendency by reminding us that we are called to be "pipes," not "buckets." God's blessings and grace are given to us so that they may run through us to others. An effective mission program keeps the larger realities of the Kingdom in focus, even as we engage in our day-to-day lives.

This can happen in a number of ways:

- **Local ministry and global mission, both needed in every church, form a single, holistic response to Christ's call.**
 - Global mission can't be reduced to local efforts. Saying "everyone is a missionary in the church" does not remove God's calling to global mission.
 - In the same way, local ministry work can't be replaced by having a strong global mission program. Churches are called to both.
- **In global mission work, the church takes up God's heart for the world.** God loves the world, even His enemies. He welcomes the stranger and the alien. He loves everyone with an undying passion, even those who do not think, act or look like us.
- **Global mission work pulls the church out of its own culture and its religious subculture, and forces us to re-examine our gospel clarity.** Our unexamined traditions and cultural forms are tested when we have to communicate a clear gospel message across language and cultures. The church needs this skill to reach its changing home culture.
- **The church imitates Christ, who left heaven and suffered to reconcile those who were enemies to God's love and favor.** God's Son left "home" to enter our world. Global mission joins that "incarnational" model. Rather than asking others to become like us or enter our culture, we become like Christ as we "become all things to all people" so that we, too, "might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22 ESV).
- **The church responds to the call of Christ to take up our cross and follow Him.** That "cross" is not only our painful struggle to grow in holiness but also includes the suffering we experience when we take the gospel to the world. The church joins Paul in filling up "what remains in the sufferings of Christ." (Col. 1:24).
- **Through global mission, the church can embrace opportunities to love and serve those who will not add to the local church's members or finances.** When the church offers grace and love to lost and dispossessed people who cannot benefit the church, it gives a clear testimony to the love of God.

7 | An effective mission program provides a strong continuity that helps the church avoid pitfalls and manage change in loving ways.

By paying particular attention to a church's relationship with missionaries and regularly revisiting the vision for mission established by the leadership team, an effective mission program often helps a church love people well while moving forward with new work.

A good mission committee can make a huge difference in the life and work of committed missionaries by communicating changes and helping them through the shifts that come in ordinary church life. Some missionaries or partnerships your church supports will outlast the tenure of a pastor, elder, deacon, or committee member. Ensuring that the committee is intentional about stewarding "institutional memory" for the church helps your global outreach partners feel well cared for and loved. Likewise, some missionaries will rotate on and off the field more quickly than your congregation may realize. By helping to communicate these changes to your church, the committee often provides a vital link between the stated vision of the church for mission work and the actual expression of it.

An effective mission committee also proactively brings its experience of seeing God work in and through global mission to the life of the church. It's possible for a church to become so identified with its home culture, or religious subculture, that members don't realize when decisions, methods, structures, and strategies have started to stray from gospel principles. By continually asking, "What does the gospel look like when it's preached and lived out in cultures other than my own?" mission committees can often help churches avoid pitfalls.

A final word of caution: Mission committees must take care not to allow personal agendas or the mantra of "We've always done it this way," to cause the committee to become disconnected from the present needs and calling of the church. A good team can be a helpful tool in balancing long-term commitments with new efforts that reflect the passions of next generation leaders.

5 | Where Are You Currently? Evaluating the Effectiveness of Your Current Mission Program

After You Dream, Assess

In Chapter 3, we asked you to take some time with your team to “dream” about how you think God is calling your church to engage with global mission efforts. That first question and answer section was designed to give you a “blank sheet” to ask for and discern God’s leading. The questions are intended to help you think through mission and your church’s passions in very broad categories.

This chapter is an assessment and focuses on the specifics of your current program. You will notice the questions here are based on the seven key components of an effective mission program discussed in Chapter 4. If you haven’t read Chapter 4, please take a few minutes to do so.

The following is an overview of the relationship between Chapters 3, 4, and 5:

- Chapter 3 (diagnostic)—If we are starting from scratch, with no hindrances, what is God calling *this* church, with *these* people, at *this* stage, to do?
- Chapter 4 (instructional)—What makes for an effective international mission program? If we feel God calling us to do something specific in Chapter 3, then what are the best practices we need to develop in order to get there?
- Chapter 5 (diagnostic)—In light of what we are called to (Chapter 3) and the best practices for getting there (Chapter 4), how do we identify our current practices and what may need to change?

Be as honest as you can. The purpose of this chapter is to help you take a look at the current state of your mission program. Every church has things they like and don't like about how they are currently engaged in mission, so don't be shy. Don't try to answer the questions in ways that will make your program seem better than it is. These diagnostic questions are simply here to help you mark the starting point for change. The more honestly you answer the questions, the more accurate your picture will be.

Don't rush through this section. There are a fair number of questions here, and you don't need to have an answer for each question. The goal is to help you see where your current efforts align with the best practices identified in the previous chapter and to get a sense for what may need to be improved. Some questions will be more helpful than others. Feel free to be brief, or even to skip questions that touch on current strengths. On the other hand, questions that point out areas of weakness will likely need more thoughtful and detailed answers.

When you finish, take time to review your answers in Chapter 3. Again, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are designed to work in concert. By spending time discerning where God is leading your church and then reviewing the best practices of effective programs, you will be in a unique position to ask, "What needs to change about our current program in order to effectively pursue the calling God has given us?"

This process will give you and your team a sense of where things are going well and where some changes would be helpful. It will also help you explain to others why you have decided to implement changes.

Where Are We Currently?

1 | An effective mission program reflects the gospel dynamic between personal renewal and mission effort.

- 1) Are we regularly seeing people in our church transformed to be more like Jesus as a result of experiencing God's grace in their lives? Why or why not?
- 2) Can people experiencing spiritual renewal in their personal lives easily find ways to serve through our church?
- 3) Are members at all stages of Christian maturity encouraged and invited to engage in local outreach or service within our church?
- 4) Does our church have any ongoing "missional training"? If so, briefly describe it.
- 5) Are our members' feelings toward global mission driven more by a sense of duty and responsibility or a joyful response to the gospel? Can we give several examples of this?

2 | An effective mission program needs a leader communicating a clear, shared vision.

- 6) Are the leaders of our church struggling with burnout or exhaustion?

- 7) Does our church leadership share a clear, unified vision for local and global engagement? If so, is this vision centered on and fueled by the gospel?
- 8) Who in our church is responsible for casting the vision for global mission? Are they consistently and effectively doing this? Why or why not?
- 9) Is there a member in our church who may also have the ability to cast the vision for global mission who is not yet doing so?
- 10) Does the preaching at our church connect local outreach and global mission as part of one calling from God to take part in his mission to the world?
- 11) Is our church consistently praying for kingdom expansion? If so, what does this look like?
- 12) How often does a member of our pastoral staff travel to visit missionaries and engage in mission work?

3 | *An effective mission program is integrated with the entire missional calling of the church.*

- 13) Where is our church involved in local ministry?
- 14) How does our church leadership assess the gifts of congregation members and how they could be integrated into both local and global mission efforts? Is our current system effective at doing this? Why or why not?
- 15) Can members readily see the connection between their local ministry work and our church's global mission efforts? Why or why not?
- 16) Has our church identified local opportunities that naturally flow out of global work? If so, what are they? If not, what are some possibilities?
- 17) How can our church's short-term teams have the opportunity to serve in similar ways locally?
- 18) In what ways does our children's ministry engage and support global missions?

4 | *An effective mission program requires a focused team or committee to implement the clear, shared vision of the leaders.*

- 19) Who leads our church's work in this area? A pastor? A staff member? An elder? A lay leader? No one?
- 20) Do we currently have a mission committee?
 - a. If so, do they have a clear understanding of the church's shared vision for mission?
 - b. Are they effective at engaging the congregation to live out this vision?

- 21) What are some of the qualities our mission leader or mission committee lacks that might make them more effective? Are there other church members who could complement our leader or join the committee?
- 22) If we already have a mission committee, how well are committee members able to readily connect global outreach with local outreach efforts? What would strengthen their ability to make these connections?

5 | An effective mission program mobilizes and releases both money and people for increased mission work.

- 23) Has our church ever raised up and sent missionaries from our own congregation?
 - a. If so, who? How was the experience?
 - b. If not, why not?
- 24) Does our church support missionaries who aren't from our own congregation?
 - a. Has our church articulated criteria for supporting missionaries?
 - b. What are our criteria?
- 25) How many missionaries does our church currently support?
 - a. What is our total (overseas) mission budget in terms of total dollars given? In terms of a percentage of our overall church budget?
 - b. On average, approximately how much money do we give to each missionary family?
 - c. What criteria do we use to determine this amount?
 - d. Ideally, what percentage of our church's overall budget would we like to see being used to support global mission? How would our congregation feel about that?
- 26) Does our church have a global mission conference or mission weekend? If so, how often is it held?

6 | An effective mission program benefits the church's overall health by preventing it from becoming too self-focused.

- 27) Does our church currently send short-term teams? If so, how often? Where have they gone?
- 28) Are church members encouraged to consider both short and long-term opportunities?
- 29) How do we encourage every person in our church to be personally connected to at least one missionary our church supports? Has this been effective? Why or why not?
- 30) Do we have a program to help people assess their gifting in mission?
- 31) Do we struggle to believe that financially supporting global mission can grow the overall giving of our church?

7 | An effective mission program provides a strong continuity that helps the church avoid pitfalls and manage change in loving ways.

- 32) Has our mission program been formed in response to the leading of the Spirit in our church's body? If not, what is it in response to?
- 33) Does our mission program provide a long-term vision for how our congregation will engage with global mission opportunities?
- 34) Is anything competing for the gospel's central role in our church's vision for global missions (e.g., strategy? Fear of man? A current trend in mission?)
- 35) What have been the most effective changes we've made to our church's program? What changes have been the least effective? Why?

SECTION THREE

Practical Helps For Living Out Your Calling

6 | Everyone Gets to Play

Forming Great Short-Term Teams

Why Employ Short-Term Teams?

The majority of American Christians experiencing overseas ministry do so through short-term teams. Nearly every long-term missionary first tested the waters through a short-term experience.

There are several important reasons, both theological and practical, for sending short-term teams to international locations as an ongoing expression of the church's mission to the world. Theologically, short-term teams are an expression of Jesus's charge to the 12 disciples in Luke 9 (also in Mark 6 and Matthew 10) and the sending out of the 72 in Luke 10. Just as in the biblical narrative, short-term teams often travel through the support of others, not out of their own resources. They go for a time, then come back and report about the work God is doing in other regions. In that sense, short-term teams are an expression of obedience to Christ's call for workers for the harvest.

Practically, short-term teams hugely benefit the ministry of the local church. First, short-term teams are incarnational in a way that financial giving and praying are not. Traveling to be present "in the flesh" on location with long-term missionaries and international believers better positions the local church for incarnational ministry in wider kingdom spheres.

Second, short-term teams foster a direct and concrete relationship between the local church and their overseas partners. A short-term trip can become a vehicle by which an international work grows from a prayer card on a refrigerator to a vision embraced and invested in by individual members and the church at large.

Finally, short-term teams shape the vision and mission of the church locally, as they often push members to engage in mission in deeper ways in their daily lives—from praying more regularly, to giving more

generously, to seeing new needs in their own neighborhoods. The spiritual lessons and ministry experiences first encountered cross-culturally often help believers live more thoughtfully and intentionally as kingdom citizens in their own neighborhoods over the course of their lifetimes.

Counting the Cost: Unintended Negative Consequences of Short-term Teams

Without careful planning and working with experienced ministry partners who understand the particular needs of a given area, a short-term team can stunt and even harm the long-term progress of the gospel. Without intentionality and mutuality, it's all too easy to undermine and devalue the ministry of national partners, create false measurements for success or adopt unrealistic expectations for immediate results.

In some cases, short-term teams create systems of ongoing financial dependence that prevent work from becoming self-sustaining. These consequences are rarely intentional, but their effects can be all too real, and as a mission organization, as Serge send out short-term teams, we work hard to minimize and eliminate these unintentional consequences.

The unintended negative consequences of short-term teams have gotten much press of late. However, the many examples of short-term mission work done poorly do not negate the value of short-term work done well.

For instance, while short-term teams sent from North America to other countries *are* costly (in terms of flights, lodging, and planning), their cost is an essential way the North American church learns to depend not on our own material wealth, but on God's provision through others.

Many short-term team members go through the formative experience of raising support. They recruit a prayer team, often demonstrating deep levels of vulnerability and a sense they genuinely need others to "hold the rope" for them so they can go over the cliff.

Likewise, once in a different country, the skills and abilities that served team members so well in the U.S. become less valuable. The need to depend on others—national partners, long-term missionaries—comes to the fore in unique ways. These experiences are tremendously important for creating people dedicated to the long-term nature of supporting international mission endeavors, even if they primarily do that while living in North America.

It's easy to judge the value of short-term teams based on their ability to do work in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible. On that score, short-term teams rarely seem to "pay off." It's worth remembering, though, that efficiency and efficacy are largely values of American culture and not necessarily values defined by the gospel. The cost of a 10-day trip may seem high in relationship to the amount of work accomplished during that period. However, the cost is actually low, since team members returning to North America often become more deeply engaged in mission over the course of their lives.

Best Practices

After experiencing partnerships with both good and not-so-good short-term mission teams over the years, Serge has developed guidelines to help ensure your trip is as beneficial as possible for all involved—the sending church, those going on the team, and your missionary and national partners.

Your church's short-term mission program does not need to be perfect. However, there are a number of ways to improve almost any church's short-term team efforts:

1 | Use short-term teams to tangibly support long-term work.

Not all long-term missionary work is conducive to facilitating short-term teams. Therefore, when choosing which short-term opportunities to pursue, consider their potential to support the long-term work in that area. A great short-term team comes at the invitation of a long-term missionary who is serving in partnership with a local church or ministry. This way, the short-term team engages in a work supported through ongoing ministry that will not be abandoned after the short-term team leaves.

2 | Establish short-term teams that are formative for a broad demographic of your church.

Every member of your church, regardless of background, will benefit through serving in ministry cross-culturally. This also protects your short-term team initiatives from becoming synonymous with one ministry of your church, such as youth ministry.

3 | Choose short-term work that develops and enriches the gifting and calling of your congregation.

When evaluating short-term options, consider your congregation's gifting and vision for local ministry. Short-term teams often motivate your congregation to dive into local work. For example, a short-term team member may come back from a trip to Uganda and feel prompted to begin using his medical training for local ministry out of the church. The best short-term team opportunities can translate in this way, mutually reinforcing local and global work.

4 | Create a follow-up plan to connect short-term work to the everyday lives of team members.

The effectiveness of a short-term team expands far beyond the scope of the weeks spent overseas. Develop a framework in which short-term team members engage in pre-field training, post-trip debriefing, and periodic check-in with one another in the months following the trip. This allows for a short-term team paradigm in which members can more easily integrate an intense short-term experience into everyday life in the local church.

5 | Frame short-term teams as part of a larger, long-term development track.

Short-term teams can be an avenue God uses to call some in your congregation to long-term international mission work. Direct people to trips that have a real potential to develop their vision for long-term ministry. Encourage those who are interested in going on more than one trip to assume leadership responsibilities for future trips.

6 | Seek to engage grassroots missionary efforts into the broader life of the church.

Frequently, individual church members begin to engage in short-term trips independently of any organizational vision. While it is natural to either ignore or discourage these sorts of spontaneous movements in a congregation, we find that if a church's vision is flexible enough to embrace these initiatives, other church members will often be drawn in, and a greater work will develop.

7 | Create an expectation that prior short-term teams will mobilize members of future short-term teams.

Often, the responsibility to recruit new members for short-term teams can leave leaders burnt out and short-circuit fruitful ministry. Teams that begin with the expectation that current members will recruit next year's team often have more staying power year after year.

Outcomes

As an outworking of these best practices, we hope your church will see the following fruit resulting from the experience of short-term team opportunities.

- **Prayer:** Through connection to ongoing long-term ministry, short-term team members will be motivated to pray for the church's global mission efforts, and they will help foster the same fervency for prayer throughout the congregation.
- **Giving:** Through a short-term team experience, a team member might be moved to give to a ministry in which they were directly involved, thereby allowing the church as a whole to engage more deeply with the work they support.
- **Renewed Vision:** Through serving cross-culturally, short-term team members can see their own context of life in their church anew, joyfully re-encountering their need for the gospel. Through engaging with a short-term team, members will bring renewed vision and excitement back to local mission engagement.
- **Sending:** Through experiencing a global mission effort firsthand, the church may find itself joyfully releasing some of their own to go.
- **Going:** Through engaging with a short-term team, some members will begin to wonder if the Lord is calling them to go.

How Serge Can Help

We recognize the challenge of doing short-term teams for many churches isn't just the financial cost, but the personnel cost of planning such a complicated endeavor. Serge has sought to address this need through employing a full-time coordinator of short-term teams. This staff member is happy to discuss upcoming opportunities for a short-term trip with Serge or ways Serge could help your church plan and execute your trip (contact using info@serge.org or (215) 885-1811).

Serge has also produced a devotional specifically for short-term teams, available through our publisher, New Growth Press (newgrowthpress.com). *On Mission* is designed to help you and your team spiritually prepare for your trip, connect with Jesus through daily devotions while on your trip, and debrief your experience once you return home. Our desire is to see people reliably take the lessons learned while on their short-term trip, connect them with their daily life and see the ways God is calling them to engage in mission at home.

7 | Here Am I, Send Me Identifying, Training, and Sending Missionaries

The Local Church's Role in Identifying Future Missionaries

God calls everyone to mission. For some, the call is primarily expressed in vocational ministry as pastors, para-church staff, evangelists, missionaries, etc. For others, the call to mission is expressed by serving in the marketplace, in the non-profit sectors, or through the nurture and care of their families. Regardless of the expression, one of the foundational responsibilities of the church is to equip its members to follow God's call in their lives to serve in His mission.

Based on Serge's experience in helping people discern God's calling in their lives, we believe at least a few people in your church are being led into global mission. While some embrace this calling independently, many need their church's encouragement to pursue this ministry. In all cases, the role of the local church is to be both prophetic (helping name the gifts and callings of its members) and pastoral (helping nurture and disciple its members, including those sent overseas).

Six Ways to Cultivate More Missionaries in Your Church

Serge has sent hundreds of short-term and long-term missionaries throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Over the course of time, we've seen some churches do particularly well at prophetically and pastorally stewarding their members into overseas mission work. While it looks different from church to church, we've seen six best practices emerge from churches that consistently identify, recruit, and send their members into cross-cultural mission work. If your church would like to grow in its ability to identify and nurture missionaries, consider developing an appropriate plan for incorporating the following practices into the life of your church.

1 | Communicate Explicit Goals for Sending

Churches that set and communicate goals—not in a rigid, instrumental way that leaves people burnt out, but rather in a faithful, obedient way—often see people raised up to go as career missionaries. One pastor began with a goal to send at least a few people into global mission every year. Within a few years, his church developed a reputation for sending missionaries. As a result of that clear value and culture for sending, a number of people were drawn to the church, both to send and be sent.

2 | Engage in Relevant Short-term Team Opportunities

Churches with a strong record of developing and sending missionaries find ways to take short-term trips that match the gifts and callings of those already in their congregation. For instance, a church blessed with many medical professionals may seek out regular short-term trips to provide medical care in impoverished parts of the world. Relevant opportunities invite church members to use their gifts, serving in ways that develop their understanding of how their profession might connect to and bear fruit in vocational mission in the future. As noted earlier in this guide, if a team's work can reflect the local ministries of your church, the connection is even stronger.

3 | Maintain an Ongoing Focus on Global Mission Throughout the Year

An ongoing focus on overseas mission throughout the year is instrumental to shaping a calling in the lives of individuals. Many large churches have a global mission “track” in their adult education and community life programs. While that may sound impossible for a smaller church, it doesn't require complex structures or practices. These programs may be as simple as:

- Scheduling a regular prayer group for missionaries and those considering a call to mission.
- Providing weekly bulletin updates with ways to pray for your missionaries.
- Including missionary prayer requests in pastoral prayer on Sundays.

Consistent practices like these reveal a church's commitment to mission, keeping it at the forefront of members' hearts and minds as they grow and develop in their gifts and calling.

4 | Develop a Strong Local Mission Expression

The best practical preparation for prospective missionaries is to be active in their church's local ministry. Consequently, as you look to see which members of your church God might be raising up for global mission, a great place to start is watching for a pattern of missional engagement in those serving in your church. Those who actively and consistently serve in the local mission and ministry of the church are potential candidates for vocational mission. They need to be encouraged to prayerfully consider the Lord's direction and design for them.

5 | Provide Prophetic Leadership

Effective sending churches have leaders who consistently work to identify and encourage the gifts of members that make them well suited for vocational mission. Leaders who regularly raise up new missionaries are concerned with stewardship of the gifts found within the body, and see this as an outworking of their discipleship efforts.

6 | Cultivate a Culture of Renewal in the Gospel

Churches that invite their members to regularly experience the gospel in deep, transformative ways end up sending more missionaries than churches that do not. True renewal in the gospel always moves us beyond ourselves and our own needs, so spiritual renewal often leads to serving the church in fraying places in the world.

The best practices listed above aren't magic, and they aren't hard and fast rules. They simply represent tangible steps that tend to be effective. Any church can make an effort to be more readily available to the Spirit's work as He engages people in Kingdom expansion.

Helping Those in Your Church Considering Missionary Service

So how should your church engage members considering missionary service? We believe the local church is ideally situated to:

- Help those considering missionary service clarify their calling
- Find a quality agency to meet their needs and align with the church's long-term vision and values

Helping Potential Missionaries Clarify and Confirm Their Calling

As part of a pastoral role in members' lives, churches can explore the following questions with anyone who believes they are called to overseas ministry:

Am I actually available and willing to go?

We look to the ministry of Jesus in forming this question. Christ's disciples were simply people who were willing to lay down their lives and follow him. Ultimately, every believer needs to answer this question through his or her relationship with God, but the church can speak into the conversation as members consider the call to mission. Particularly in the case of married couples, where the husband and wife are not in agreement about what they are willing to do as a family, the church is an ideal place to explore this question.

What mission work suits me best?

We believe the local church is most qualified to lovingly evaluate the ministry giftings of their members, even more than a sending agency, because of the long track record of observing the member in the life of the church. Someone may be willing to live in a rural area and work with an unreached people as an evangelist, but that does not necessarily mean they have that gifting. A church can often help the member understand this better than a sending agency.

Why do I want to go?

The best context to enter into overseas mission is through a growing awareness of God's grace in our lives and an overflowing personal sense of joy in that fact. Unfortunately, from time to time Serge staff engage with people who hope international mission work will be a way to escape their present problems. Unsatisfied members of a church are not likely to thrive as missionaries. A church can love its members by discouraging them from pursuing mission for misguided reasons.

By exploring these questions over a period of time in the context of existing relationships, a church can both confirm their members' desire to go and help them narrow their focus in ministry.

Recommend Sending Agencies That Are Good Long-Term Partners

Churches can provide invaluable guidance to their members in selecting a sending agency. Through maintaining a list of recommended agencies that match the vision and values of your church, you can help members choose an agency that will be a good fit for them.

Additionally, by maintaining connection with the current international missionaries sent out or supported by your church, you can discover from current missionaries the attributes of various mission-sending agencies. In fact, one good strategy is to send an individual or couple to serve with a well-established missionary from your church. It has been the great privilege for Serge to see churches ultimately send entire teams made up of their members, though the work the Spirit that began with one individual or couple.

Learn more about mission-sending agencies in chapter 8.

8 | Working Together

The Roles of a Mission Agency and the Local Church

Why Use a Mission Agency?

With all the changes in our culture and today's economic realities, many churches respond by tightening their financial belts. Global mission, where the work is out of sight and far away, can often suffer first from the hard choices churches make. Working with a mission-sending agency adds a percentage to what a missionary has to raise. In the case of Serge, that is about 15 percent. So the question naturally comes up: Why pay a mission agency like Serge a fee to send your church's missionaries?

We are confident that the value of an experienced and competent global mission agency will become clear if you look at what Serge and other agencies can do to prepare, deploy, care for, maintain, and then transition your missionaries back to life in the U.S. Most local churches cannot replicate the expertise organizations like Serge bring to global mission work. Their time and effort are better spent encouraging the missionaries they support and mobilizing their church to have greater engagement in mission.

Understanding the Role of the Local Church and a Mission Agency

We believe God has called the local church to send missionaries. We have a high view of the church and the roles of the pastors and other church leaders. Serge, as a mission agency, partners with local churches to help send missionaries into the work to which they are called in God's global mission. In light of that, we understand our role to be important and helpful, but limited. The church sends missionaries; agencies merely assist.

No agency or partner can replace the unique role of the local church for the missionary or for the mission enterprise. We can't replace the pastors and home church's history, love, care, and voice to the local missionary. Nor do we want to do so. We believe a mission agency should help support and maintain these key relationships between the missionary, the home church, and other partners and supporting churches.

A mission agency should serve the local church. Mission agencies are not envisioned in the New Testament. But like other specialized servants to the church, a mission agency can be a vital part of an effective mission program. The church makes good use of accountants, law firms, youth pastors, Sunday School teachers, administrative staff, and many other institutions and programs not mentioned in the New Testament. Adjunct or parachurch organizations working alongside the church can serve to make the local church effective in her primary calling. A mission agency serves the church in much the same way.

The role of the mission agency is to make the local church effective in sending and supporting missionaries as a part of the church's own missional vision. Effective mission requires a good fit for the church with a sending agency.

- Ideally, the church should partner with a mission agency or agencies that reflect the local church's values, ethos, and vision.
- This relationship should be part of the church's strategy to build strong, lasting, and effective partnerships.

Knowing a Good Mission Agency When You See One

Although there are a financial costs and time commitments to partnering with a mission agency, those investments provide many important benefits to both the church and the individual missionary over the long run. Not all mission agencies operate in the same way, nor do they necessarily provide the same level of services and partnership. Some provide minimal financial accounting, and nothing in the way of care, support, and training. Other agencies provide more robust services but tend to work wholly outside of partnership with local churches. Some agencies support a specific type of work, while others focus on a particular region in the world.

Serge is a values-led organization. Quite simply, this means the gospel of grace informs how we recruit, deploy and care for missionaries (we seek for people to be propelled by and rooted in the gospel), the way we partner with churches (we support them rather than replace them), and the work we do (we have a broad range of work: evangelism and church planting, Christian renewal/discipleship, and ministries of justice and mercy).

So how you can distinguish between good and mediocre agencies? And which one(s) might be best for your church and your members to partner with? Here are eight considerations to assist you in making that determination:

1 | *An effective mission agency partners with your church in prayer and calling.*

An agency that fits well with your church will partner with your church leaders and members to build interest in God's work around the world. Look for an agency that:

- Will join you in prayer and in practical ways to encourage you in your work to build interest in global mission in the congregation.
- Can help you identify, equip, and qualify those in your congregation who pursue an interest in mission.
- Can help you integrate your mission program into your church life through discipleship, prayer, conferences, and program support.

2 | An effective mission agency provides a clear path for funding.¹

Few churches, even those who only want to send and support their own people, can fully fund and care for a missionary long term. Even though the Apostle Paul was sent from his church in Tarsus, many other churches cared for and supported him as his mission continued. Many people considering mission work find the idea of raising support daunting and uncomfortable. A strong mission agency will have a clear plan and resources to help missionaries raise the prayer and financial support they will need from other churches and individuals. Identify an agency that:

- Partners with a home church to encourage and train missionaries to build relationships to bring prayer, interest, and the funding needed.
- Provides a streamlined and effective process for helping new donors get started with the giving process and make donations in a manner of their choosing.

3 | An effective mission agency emphasizes openness and accountability.

A strong mission-sending agency has clear financial responsibility that is audited and approved by certified organizations. Therefore, look for an agency that:

- Handles and sustains financial support in ways that are reliable, accessible, and show full integrity.
- Provides needed receipts and records in a timely manner.
- Provides appropriate fiscal oversight for their missionaries, ensuring missionaries use donor money appropriately and avoid excessive debt and risky financial relationships.
- Is adept at navigating the many possibilities and changes in mission work and can coordinate support for those changes.
- Has policies about how to handle funds when a missionary's plans change so that the donor's intent is honored.
 - Is regularly audited by an independent firm and accredited by an outside oversight agency like the Evangelical Counsel for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

4 | An effective mission agency helps assess missionary candidates.

Not everyone who feels a tug toward mission or who responds to a call should become an international missionary. Experience shows that simply having a good heart, a tender conscience, and a desire to go are not enough to sustain the rigors of missionary service. An effective mission agency will help those contemplating missionary service to determine both their calling and their ability to follow that calling effectively. Look for an agency that:

- Provides expert assessment for psychological health, spiritual readiness, financial feasibility and budgeting, vision and calling.
- Understands that husbands and wives need a shared calling in order to be effective over the long term and walks with couples to help them more fully understand each other's desire for mission. When difficulties come, both partners need to have a settled sense they are pursuing God's call on them personally, not just going along with a spouse's sense of calling.
- Carefully assesses the ability of prospective workers to navigate missionary life with a team in a new culture and to actually accomplish the ministry they feel called to do.

¹ This section provides a general overview of the services provided by a mission agency. For further exploration of this topic, please refer to chapter entitled "Establishing Funding."

5 | An effective mission agency equips missionaries for service.

While churches play a critical role in the spiritual preparation of missionaries, most cannot offer the breadth of experience needed to effectively equip missionaries for the trials and rigors of cross-cultural service. Find an agency that will make use of their extensive, collective experience of working cross-culturally to ensure that missionaries are well prepared and cared for as they deploy so they can have long-term sustainability on the field. Look for an agency that:

- Offers careful cross-cultural training for new missionaries so workers can be effective more quickly and can navigate their new area of work well.
- Ensures workers have sufficient foreign language skills for their work in a new culture.
- Works to assure good team placement and relationships so workers are not alone in their work. Building good team relationships is a crucial part of thriving in long-term mission work. Mission teams are notoriously difficult because of the many stresses, changing dynamics, and high expectations they bring. Partner with an agency that has experience building and helping teams become successful in ministry.

6 | An effective mission agency provides administrative services that ensure field effectiveness.

A mission agency should care for your missionaries by providing the key services and benefits most workers need in order to sustain and protect their families. Look for an agency that:

- Provides direction and appropriate levels of health insurance for overseas workers.
- Provides some help and guidance for future retirement for long-term missionaries.
- Engages the ongoing personal development and education of missionaries. Workers should have the chance to make professional and personal progress while they serve as missionaries.
- Provides resources to help missionary children adjust to new environments. Children of missionaries face particular difficulties. Parents need professional help navigating schooling options in a new culture, obtaining educational support to ensure their children make sufficient progress, sending kids to college, and working through changes that furloughs/home ministry assignments bring. Families who cannot readily find ways to meet the needs of their children will often quickly leave the field.
- Partners with missionaries to work through the complexities of governmental and financial requirements of life abroad—everything from foreign currencies, Social Security requirements, laws about partnering with local groups, and issues around work visas and passports.

7 | An effective mission agency has a plan for emergency care and evacuation.

An effective agency takes seriously the unexpected challenges its workers will face once deployed. It will proactively create plans and policies for assessing highly fluid situations and finding timely solutions to ensure missionaries' safety. It should also have enough experience to carry out these plans effectively. Look for an agency that:

- Provides help for workers navigating unusual crises like local armed conflicts, epidemics, or natural disasters.
- Has adequate procedures and health insurance so specialty medical care can be obtained when needed.

- Has a trained crisis team, able to coordinate and lead team and agency responses and guide evacuation or other engagement where needed.
- Provides post-event care for missionaries caught up in crisis, which is often crucial to their long-term health and confidence in returning to the field.

8 | An effective mission agency supports spiritual, emotional, and social health and growth.

A mission agency should make renewal in the gospel a cornerstone of every aspect of its work and an integral part of every missionary's life. The agency should provide resources to keep the missionary fed spiritually and able to minister to others as a result of their living, breathing, and growing relationship with Jesus. While not every agency can offer in-depth discipleship and training programs, look for an agency that:

- Supports keeping the rhythms of regular rest, vacations, personal prayer days, and retreats to foster spiritual and emotional health.
- Provides protection from the myths that can lead to unrealistic levels of work and slavery to unrealistic expectations.
- Provides counseling resources and spiritual directors who have experience working with the unique needs of missionaries and can offer personal and emotional support in times of need.
- Ensures that all missionaries maintain a good connection with their home country, supporting churches, families, and support networks. Often, this requires specific time set aside (i.e. a "home mission assignment") to return to the U.S. to strengthen and renew these relationships. These times are also critical for new training, recruiting future teammates, and/or attending special education, counseling, or recovery events. Each of these is vital to continued spiritual, emotional, and social health.

The Benefits of Finding a Like-Minded Mission Agency

Beyond the care and support a mission agency can provide to individual missionaries, teaming with an effective agency can help your entire church be enthusiastic about engaging in mission. Simply put, the more closely the values of the agency reflect the values of your church, the more opportunity there will be for finding new ways to partner in mission.

A good partnership between your church and a like-minded mission agency strengthens your church's unique calling and care for your workers. As noted earlier, mission agencies do not and cannot replace churches. No agency can provide the same level of encouragement that your church's love and spiritual engagement will. By choosing a mission agency that understands this, you can ensure your church will be:

- Able to engage deeply in your current local work because you will not be struggling to provide the resources and help that cross-cultural missionaries need to survive.
- Freed to deeply love missionaries you support, because your partnering agency understands and is committed to the uniqueness of your role and their role in successfully deploying and maintaining missionaries.

A good partnership will help extend the vision, mission, and values of your church in ways that have a global impact. When a church's values and vision are a good fit with partnering agencies, both the missionary and the church benefit.

Over the years, Serge has seen how a gospel orientation and grace values have confirmed these same in the churches we serve as we help send out missionaries. Missionaries naturally tell their stories in ways

that support the teaching the congregation hears from the pulpit. Dealing with brokenness and failure in honest ways draws others more deeply into grace. Members of the congregation tend to quit thinking of missionaries as “spiritual superheroes” and starting asking, “How may God want to use *me*?” Having shared values also helps ensure that long, effective partnerships are created over the working life of the missionary, because there are fewer conflicts between the expectations of the church and work being done on the field.

A good partnership will open the doors for your missionaries to engage in new, effective strategies for pursuing mission. While the message of the gospel doesn’t change, the methods for effectively proclaiming it do. Working with an agency that shares your church’s value for the gospel—evidenced by the fact that the gospel is still something *you* need in your life and your missionaries need in *their* lives—leads to new ways of working in countries to help reach those who traditionally have been very difficult to touch.

For example, Serge is increasingly working with building businesses and other non-traditional approaches in new fields, especially areas where no one can legally work as a missionary. Serge has a strong business model and looks for entrepreneurs, doctors, nurses, educators, and development workers to serve in a variety of fields where churches cannot be openly planted. Understanding our own ongoing and desperate need for the gospel is foundational to being able to enter these situations with the grace, patience and humility necessary to effectively build relationships and eventually share the gospel.

Because so many of our new works are in closed Muslim or hostile countries, Serge has developed careful, state-of-the-art approaches to personal security for our workers in difficult areas. Though we cannot remove the risks workers take, we can do everything possible to provide the best level of security so that simple carelessness or ignorance will not bring harm to our workers or expose the nationals they work with to persecution. Again, in order to be effective, this type of work requires a high level of trust between sending church, missionary, and sending agency. Finding agencies that share your church’s passion, that have a “gospel DNA,” and that also have the needed skills and expertise to care for your missionaries well allows your church to extend its missional footprint.

9 | Money, Money, Money

Developing Sustainable and Focused Funding for Mission

The Necessity and Importance of Funding Mission Work

Providing for the physical needs of mission workers has been part of the New Testament paradigm from the earliest days. Jesus' and the apostles' ministry was funded by groups of women who gave from their own means (Luke 8:1-3). Paul's work as a missionary was funded by other churches (Philippians 4:10-20; Romans 15:20-24; 2 Corinthians 11:8-10), and Paul regularly collected funds to care for the poor (1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Romans 15:22-29).

Giving generously to God's Kingdom work requires faith. The act of giving opens the door for spiritual self-examination because it causes us to look at what our hearts truly love and what we are trusting for security. It also requires us to "give up" funds that could be used for other purposes. Giving may even require real sacrifice in our own lives and lifestyles. In the case of a local church, it can highlight the tension between resources needed to do local ministry (money for staff, bills, buildings) and resources given to see God's Kingdom expand cross-culturally. Each of these decisions is an invitation to trust God in tangible ways to provide for our needs instead of relying on our own means. All of us have fallen hearts. We crave security and control on our own terms, so relying on God's grace is not easy.

However, giving to mission work often has a surprising outcome. It doesn't merely redistribute the slices of the existing financial pie; it grows the pie bigger. For better or worse, many people aren't as willing to sacrifice to pay for paper clips and copier paper the way they are to support international mission work. By creating a culture in your church where the congregation generously supports missionaries, with individuals freely giving, a synergy develops whereby other ministries (such as local outreach) grow their funding, too. What starts as a practice of setting money aside to help a missionary who members personally know and love, can over time become a habit of generosity toward other Kingdom projects.

Helpful Funding Models

There is no one right way to fund mission efforts in a local church. Each situation is unique in terms of the people and resources involved, the history of church practices, and cultural factors, which can range widely. The two most common models for funding mission work are the “faith promise” model and the “annual budget” model.

In the faith promise model, church leaders ask members to prayerfully consider what God is asking them to give to the work of mission. This amount is considered over and above their regular giving to the work of your church. Members then make a “faith promise” to set aside this money in weekly or monthly installments, as God enables and provides the funds. Sometimes churches ask congregants to anonymously submit their faith promise amounts so the mission committee can budget accordingly. Often, the faith promise amounts are given directly to missionaries instead of to the church.

In the annual budget model, those in your church give their regular tithes and offerings with the intention that this money will be used both for the local ministry of your church and to support mission work international. These funds are included in the annual budget of the church, and the mission committee has access to the funds to disburse them to missionaries and special mission projects.

Neither system is inherently right or wrong, and both have advantages. In Serge’s experience, the churches that most successfully support missionaries often use a hybrid approach to these two models. The church regularly collects money through tithes and offerings, some of which is budgeted for the work of mission. This allows church mission committees—and the missionaries they have agreed to support—to plan ahead and make appropriate budgeting decisions. Additionally—usually in conjunction with a mission conference—church leaders encourage people to pray about a faith promise amount to give either to current missionaries or missionaries not yet supported by the church.

The orderly planned giving allows churches and missionaries to plan effectively. Sometimes churches raise money through the faith promise method to support a specific project or meet a one-time need for a mission team. The additional faith promise portions give people a chance to pray and listen to God about special circumstances, opportunities, and passions in order to take a step of faith to give sacrificially.

Regardless of how your church chooses to support mission work, it will always require intentionality on the part of the leadership to make the opportunities and needs of your international partners known. Generous givers grow over time—none of us is generous by nature. Regularly seeing God meet individual needs and hearing the stories of how God has led people to follow Him in these areas is a great encouragement.

Understanding Where Your Money Is Going

International mission work is expensive. No matter how you look at it, training, equipping, sending, and sustaining a missionary will require a significant financial investment on the part of a church. In order to remove possible stumbling blocks, it’s important your church’s mission team understands how a missionary spends the money raised.

It’s helpful to remember the support a missionary raises is akin to the funds needed to start a small business. Typically, only a small percentage of the money a missionary raises for support goes to his or her salary. In addition to the wages they receive, they need to:

- Raise money for their ministry expenses (renting facilities, buying supplies, etc.).
- Pay for medical insurance.
- Contribute the full 15 percent of funding for Social Security.
- Cover the cost of all travel to and from the field and to their supporting churches.

- Collect the needed money to rent or purchase suitable housing.
- Provide for the education of their children.
- Set aside money for retirement when they are no longer physically able to stay on the field.

When a missionary states he or she needs to raise \$10,000 a month in support, that does *not* lead to a salary that is \$120,000 a year. Rather, this means it will cost \$120,000 a year to “run the business” to which God has called them.

Sending agencies can provide a high level of support and service to your missionary. Missionaries are sometimes challenged about why their sending agency charges administration fees. These fees partially subsidize the cost it takes to keep a missionary on the field, and nearly every sending agency also raises large amounts of money to cover remaining costs to support and maintain their missionaries. Administration fees must be taken into consideration in the cost of mission work, but churches can help missionaries find a sending agency that charges a modest administration fee. Fees range from agency to agency, but should range between 10 percent to 17 percent. Anything less than 10 percent probably means your missionary isn't receiving the training, care, and support he or she needs. Anything more than 17 percent indicates the mission agency isn't being as efficient as it should or isn't committed to raising enough of their own funds for the partnership. See **Chapter 8** of this guide for more information about building an effective partnership with a mission agency.

Who to Support and How Much

Deciding which missionaries to support and how much to give them is one of the most important, exciting, and sometimes daunting decisions a church can make. Most churches receive many (many!) more requests for support than capacity allows, and so they must make difficult decisions on a regular basis. Churches should be deliberate in decision-making, and open and compassionate in communication with missionaries. (See the next section for more help about open and compassionate communication regarding funding).

There has been a growing trend in some churches to limit support only to those missionaries sent from their own congregation. On the positive side, this helps ensure the congregation has strong personal relationships with missionaries and is invested personally in their ministry. It also provides a clear guideline for who is and isn't eligible to receive financial support. However, this policy does come with a significant downside: most churches cannot fund these missionaries 100 percent. Unfortunately, these churches are effectively (though unintentionally) telling other churches, “We won't fund your people, but we need you to help fund ours.” The unfortunate consequence of this type of policy is that it closes doors to cooperation, interdependence, and partnerships—all of which are essential in the cause of global mission and are biblical in nature (again, refer to Paul's ministry model). In many cases, refusing support to missionaries outside a church's congregation can also prevent a church from having a cohesive mission focus that is able to achieve strategic impact. Because the sole criteria for eligibility for support is being a son or daughter of the church, other considerations—qualifications, the type of work, how the work will advance the Kingdom strategically, etc.—often take a back seat.

Is there a better alternative? Based on experience with thousands of supporting churches, Serge recommends a “weighted ranking system” to determine who receives support from the church and in what amounts.

How Does It Work?

In this system, mission committees put potential missionaries through a consistent, publicly available set of criteria that reflect the deliberate strategies and values the church has embraced in their strategy for

global mission. Each of these criteria is assigned a relative weight reflecting how important it is to the church. A prospective missionary is then assigned a score which determines who may be eligible for funding and at what level. The scores need not be restrictive—they may simply designate a range of possible funding.

For example, one church may prioritize those who have a close personal connection to the church and the consistency of gospel values in their missionaries, while putting less emphasis on the particular work being done or the location the missionary will serve. Another church may feel led to chiefly support pioneering works in a specific part of the world and consequently put less emphasis on the missionary's personal connection to the church and denominational affiliation. In each case, the same missionary may be supported by both churches, though probably at different funding levels and for different reasons. In each case, the church is giving to a missionary who reflects the values and priorities of that particular church.

Here are some of the criteria churches often consider as part of weighted ranking system:

- Is this missionary a son or daughter of the church?
- Does this missionary have a significant (current or past) relational connection to the church?
- Does this missionary have the same grace/gospel/missional values as the church?
- Where is the work being done?
- What type of work is being done? (church planting, evangelism, mercy, justice etc.)
- Is the proposed work consistent with stated strategic aims of the church's mission program?
- Does the work align with the church's current local mission?
- Can this work integrate with the church's plans for short-term teams?
- What is the length of the project/calling? (Short-term missionaries are often supported at different levels than long-term missionaries).
- Does this work connect to other current partnerships of the church?
- What is this missionary's denominational affiliation?
- Does this missionary have the necessary theological or professional training in order to be effective in their work?

An Example

As a case study, let's consider a fictional church named "Grace." Grace Church has recently developed a more robust mission budget and more congregational engagement in global mission. The church has set aside a larger percentage of the budget for this work and started a faith promise program. Currently, the church supports just a few missionaries with modest financial support.

As part of their planning, the members of the mission team decide they would like the church to support work that focuses on mercy and justice and is being done by people who have a strong rootedness in the gospel of grace. They are open to various locations, though the church already supports some missionaries in India and Sudan and would like to keep growing those connections. They want to make room for families in the church that may be called to this type of work, though currently there are not any.

Grace Church would benefit from having a simple ratings form that reflects their priorities by assigning a number value to each priority so missionary applicants can be screened and given a relative ranking for how well they match Grace's desired outcomes.

Primary Considerations Rating Scale						
	5	4	3	2	1	Totals
Mercy/Justice Ministry						
Understanding of Grace						
From Grace Church						
					Primary Consideration Subtotal	
<i>5 = Completely Describes Missionary/Work</i> <i>3 = Somewhat Describes Missionary/Work</i> <i>1 = Does Not Describe Missionary/Work</i>						
Secondary Considerations Rating Scale						
			3	2	1	Totals
Works in India/Sudan						
Possibility to Host Short- Term Teams						
					Secondary Consideration Subtotal	
					Final Score	
<i>3 = Completely Describes Missionary/Work</i> <i>2 = Somewhat Describes Missionary/Work</i> <i>1 = Does Not Describe Missionary/Work</i>						

Benefits

This type of system has several significant advantages:

- It allows support to be delegated in ways that create a much higher degree of alignment with the strategies and values of the church.
- It allows churches to significantly support missionaries raised up in their midst, while not eliminating the possibility of supporting others.
- It helps prospective missionaries know if they are good potential partners with your church.
- It encourages your church to have a clear strategy for global mission.

Because the system is flexible (the church determines what values are most important to them) but consistent (each potential missionary is dealt with in a similar way), it takes the pressure off the pastor or mission committee. Pastors are free to encourage ministry colleagues to apply to the church for support while noting there is an established process to determine funding. Likewise, mission committees can clearly communicate how they determine levels of support. The method allows mission committees to objectively assess a missionary’s fit with the church, instead of having to rely on subjective criteria (“They were nice people!”) or feeling undue pressure from the congregation (“You just *have* to support my sister’s cousin’s daughter’s boyfriend.”)

How the Gospel Informs How We Think and Talk About Money

Even though we've addressed funding in this chapter, we haven't actually been talking about money. Not really. We've been talking about:

- **Faith:** God provides funds to expand his Kingdom and we have to trust Him enough to release those funds to missionaries, even though we have expenses that need to be met in our own churches.
- **Stewardship:** As His sons and daughters, we need to seek to use God's money for God's purposes to bring about God's glory.
- **Vision and calling:** Your church should find ways to support missionaries that are in line with the passions and gifts of your congregation.

Therefore it shouldn't be too surprising that when it comes to communicating about funding to a potential or current missionary, we aren't really talking about money either. Rather, we're talking about what "faith expressing itself in love" looks like in the conversations churches and missionaries have about financial support. Talking openly and compassionately about such things isn't easy. In many ways, it's countercultural. At times, it can feel a bit awkward for everyone involved. But we want to encourage you to see this as an area where the Gospel needs to be at work in your own life so you can freely and lovingly discuss the realities of financial support without feeling shame, pride, fear, or struggling for control.

When a missionary approaches your church for financial support, what do they most deeply want from you? It may shock you to hear this, but *it isn't money*. Well, okay, most of the time it isn't money—we've all had those "Please give us money even though you don't know us and have never met us" form letters, and we think you should feel free to drop them directly in the recycling bin. But when a missionary takes the time to personally write to you, call, or schedule a visit or video appointment, what do they really want? They want a relationship, not a business transaction. They are longing to find partners who will pray for them, dream with them, and engage with them so that people who don't yet know Jesus can meet Him. Even though dollar amounts, beginning dates, and ending dates are in view, they are not the most important parts of the story. Don't get us wrong. Missionaries *do* need your money in order to fulfill their calling on the field, but it isn't what they are really about. They want you! Understanding this—the fundamentally relational nature of all aspects of mission—is the first step to having open and compassionate communication with the missionaries who will join your family.

Creating an Open Discussion about Funding with Your Missionaries

Fostering open, compassionate dialogues with your missionaries about funding takes intentionality and humility. It also takes faith—both faith that God is going to be at work in both you/your missionaries during the process and faith that God is going to provide both for you and for them. Finally it involves faith to believe that, despite the fact everyone involved in the process is a sinner wildly capable of making errors and wounding others, God is at work in and through you to see His Kingdom grow.

One of the best ways to cultivate a strong relationship is to communicate personally with a missionary whenever possible. A personal phone call, a conference call, or a video chat beats an email or letter any day. Being able to hear and see your missionary, and vice versa, helps create the sort of bond and connection needed for a long and fruitful partnership. Specific details can always be confirmed in writing after you've spoken, but whenever possible, seek to communicate with your missionary personally, even if you're having to deliver difficult news. It will take some courage on your part, but in the long run, it's always worth it.

It's also helpful to anticipate some of the places where communication can be difficult. In broad terms, starting up is fun, changes can be difficult, and ending well is hard.

Start Up: Enjoying a New Venture

Telling a missionary that your church is going to support his or her work is one of the best parts of serving on a mission committee. Whether it's a monthly amount, a one-time gift, or support for a project, everyone loves to be able to say, "We'd like to partner with you financially."

When you're at this stage, here are few helpful things to keep in mind:

- **Money is of secondary importance in the relationship you are entering.** Again, while missionaries do need financial support, what they long for most deeply are partners who will join them in the fray. As you begin supporting missionaries, spend some time getting to know them—what is currently a challenge for them, where are they struggling, how can you encourage people to pray for them, how are they doing spiritually and emotionally, what are the exciting opportunities ahead for them? All of these things help you to understand how to best partner with your missionary and will help you get a sense of how to best invest in the relationship.
- **Be clear about how much financial support you are offering, how it will be paid to them, and how long you intend your commitment to run.** Remember, most missionaries have dozens or hundreds of supporters, and each church handles support a little differently. A friendly: "We're so excited to be able to support you, and this is what that will look like" conversation will be helpful to both sides. Missionaries often need to raise both one-time and ongoing support, so be clear about the type of support you will give, how often it will be given, how it will be disbursed and how long you intend to give. Everyone knows things can and do change, but communicating your intentions at the outset can save hurt feelings or misplaced expectations down the road. It's also a good idea to send this information in writing after you've spoken personally so both of you have a written record to refer to later.
- **Find ways to support and build a relationship.** Finding ways to help your mission committee, staff, and congregation feel connected to new missionaries pays off over time. People are motivated to pray, help, give, and care for people when they feel like they know them. While the announcement that your church is going to financially support a missionary is exciting, it's only one piece of the puzzle.

When Changes Need to Be Made, Overcome Challenges Together

If you ask any missionary, regardless of where they serve, what they do, or how long they have been there, "What is one of the constants of living as a missionary?" they'd all include "change" in their answer. Everything about an international missionary lifestyle involves change—change of locations, ministry focus (as new opportunities open), family dynamics, team members, expectations, culture, and language.

So it's no surprise to them when support relationships change over time. Sometimes the changes are exciting—a desire to give more money, or find deeper ways to partner. Sometimes they are more challenging—a realignment of funding due to strategic changes in the vision for your church or an unexpected drop in giving that requires support amounts to be recalculated. These are all par for the course. Regardless of the nature of the changes, here are a few things that will help you love your missionaries well.

- **Money is of secondary importance in the relationship you're changing.** Sound familiar? While there may be changes to the financial part of your relationship, your missionaries still desire an ongoing, mutual partnership with you. Knowing that you care—that they matter to

- you, that even though giving amounts may be changing, your commitment to them isn't changing—is just as important (maybe even more so) than the financial support they receive.
- **Communicate in person with your missionary before, during and after the change period.** This is admittedly easier when the changes are exciting—an opportunity for a deeper engagement on your part or an unexpected bump in support. But hearing from you in person about changes on the horizon, how the decisions were made, and what the ramifications are is a vital part of the support relationship. You should always send a confirmation letter with the specific details after you've talked, but simply sending a letter saying the church is lowering or suspending giving would be failing to love the missionary well.
 - **Be compassionate.** Even though missionaries live lives of constant change, it doesn't mean it's easy. On any given day or week, your news could be the extra degree of change that pushes them over the edge—even if it's a good change! Take some time to listen to them and try to see things from their point of view. Be sympathetic. Look for ways to encourage them regardless of what message you have to communicate. Keep praying for them. Ultimately, Jesus has to be their rock and fortress, not you, your church, or your support relationship. Missionaries realize this—most of the time! But as broken and weak people, it takes time and the Spirit's strength for hearts to catch up to where Jesus has been leading.

Ending Well: Stopping a Partnership Without Feeling Like You Just Shot Old Yeller

There are good and bad ways to end a partnership with your missionary. That isn't to say any of them are easy. Every missionary has had a church stop supporting them, and even if it wasn't fun, most of them make it through just fine. What you do as you withdraw support, however, can have a dramatic impact on how the experience feels and plays out for them. Ending well is never easy, but it is one of the most tangible ways the gospel gets worked out in the sending life of a church.

Here are some ways to ensure you are finishing as well as you started:

- **Money actually matters more as you end the relationship than it did when you started.** Most missionaries can't absorb the loss of a church's giving without needing to replace that amount in new giving. Anything you can do to help them in this regard will be greatly appreciated.
 - If a change (or end) to funding is on the horizon, tell your missionary as soon as you possibly can. They will need time to absorb the information and plan accordingly. Sometimes, this extra time makes a crucial difference affecting their continuity of fieldwork. If they know ahead of time that one source of support is going to end, they can begin working on finding new supporters without having to immediately drop what they are doing on the field and return home to raise more support.
 - Ask if there is a way to gradually stop financial support to minimize the impact of your decision on your missionary's work. Missionaries regularly need to raise new support and often have scheduled times to travel and connect with potential new supporters. Understanding your missionary's timetables may allow you to end your support in a way that minimizes the impact of needing to find new financial partners. Since money serves people and not the other way round, do your best to come at it from the perspective of people's needs first.
 - Be as flexible and generous as you can. Reducing support gradually and offering to help cover one-time expenses associated with needing to raise new support are great ways to help.
 - If at all possible, free your missionary to raise support from your congregation. Often—especially if the partnership has been effective—members in your

congregation will have formed special friendships with missionaries and are willing to consider giving individually to help them stay fully supported. This is a great place to see “the pie grow” because most of the time, these people wouldn’t simply start giving more on their own. With a strong personal connection to the missionary, a clear sense of the work they are doing, and sensitivity to how God is asking them to steward His resources, they often find new levels of generosity.

- **Communicate the decision to stop financial support personally, face to face if at all possible.** Yes, this is daunting, but the gospel transforms not just what we decide to do, but how we love people through the midst of difficulty and pain. Getting a letter in the mail that dissolves a partnership may be okay in the business world, but that method has no place in God’s family. Find a way to speak with missionaries in person, over the phone or by video conference. Expect it to be hard and expect to make mistakes, but likewise, cling to promises that Jesus makes to use the hard things in your life to make you more dependent on Him.
- **Be compassionate.** Becoming a missionary is going to be the hardest thing most of these individuals will ever do. Even if they have a strong ministry with lots of fruit and are blessed with a strong network of people that will care for them, there will be profound costs to their work—costs to their marriage and their children, to their comfort and security, and, at times, even to their safety. On top of that, they have to travel for months, sometimes years, to raise the money needed to carry out their calling. No matter how well thought out your decision is, or how necessary, it’s still going to be hard. Help your missionaries by bearing some of that cost. Listen to them and value their tears. Be tender when they feel hurt or angry. Find ways to let them know that a change in funding isn’t a referendum on the spiritual impact of their ministry or their personal worth.

A Special Note to Sending Churches

If you are a missionary’s sending church (vs. just one of their supporting churches) we would encourage you to use extra care here. Quite honestly, Serge generally recommends that you avoid cutting ties with a missionary your church raised up and sent, even if their support has to be reduced. Of course, sometimes continued funding just isn’t possible. In that rare occasion where the partnership is being brought to an end as a result of your church’s decisions, we’d recommend going the extra mile to love your people well.

Here are a few things that will help:

- **Be sure you understand what emotional, financial, and ministry impact your decision will make before you commit to it.** Some families can’t stay on the field without the support of their sending church. Do you have a clear picture of how your decision will impact the missionaries you’ve personally sent?
- **No matter what the reasons, or how well it’s communicated, your missionary is going to feel personally rejected.** To some extent, it *is* a personal rejection. Be sensitive to this fact and know that your missionaries may not respond as well as either you or they would like. Part of your role in bearing one another’s burdens is to be willing to carry some of the pain that will inevitably result, and to do so graciously and well.
- **Go over and above in your efforts to stay connected and make provision for your missionaries during the time of transition.** The ending only *starts* with the news that you are going to stop financial support. Even though communicating that news will feel like the big event for you, for your missionaries, it’s just the start of the big transition. Be ready to walk beside them for another year or two, particularly if they will need to come off the field to raise new support. Find ways to help them with travel expenses, lodging, a car to use, etc. Offer to fund some time at a debriefing program for missionaries (Serge uses Mission Training International and we recommend them highly), or to work with a counselor. Find out if your

church can help fund ongoing expenses for their children (e.g. helping them finish out the term or year at their school).

- **Pay careful attention to what you communicate to your congregation about the change.** Having to explain over and over what has happened and why compounds the difficulty for missionaries who have strong networks at your church. Someone on your mission committee should be a point person to deal with all the inquiries, and you should ask people in your church to go to that individual directly instead of asking the missionary. Often, individual members of your congregation will disagree with this type of decision. These disagreements should be discussed so you can help avoid the type of gossip and division that these decisions can occasion.

10 | Caring for Your Missionaries

Keeping Workers from Shriveling Up, Burning Out, Cursing God, Badmouthing You, and Then Dying

Walking Together

Both sending and supporting churches love their missionaries. Many of them do a great job of caring for those they send. In fact, over Serge's years of operating as a sending agency, we have been humbled as we've observed the irreplaceable roles of a missionary's sending and supporting churches. Churches often ask, "What can we do to go above and beyond in loving our missionaries?" Below are some valuable practices we've recognized in caring for missionaries, regardless of whether you are a supporting church who is just growing your relationship with a new missionary, or a sending church who is walking with a family that has been a part of your church for years.

Start by considering the different roles of the sending church, supporting church, and sending agency. One missionary might have several **supporting churches** whose members pray for the missionary and give financially. These churches may send short-term teams and communicate regularly with missionaries they support.

The **sending church**, on the other hand, tends to play a unique and more direct role in the life of the missionary, since that church is supporting and sending out one of their own. While missionaries often have many supporting churches, they usually only have one sending church. Their sending church often functions as their "home base" during support raising and when they return on home ministry assignment (also called furlough).

While a good **sending agency** endeavors to provide a degree of missionary care, unlike a local church, the agency also serves as the employer of the missionary. With the sending agency supervising the missionary and providing the essentials needed for long-term employment, the sending and supporting churches are freed up to focus on providing the missionary with pastoral care and advocacy.

Caring for Newly Appointed, Support-Raising Missionaries

Newly appointed missionaries can feel an incredible mix of excitement and fear. They may feel energized by a future calling, daunted by the task of raising support, anxious about looming transition, and grieved over future losses. While the support-raising missionary is still a present part of your congregation, the support-raising season can be a great time to begin intentionally caring for and walking with the missionary, helping with the practical challenges of support raising, and establishing relational bonds that will enable better long-distance care in the future.

Practical Ways to Help:

Partner with their sending agency. Ideally, a missionary's sending agency will provide practical help throughout the support-raising and deployment process (coaching in fundraising, setting up health insurance, scheduling pre-field training, etc.). But we know from our own failures that sending agencies are flawed. They cannot provide the level of care a good local church can. We encourage you to think of your church as partnering with a sending agency, rather than outsourcing to a sending agency. Missionaries will feel loved when your church checks in with them about whether the sending agency is serving them well.

Champion their vision. Sending and supporting churches take tremendous joy in seeing someone pursue God's call to the mission field, especially when the church has an existing relational connection to the missionary. Even in the midst of this, missionaries may need help from their pastors and church leaders in publicly championing their vision and calling. Pastors can encourage church members to support the missionary or speak on behalf of the missionary at support-raising events. A pastor "buying into" the work of the missionary strongly affects the readiness of a church's members to rally around the missionary. It identifies the work for what it is: a shared missional effort between the missionary and the church families who send and support them.

Network on their behalf. Established missionaries may appear to be incredibly well-networked, but most of them didn't start that way. They needed others to help open doors. Your church can help connect your missionaries with additional supporting churches and individuals by networking on the missionary's behalf. We've seen pastors play major roles in kingdom expansion as they've championed their missionary's calling both within their congregation and across their wider networks. Their missionary depended on the introductions they could provide.

Help streamline and simplify. Supporting churches often have their own set of forms to fill out when applying for support. Consider having someone gifted in administration help streamline the application process for your missionary, perhaps serving as a liaison between the missionary and other supporting churches, or serving as the point of contact for collecting prayer requests, ministry updates, and special requests.

Relational Ways to Care:

Plan ahead. Before deployment, ask your missionary how you can serve him or her. Ask for insight into what will be helpful for the missionary or missionary family. This is particularly helpful if you are the sending church, since the missionary will be saying goodbye to so many dear friends in your congregation.

Build a relationship face to face. Work to create a relationship characterized by emotional vulnerability so your church can pastor missionaries well in difficult seasons on the field. A supporting

church may have to be more intentional about this since missionaries may not have the established friendships with church members that they have in their sending church.

Acknowledge the unique challenge of a cross-cultural lifestyle. God calls His church to engage in loving the lost, both locally and globally. Everyone in every congregation should be reaching out, loving others, and sharing the gospel. The tendency to see everyone as missionaries can sometimes inadvertently obscure the unique challenges of living in other cultures. While the missional ministry itself—whether done at home or abroad—may be similar, the challenge of living and working in a culture far from home, family, friends, and normal support communities is not. Simply being sensitive to this dynamic is a great way to love your missionaries and to let them know you understand the challenges they face.

Caring for Missionaries While They Are on the Field

Practical Ways to Help:

Watch out for “orphaning” your missionaries in times of transition. Missionaries often outlast church leadership—from senior pastors to mission committee leaders, to elders making financial decisions—and these transitions can sometimes result in an alteration to the missionary’s support or structure of care. Missionaries understand things change back home even when their needs are the same on the field, but it’s helpful to communicate transitions as soon as possible and to work to ensure that missionaries’ needs don’t slip through the cracks when leadership changes or committees rotate. Whenever possible, continue to support the missionaries your church has sent, even if it’s necessary to stop supporting other missionaries to bring your program in line with your new leadership and vision.

Provide for and bless your missionaries in ways that are not tax-deductible. Missionaries can raise tax-deductible support through supporting churches and individuals for their direct support and ministry needs. This money is often funneled through their sending agency, and when in doubt, the sending agency can help determine what is tax-deductible and what is not. Sending churches are in a unique position to know and provide for needs that may fall outside the scope of normal, tax-deductible giving—airfare home for Christmas (or donating air miles for vacation or a special school trip), a car big enough for the missionary family, care packages, children’s college funds, the cost of unexpected health issues, etc. Many people are delighted to give one-time, over-and-above gifts to meet a specific need, even if those gifts are not tax-deductible.

Ask your missionaries about their needs. It’s hard to meet needs you don’t know about. Consider assigning a unique care person (see below) to check in periodically with your missionaries regarding specific needs. When missionaries are support-raising, on furlough, or physically present in your church, their needs are easier to identify. Deployed missionaries often need proactive churches who reach out and ask how to serve them. Whenever possible, avoid a generic, “Let us know if there is anything we can do,” and ask about specific needs. You can use the “Finding Out What Your Missionaries Really Need” addendum at the end of this chapter to give you some ideas.

Relational Ways to Care:

Pastor your missionaries. Missionaries need pastors, and they need pastors who don’t double as their team leaders or bosses on the field. Whether your missionary is stateside support raising or tens of thousands of miles away, they need spiritual shepherding beyond the scope of what a member-

care associate at a sending agency can give. Pastors, you are irreplaceable! And yet, we know how hard it is for pastors to know and meet the needs of the countless people in front of them, let alone those who are thousands of miles away. Planning a periodic check-in or shooting missionaries a quick email to ask how they are doing can feel like huge, attentive acts of care for missionaries far from home. At the very least, it lets them know they are not forgotten, which is a huge encouragement.

Set them up with a unique care person. Consider assigning your missionary to a person in your congregation (likely someone on your mission committee) who can check in, communicate the missionary's practical needs to the mission committee, and alert you to any pastoral needs that come up. Having the same person regularly check in is a great way to notice when a family may be struggling and to celebrate with them when things go well.

Love them as individuals. Missionaries feel the weight of having many stakeholders. They face expectations from a long list of supporting churches and individuals who sacrifice financially to help them do their work. They report back to their sending agency about ministry plans and progress. They have their own internal expectations and desires. And sometimes, churches can inadvertently put missionaries on a pedestal as examples of what a mission program has accomplished.

One of the most encouraging things you can do is cultivate a relationship with your missionaries, primarily focused on your love and care for them as individuals. A missionary's sending church, in particular, is in a unique position to love, encourage and support missionaries in personal, relational ways.

A practical way to do this is to ask missionaries questions that communicate your care for them beyond the fruit of their work. Ask how they are doing with their team, their kids, their sending agency, adjustment to the culture, etc., and seek to encourage them.

Caring for Missionaries When They Return Home

Practical Ways to Help:

Ask about their needs for housing and transportation. What will missionaries and their families need to rest and thrive during their time or home mission assignment or furlough? Reach out and ask about their specific needs before they return. If possible, provide a car to use and a home they can have to themselves or as a family. It can be a tremendous blessing to be able to stay in one house by themselves during the duration of their furlough. It creates a sense of having a "home base"—a place where they can recharge as they continue to meet with supporters and churches. Again, if you need help getting started, take a look at the "Finding Out What Your Missionaries Need" section below.

Continue to provide pastoral care, and connect them with counselors and debriefing programs. Missionaries often return home burnt out, and sometimes in crisis. Set aside funds for your missionaries to see counselors, and provide referrals if necessary. Encourage missionaries to attend debriefing programs (such as the "Debriefing and Renewal" program provided by Mission Training International: www.mti.org).

Provide for their rest. Think of ways your congregation can creatively provide their family with rest. Some possibilities are donating airline miles, loaning vacation homes, donating timeshares, etc.

Engage their children. Missionary kids struggle with re-entry right alongside their parents. Look for ways to serve and bless missionary kids—making them feel at ease at church, including them in play dates, introducing them to families with kids of similar ages, helping parents get their kids registered for school, sports teams, or summer camps, etc.

Relational Ways to Care:

Educate yourself and your leaders. Re-entry to life in the U.S. can be even more difficult than adjusting to life in another country. You and your congregation may be confused by the struggles your missionaries face as they return to a home they know and love. Consider taking a course or reading a book about the re-entry process missionaries walk through (or ask a former missionary about his or her re-entry experience).

Try to suspend expectations. When a missionary returns home, the sending church is often excited to have one of their most active members back in their congregation, now with a fresh experience of serving God overseas and newly equipped to encourage their members. Missionaries, however, rarely feel ready to hit the ground running right when they return to their home church. They need time to adjust to being back, grieve their losses, and process the enormous life change their family has just walked through. Do not expect missionaries to return as active, vibrant members or leaders of your congregation right away. Attending a church service may even feel overwhelming for them in the beginning. Most missionaries love publicly sharing what God has done and their gratitude to their sending church, but find it hard to do so immediately after returning.

Love and befriend them. Invite them into the community, while giving them freedom to say no. Missionaries often return to their home country feeling isolated and alone. They re-enter a community in which they were once deeply ingrained, but may feel at a loss as to how to engage again. Proactively invite missionaries to events and gatherings, as you would other church members. Include them in the normal rhythms of church and social life. But do so with an awareness that such engagement may be overwhelming. Include them but give them the freedom to say no.

A Note to Supporting Churches

While a sending church (hopefully) takes on a central role in caring for their missionaries, especially in the pastoral sense, supporting churches often provide the same type of help listed above. We encourage you to reflect on how you are currently caring for missionaries you have either sent from your own congregation or supported from another church, and see if you can take another small step to deepen your relationship with them. Many missionaries relish the idea of having an entire network of churches engaged with them, praying for them, and willing to partner with them and their work.

- If your relationship with a missionary is primarily through a monthly financial gift and praying regularly, consider sending the missionary an encouraging email.
- Find out what foods they miss from home and send a care package.
- Seek to help the sending church meet housing and transportation needs when missionaries return on furlough.
- When missionaries report fruit in their ministry, celebrate with them by sending an encouraging email.

Finding Out What Your Missionaries Really Need

The following is a sample questionnaire that a sending or supporting church could use to help provide for missionaries who are staying with them or around them during home ministry assignment.

As you work through the following inventory, here are some “best practices” to keep in mind:

- **Be sure you have the “traveling contact info.” for missionaries you’ll be hosting.** Email addresses, cell phone numbers, etc., often change.
- **If at all possible, provide a single point of contact from your church to missionaries.** Even if all that person does is forward emails and remain available by phone, this is extremely helpful for missionaries. Consider the logistics of moving your own family overseas and then living on the road for several months. Having one person at your church who can funnel information and get questions answered is a blessing to missionaries who are potentially juggling numerous, closely spaced trips.
- **Be as flexible as you can when hosting missionaries.** Much of their lives are spent in transition, and often itineraries change for reasons that are beyond their control. Letting them know the “light will be on for them” whenever they arrive can take a load off their minds.

Housing

Many missionaries returning to the U.S. gave up their U.S. residence when deploying. Missionaries visiting supporting churches may need a place to stay for a few days or weeks. Often, putting missionaries up with a family from the church that has adequate lodging (i.e. enough bedrooms and bathrooms to accommodate an extra family) is a good choice in this situation.

Missionaries on home ministry assignment may need housing for several months to a year. In this case, the ideal solution may be a missionary house, condominium, apartment (owned or leased by the church), or a church member’s second home that can be used for free.

Missionaries are a hearty bunch, and they are used to making the best of whatever comes their way. But anything you can do to help them have a sense of “normal” while they are away from the field is a tremendous gift. A good test question is, “How would I feel about my family living in these accommodations for the time frame in question?”

Specific Questions to Ask:

- Will your family need housing?
- What are the dates that you will need housing? (This tells you how long and what type of accommodation to look for.)
- Minimum number of bedrooms needed:
- Maximum number of bedrooms needed:

Transportation

Providing a safe, mechanically sound vehicle for missionaries to use while they are in your area is a huge expense saver for missionaries. Missionaries aren’t picky; almost anything will do as long as they can safely transport their entire family. Schedule a normal maintenance checkup to be sure the vehicle is mechanically sound, and confirm that all taxes, licenses, and registrations are up to date and the vehicle is fully insured for a guest driver.

Organizations like “Righteous Rides” righteousrides.org, specialize in providing short-term leased vehicles for missionaries. Covering the cost of such a lease could also be a way to support your missionary.

Specific Questions to Ask:

- Will your family need a vehicle?
- What dates will you need a vehicle?
- How many people do you need to transport?
- Do you need child car seats or boosters? How many?
- How many miles are you likely to put on the vehicle? (This will help you determine if the person needs it for local transportation or if they will have to make longer trips to visit supporters.)

Schooling

Missionary kids often need temporary schooling while on the road, especially during home ministry assignment. Having someone who knows the local system and who can help them get registered is helpful.

Specific Questions to Ask:

- Do you need help figuring out schooling options for your children while you are with us?
- If so, what type of educational situation were you ideally looking for? (public, private, Christian, home school support, etc.)

Child Care

Missionaries may not have the social networks in your area to easily arrange for baby sitters or find extra child care help. Try to create a list of adults and teens who are willing to volunteer and babysit. You don’t need to arrange it all, but it is helpful to provide an up-to-date list they can use and say, “I got your name from the church. They said you may be available to...”

Specific Questions to Ask:

- Would you like help in finding someone who can watch your children so you can have date nights, attend small groups, etc.?
- If so, are you able to pay?
- What are the ages of your children?

Connecting with local sports, activities, etc.

If missionaries will be with you for an extended stay, helping them find teachers for music lessons, register for sports and park district programs, etc. is a great way to help missionary kids feel welcomed and valued.

Clothing

Depending on where missionaries serve in the world, they may not have the type of clothing they need to survive well in your part of the world. Round up coats, hats, gloves, etc., for folks coming from warm climates. A gift card that can be used to purchase these types of items is an easy way to help out.

Specific Questions to Ask:

- Is there any clothing you don't currently have (or can't bring with you) that we could provide?
- If so, please provide sizes and style preferences.

Note: Missionary kids often make do with older and hand-me-down clothing. If you really want to bless your missionary moms and dads, offer to take their kids on a "back to the U.S." shopping trip to help them get good quality, up-to-date clothes that will be appropriate for your community and climate. Many people are happy to contribute to one-time expenses like this. Keep in mind that missionaries sometimes need more help than others since styles and fashions change much more quickly in the U.S. than they do in other cultures. Adult missionaries may need some help too, since they'll be standing up in front of audiences nearly every week.

Volunteer Help

Missionaries often work where there is a lack of professional services. Consider connecting missionaries with skilled people in your congregation who will donate time to solve IT issues, provide tax advice, etc.

Specific Questions to Ask:

- Are there particular tasks you need to accomplish while home that a volunteer from our church could help you with? (e.g. buying new computer equipment, resolving IT issues, filing taxes, etc.)
- Do you need recommendations that we could help with? (medical, dental, mechanic, etc.)

11 | We Can Help

Ways Serge Can Partner with Your Church to Deepen Your Mission Efforts

A Personalized Approach

Serge carries out its work with the following in mind:

- **Every church and each person has a unique calling in the kingdom.** Serge is here to help you live out the missional calling God has given *your church*, not to export a program. We will work with you individually and guide you through an intentional discernment process rather than present you with a “take it or leave it” formula.
- **Relational connection is the key to partnerships that work.** Serge is committed to the role of relationships in transforming churches and individuals. Our entire process—from helping your church strengthen its international mission engagement to caring for the people you send with Serge—revolves around helping people experience God’s grace through relational connections.
- **Without daily renewal in the gospel, mission becomes powerless. But without mission, daily renewal turns inward.** The transforming effect of the gospel is the motive and sustaining power for mission. We’ll help you and your church better understand this dynamic and then develop strategies so every part of your church can experience deeper spiritual renewal, which will fuel your mission. We provide resources for both discipleship and mentorship (Serge’s resource offering includes books, small group studies, teaching events, consulting, and conferences; Serge mentoring begins with discipleship in relationship through resources like *Sonship* and continues through in-depth, disciple-making training and leadership development). Our goal is to help your church grow in its ability to see renewal and mission as one, integrated outworking of the gospel in the life of your church, its community, and the world.

If you’d like to begin personalized engagement with Serge toward deepening your church’s international mission program, it’s easy to get started. Simply contact Mobilization Director, Matt Allison, at mallison@serge.org. The following are steps we’ll take you through.

Step 1 | *Discovery*

In order for your church to deepen its international mission engagement, it's important to understand who you are as a body and how God is calling you to participate in Kingdom expansion in this season.

Our discovery process helps you—and your team—discern where you've been in terms of mission, the gifts of your church, and where God is calling you in the future. The “Discovery” step involves reflective questions for you and your team to answer and pray over.

Next, we will follow up with you to be sure we understand your church's passions, desires, and calling. Serge specializes in creative partnerships. Based on what we hear from you, we will make a range of suggestions for how Serge can best partner with your church, listening along with you to see where and how the Spirit is leading your church further into mission.

Step 2 | *Serge Suggests Ministry Partnerships*

Serge offers everything from long-term placement for missionaries, to short-term trips and summer internships, to apprenticeships for those seeking to discern long-term calling to cross-cultural missions. We work around the world in settings ranging from European cities to rural Africa and Asia. We specialize in church planting, discipleship, arts outreach, holistic mercy and justice ministries, and have a growing investment in business for transformation. Serge can help you field individuals from your church, start a partnership to create a new team, or pioneer a new field or ministry.

Based on what we hear from you in the “Discovery” step, Serge will make a range of suggestions for how we can best partner with your church. Because we specialize in creative partnerships, there are often several options for any given situation.

Step 3 | *Implementation of a Renewing Mission, 4-Stage Pathway*

Once you have a sense of where God is calling you as a church, Serge is ready to help you get there. We have always believed being transformed by the gospel provides the power and motivation for missional living. Serge's Resources and Mentoring ministries emphasize daily renewal in the gospel—learning to live freely as God's child in a lifestyle of repentance, faith, and love—which leads to missional engagement.

We will work with your church to develop a “missional nurture pathway” that will work best in your context and build on the strengths you already have. By highlighting best practices and helpful pathways, our goal is to help you develop an organic, repeatable discipleship structure to engage people in living missionally. Whether it's preparation and participation in short-term mission trips or serving in the nursery, partnering to plant a new church overseas or becoming a better small group leader, Serge can help you develop a culture where daily renewal and missional living go hand in hand.

Based on our experience, we've seen a pattern emerge in the teams and churches that have consistently lived out gospel realities and extended this to others. (You can find a more in-depth look at this pathway in **Chapter 2** of this guide):



Prepare. Finding consistent ways to teach, model, and live out the gospel in every area of life is the starting point for sustainable mission. Serge Resources specialize in creating Christ-centered, grace-based books and studies to help people grow in the gospel.

Engage: Whether it’s a short-term trip, reaching out to your community, or serving those in your church, the gospel is demonstrated with hands and feet. Serge can help you find ways to live out your missional calling through loving and serving others, whether in the U.S. or internationally.

Debrief. Disciples are handcrafted, not mass produced. Serge Mentoring can help train your shepherds, disciple-makers, and leaders to walk with people as they process the “fray” of ministry experiences and learn how to drink from the gospel afresh.

Support. As people in your church taste the transforming power of the gospel and learn to allow their faith to express itself in love—love for their families, their neighbors, and God’s broken world—they also have a chance to help others connect more deeply to a lifestyle of grace. Serge can help you make the most of people’s stories and experiences, capture the passions revealed in the “Engagement” and “Debrief” stages, and find ways to engage in global mission in the midst of busy lives.

What’s the Next Step?

The following will overlap with assessment questions offered earlier in this guide, but can be a helpful index of next steps as you think about how Serge might partner with you.

Where Are You?	Next Step:
Do you have a regional focus?	Check for a Serge field match at www.serge.org .
Do you regularly send members and leaders in international mission?	Ask for information about internships and short-term team opportunities.
What are the main giftings of your congregation?	After engaging in assessing your congregation’s giftings, request a relevant “Partnership Abstract” from Serge.
Do you have a program to help people use their giftings in mission?	If yes, then consider including information about Serge internships and apprenticeships in your offerings to your congregation.

Do you want your international mission work to connect more to your local mission work?	Talk to a Serge advisor to see how this is possible.
Does your church have a shared sense of calling?	If not, consider hosting Serge for a weekend seminar.
Where Are You Going?	Next Step:
What are new areas of the world you want to send your church into?	Request a "Partnership Abstract" from Serge.
Are you interested in integrating your discipleship and mission programs?	Contact mentoring@serge.org to talk with Serge staff about how to deepen your church's integration of renewal and mission.

Serge Mission Offerings

Serge has more than 200 missionaries—80 percent are long-term workers and 20 percent are one- or two-year apprentices. Every year, we send between 30 and 40 interns for anywhere between two and 11 months. Here are some ways you can connect with the work on the ground.

Prayer Conferences (1 week)

Attendees have the chance to see and understand what God is doing in the global church. Our flagship prayer conference is the London Evangelism and Prayer Conference (serge.org/leap). These conferences help members of your church exercise spiritual muscles (evangelism, intercessory prayer, team ministry) that they often do not have opportunity or vision to exercise in their everyday lives.

Short-Term Trips (1-2 weeks)

Short-term teams come alongside Serge missionaries to assist with and complete ministry projects, from constructing buildings to leading Vacation Bible Schools. These opportunities are ideal for North American churches looking to partner with Serge missionary teams (serge.org/stt).

Internships (2-11 months)

The heart of our Internship (serge.org/internships) is a two-month summer program where interns serve embedded alongside Serge long-term teams. They are discipled and helped to be more rooted in the gospel and also receive input on their callings to cross-cultural ministry. Some of our internship sites are in cities and involve working with church plants in generally poor immigrant communities. Other internship sites are in more rural contexts. We also send interns for longer periods throughout the year on a case-by-case basis.

Apprenticeships (1-2 years)

Serge Apprenticeships (serge.org/apprenticeships) give people considering a long-term call to mission work hands-on experience and personal mentoring to help discern calling. We currently have Apprenticeship programs in the U.K. (London), Ireland, Spain, Uganda, and North Africa, and the list is growing. Apprentices spend five days a week in direct ministry under a long-term missionary, and one day a week with the apprentice program team doing *Sonship*-type curriculum and cross-cultural training.

Long-Term Opportunities (5-year commitment)

Long-term Serge workers (serge.org/mission/long-term) are people who have been stretched by the gospel's impact on their lives and followed path into cross-cultural ministry. It is slow, faith-stretching, incarnational work that we believe should not be done alone. Our long-term teams consist of eight people on average. Each team strives to reflect some mixture of work in spiritual renewal, evangelism, and ministries of justice and mercy.

If a member of your church would like to talk to us more about any of these opportunities, they can take the first step by filling out a GO Form at serge.org/go This helps us engage them in the best way possible.

Deepening Renewal in Your Current Discipleship Offerings

The process above focuses on how to bring a renewal emphasis into common missional activities. This presupposes there are missional activities to participate in and people who are eagerly engaging. However, in many cases, the church discipleship ministry (small groups, adult education, one-to-one discipling) has to lead the way in encouraging members to begin to engage in mission.

Through Serge Resources and Mentoring, we can partner with you to grow or deepen your church's current emphasis on personal transformation. Our goal is to help you see your missional expression grow. The following are a few ways we can help:

Leading an On-site Renewal Event

Serge partners with churches or networks to host one- to two-day weekend renewal events. Topics vary from spiritual intimacy to how to apply the gospel to everyday situations. Serge also offers retreats for men, women, and leadership groups. Serge also works with a sponsoring organization to host *Sonship* Week, a weeklong renewal conference every other year. All events focus on Scripture teaching, authentic stories of gospel change, and small group interaction. For a limited number of participants, *Sonship* Weeks also offer the opportunity to provide or engage in on-site, one-to-one daily gospel mentoring.

Helping Train Key Disciple Makers

There is no "mass production" discipleship program. Rather, people need other people to walk with them to experience gospel transformation. Serge has a 25-year track record of helping Christian leaders experience God's grace in transformative ways through our *Mentored Sonship* program. Additionally, Serge recently developed an in-depth Discippler Training Program to teach others how to more effectively disciple from a gospel paradigm. We would be happy to discuss how we can help your church or organization develop its own core of "gospel disciplers" using a combination of these programs. *Mentored Sonship* and our in-depth Discippler Training are generally offered through video conference. They offer access to high-quality disciplers and trainers without the need to travel or attend conferences.

Helping Small Group Leaders and Lay Leaders Disciple Better

In addition to our more robust programs listed above, Serge also provides on-site training for small group leaders and other lay leaders who are engaged in discipling others. The training focuses on digging below surface issues to bring transformation to people's hearts.

Training Leadership to Live Out the Gospel in Teams

Often, leaders and ministry teams struggle to live out the gospel in their shared work. Serge offers one- to two-day seminars to help leadership teams take the personal transformation the gospel brings in individual lives and apply it to the dynamics of leading and being on a missional team.

12 | On Mission

A Serge Journal/Devotional for Your Short-Term Mission Trips

Why the Need for *On Mission*?

A mission trip provides unique opportunities to experience God's grace in ways we often miss during our day-to-day routines. Over time, however, we are prone to forget these spiritual lessons as the memories of the trip fade. Given the high cost of planning and executing short-term trips, we wanted to provide a resource to help participants capture the transformative lessons they learned and develop concrete follow-up plans for staying engaged in living missionally once they return.

On Mission is an expanded daily devotional guide, designed to help make the most of short-term trips as individuals and teams:

- Spiritually prepare for a trip.
- Stay connected to Jesus each day of the trip through Scripture reading, devotions, reflection questions and space to record important lessons, events and answers to prayer.
- Reflect on what God has taught and find new ways to stay missionally engaged after returning home.

As a mission sending agency, Serge desires to see God's grace produce lasting transformation and missional engagement in those who participate in global mission. In light of that, *On Mission* was designed to be flexible, applicable to a broad range of mission trips, and suitable for audiences from high school students to adults. It's great for individuals and also ideal for groups that want a common set of readings, devotionals and questions to anchor the time together.

Ordering Information

Audience: Adult

Category: RELIGION / Christian Ministry / Missions
6" by 9" 112 Pages Trade Paper

Suggested Retail: \$14.99
Print ISBN: 9781942572121 Item No. 2055

About the Author

Patric Knaak (B.A. Moody Bible Institute; M.A. Wheaton Graduate School) is the Area Director for Renewal at Serge where he leads their publication, teaching, training and mentoring ministries. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America, Patric has worked in curriculum development and was the pastor for spiritual formation at Naperville Presbyterian Church (IL) before joining Serge. A veteran of nearly a dozen missions trips, he's seen the good, the bad and the ugly when it comes living out grace at the fray.



On Mission: Devotions for Your Short-Term Trip is available through Serge's publisher, New Growth Press (www.newgrowthpress.com), and Amazon.

Overview of *On Mission*

Part 1: Before You Go

Pre-Trip Exercise: Ready or Not?

Designed to help you identify some of your needs and hopes going into the trip. *Ready or Not* will also give you the chance to journal about things you'd like to see God do on your trip and to craft a prayer update to send out before you leave.

Travelogue Features: My Teammates; Holding the Ropes

My Teammates and *Holding the Ropes* provide easy ways to record the names and contact information for your teammates and your supporters.

Part 2: On the Trip

On Mission's daily devotionals are designed to help you connect with Christ in deep and refreshing ways as you experience the highs and lows of your journey. Every day begins with a passage from the gospels that focuses on Jesus. A brief article provides the content for each day and is followed by thought-provoking questions and prayer and journaling exercises. Each devotional also includes a reflection section where you can record how you saw God work during the course of the day.

Because they can be completed in 30 minutes, the devotionals are easy to schedule consistently throughout your trip.

- **Devotional One**—*Jesus is the One Who Sustains You*
- **Devotional Two**—*Jesus is the One Who Secures Your Identity*
- **Devotional Three**—*Jesus is the One Who Equips You Through His Spirit*
- **Devotional Four**—*Jesus is the One Who Motivates You to Love Others*

- **Devotional Five**—*Jesus is the One Who Shows You How to Lay Down Your Life*
- **Devotional Six**—*Jesus is the One Who Provides for Your Every Need*
- **Devotional Seven**—*Jesus is the One Who Welcomes You Back After You've Messed Up*
- **Devotional Eight**—*Jesus is the One Who Walks with You in Uncertainty*
- **Devotional Nine**—*Jesus is the One Who Carries Your Burdens*
- **Devotional Ten**—*Jesus is the One Who Changes the Way You See Others*

Additional Devotional Resource: Introducing Lectio Divina

For trips lasting longer than ten days, the *Additional Devotional Resource* section will help you use an ancient method of devotional reading that combines Scripture and prayer into an intimate listening experience with God.

Travelogue Features: Our Journey; New Friends; Missional Memories; By the Numbers

Our Journey, *New Friends*, *Missional Memories*, and *By the Numbers* all provide handy ways to record the unique memories, people, and experiences you'll encounter along the way.

Part 3: After the Trip

God's work in your life doesn't end when you return home. In many ways, it's just beginning. To help you make the lessons of your trip last a lifetime, the debrief exercises will help you record and organize your thoughts, listen more intently to God, and discern his plans for you. They will also help you continue to live *on mission*—with the same outward focus of helping others meet Jesus that you developed during your trip.

Debrief One: Making Sense of What You've Seen

Completed on your journey home or in the first week after you're back, the first debrief will help you to record the spiritual lessons of your trip while they are fresh, and to reflect on all the ways God was at work during your trip. It will also help you prepare to tell your story to your church, friends, and supporters.

Debrief Two: The Gospel In and Through You

Completed four to six weeks after you're back and the dust has settled, the second debrief is geared toward helping you connect the experiences and lessons of your trip with your daily life. It features a planning section designed to help you come up with some concrete ways to live more missionally—to pray, serve, give, and go in ways that will help others see Jesus more clearly—as part of your normal lifestyle.

Debrief Three: The Ongoing Journey

Completed six months after your trip, the final debrief will help you review your plans and consider additional ways to be missionally engaged, involved in helping God's kingdom grow, and sharing Christ with those who don't yet know him.

Contributors

Matt Allison | Matt began working with Serge in 2003, serving in Uganda until 2006 and then as a recruiter in the U.S. He currently serves as Serge's Mobilization Director and Associate Director of Mission. He enjoys helping churches mobilize their congregations to serve in the global mission of the church. He has done graduate work at the University of Notre Dame and the University of Rochester in American History. He and his wife Rachel live in West Philadelphia and are members of City Church.

Josiah Bancroft | As a pastor, a church planter, and a missionary, Josiah has a heart to see God's grace and power work in new ways in the church and throughout the world. A graduate of Covenant College and Reformed Theological Seminary, Josiah planted three churches in the U.S. before he and his wife Barbara joined Serge with their three children in 1992. Josiah was drawn to the work of Serge because of the organization's commitment to grace and its focus on the gospel for the believer and through the believer to the world. Josiah served with Serge in a variety of roles until 2005, including team leader, pastor, field director, U.S. Director, and Missions Director. After co-pastoring Grace Community Church in Asheville, N.C., for five years, Josiah returned to Serge in 2005 as Director of Mission. Josiah enjoys reading theology, poetry and novels, dabbling in tech, and Barbara's marvelous cooking.

Lindsay Kimball | Lindsay's time with Serge began with a summer internship in the Czech Republic, followed by two years of church-planting work with Serge's team in Vienna, Austria. Lindsay lives in Philadelphia, and enjoys serving as a gospel renewal mentor, and as coordinator of Serge's new Discippler Training initiatives. She graduated with a counseling degree from Biblical Seminary in 2014, and loves how her work with Serge allows her to witness God's grace worked out in the frayed edges of her own life and in the lives of others.

Patric Knaak | As a pastor, Patric's life, marriage, and ministry were radically changed through the Mentored Sonship program. It's now his great joy to be part of making that same teaching and mentoring available to a new generation of Christian leaders. A graduate of Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton Graduate School, Patric's background includes Christian publishing in addition to his pastoral work. He's husband to Jennifer, father to Parker and loves it when they can join him to see what God is up to in the world. He loves to read, dabbles in vintage fountain pens, and has never met BBQ he didn't like.

Editorial Team | Karen Herold, Lindsay Kimball, Patric Knaak, Karen Lambrecht, Kelsey Reed, and Dargan Thompson.

Serge Grace at the Fray

*101 West Ave., Ste 305
Jenkintown PA 19046-2039
goingglobal@serge.org
(215) 885-1811
serge.org*