

POSTINGS

articles for missions mobilizers



Postings Classic Issue | by Ellen Livingood

Charting the Path for future global workers

A person's journey towards cross-cultural missions often takes twists and turns over a period of several years. Some get discouraged and give up. Others travel the missions path on their own, contacting their church only when they are ready to ask for financial support. By this point in their journey, decisions have been made and processes set in motion that don't always match the priorities and requirements established by their church.

Churches and potential workers should walk the path together toward cross-cultural service. Future missionaries need the affirmation, encouragement, and direction of their church leaders. They need to clearly understand the church's global priorities and their requirements for missionary service. They need the support of a community of others who are on a similar journey.

To the question, "Do you have people in your missions service pipeline?" church leaders often answer, "I hope so," or "I'm not really sure," or "Maybe a couple." These responses suggest that they probably have not made a sufficient effort to discover those who are

pursuing missions or persons who could be candidates for cross-cultural ministry if they were just encouraged to consider it.

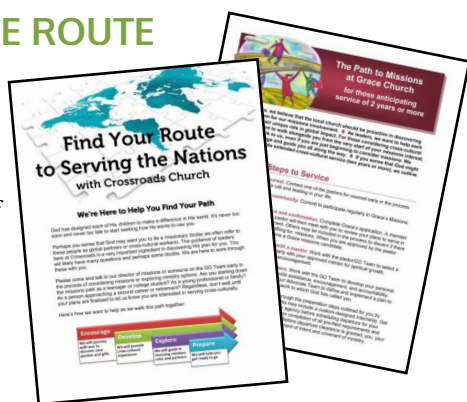
Sending workers is more likely to happen if you as a church take the initiative. You may be surprised at how much latent missions

interest is buried in your church. Here are some ways to invite potential global workers to begin the journey.

Creating a Missions Path

1. OUTLINE THE ROUTE

Articulate the process you want prospective workers to follow (the samples pictured right are attached at the end of this *Postings*).



2. INVITE DIALOG

Regularly remind the entire congregation that you would love to chat with them about how God might want to use their gifts and passions to impact the world. Create multiple avenues to make it easy for them to contact you—by phone/text, email, open-door office hours, a [coffee-shop appointment](#), etc.

3. CONNECT WITH YOUTH

Intentionally intersect with high-school and college-age students to explain the walking-together concept and to open conversations about their missions interest. Summer break is a good time to engage with collegians. Ask for a few minutes to share at one of their small group meetings or a social gathering. You may discover that students who had no missions interest as high-schoolers now have a passion for the world. Help them understand their church wants to play a role in their missions plans.

4. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL

Annually challenge staff, elders, your missions team, and other key leaders to ask God to point out those He may be calling to missions. You may want to provide leaders with a [list of characteristics](#) that

mark those with cross-cultural gifting. Then challenge the individuals and couples they identify to consider global service. Plant the seeds of possibility; ask God to make them grow.

5. OFFER COMMUNITY

Establish an [informal group](#) of those interested in missions service. Meet monthly or bimonthly to talk about missions and the process of becoming a global partner.

6. RECRUIT GUIDES

Identify spiritually mature and discerning individuals who are gifted and willing to walk alongside potential workers in the early stages of their missions journey. The job doesn't need to be intimidating. You may want to ask the guides and the prospective workers to meet regularly and work their way through a resource such as Marsha Woodard's *To Timbuktu & Beyond* or Ryan Shaw's *Spiritual Equipping for Mission*.

7. DEFINE NEXT STEPS

At the end of every short-term trip or local, cross-cultural ministry, make sure that each participant knows at least one way they could get further involved globally. Explain how they can continue to expand their vision and develop their ministry skills. Be proactive about developing and communicating these “next step” opportunities.

On the next pages are two sample information sheets that churches developed to help potential global workers understand their pathway to missions. You are free to customize these materials for your own use.

Catalyst's *Postings* e-newsletter is a free, monthly publication of practical articles highlighting what churches and agencies are doing to mobilize untapped potential for global impact.

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READ past *Postings* articles at CatalystServices.org/Postings-gallery-of-archives.



The Path to Missions at Grace Church

for those anticipating
service of 2 years or more

Here at Grace, we believe that the local church should be proactive in discovering God's direction for our missions involvement. ♦ As leaders, we want to help each person find their unique role in global impact. For those considering cross-cultural service, we want to walk alongside you from the very start of your missions interest. Please come talk to us, even if you are just beginning to consider missions. We want to encourage and guide you all along the way. ♦ If you sense that God might be leading you into extended cross-cultural service (two years or more), we outline this path.

Sequential Steps to Service

1. **Seek pastoral counsel.** Contact one of the pastors for counsel early in the process of confirming God's call and leading in your life.
2. **Join our missions community.** Commit to participate regularly in Grace's Missions Discovery Group.
3. **Seek further guidance and confirmation.** Complete Grace's application. A member of the GO Team and a pastor will then meet with you to review your plans to serve in a cross-cultural assignment. Others may be included in the process to discern if there is a true calling to, and gifting for, missions. When you are approved by the pastor and GO Team, you become a Grace missions candidate.
4. **Select agency and work with a mentor.** Work with the pastor/GO Team to select a mission agency. Meet regularly with your approved mentor for spiritual growth, personal development, and encouragement.
5. **Develop your sending partners.** Work with the GO Team to develop your personal Advocate Team which will provide assistance, encouragement, and accountability. Work with the GO Team and your Advocate Team to define and implement a plan to engage the congregation in the work to which God has called you.
6. **Complete requirements.** Work through the preparation steps outlined for you by Grace and your mission agency. This may include a custom-designed internship. Get clearance from both Grace and your agency before scheduling departure for your assignment. Approval is predicated on completion of all pre-field requirements and commitment of full financial support. Before departure clearance is granted, you, your agency, and Grace will sign an agreement of intent and covenant of ministry.

Requirements for Service with Grace

Those who want to become one of Grace's cross-cultural workers will be evaluated by the following guidelines, applied with a commitment to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading.

1. **Relationship to Grace.** Candidates must be members of Grace in full agreement with our Statement of Faith and willing to submit to the authority of the church elders as their spiritual leaders.
2. **Personal qualifications.** Candidates must exhibit a consistent, godly character and requisite qualifications/education/skills. They must prove their ability and fitness for ministry by serving in various positions with Grace over a period of time sufficient for leaders to evaluate their gifting and readiness for cross-cultural service.
3. **Agency.** The partnering mission agency must hold to biblical doctrines in agreement with Grace's Statement of Faith and be committed to working in close partnership with Grace as the sending church. They must have a proven track record of providing:
 - Appropriate pre-field training and ongoing learning opportunities
 - Quality leadership including regular field supervision and evaluations
 - Regular missionary care and, as needed, professional counseling services
 - Medical insurance
 - An adequate retirement plan

The agency must also agree to send to Grace annual ministry evaluations for each worker and to communicate with our church leaders in a timely manner regarding any major ministry assignment changes being considered or significant issues our workers or their families are encountering.

Fulfilling Our Acts 1:8 Mandate

Grace Church is excited about the privilege to be a part of fulfilling Jesus' command to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. We believe He wants us to mobilize our members as His ambassadors and our partners.

Let's walk that path together!



Find Your Route to Serving the Nations with Crossroads Church

We're Here to Help You Find Your Path

God has designed each of His children to make a difference in His world. It's never too soon and never too late to start seeking how He wants to use you.

Perhaps you sense that God may want you to be a missionary (today we often refer to these people as global partners or cross-cultural workers). The guidance of leaders here at Crossroads is a very important ingredient in discovering His plan for you. You will likely have many questions and perhaps some doubts. We are here to work through these with you.

Please come and talk to our director of missions or someone on the GO Team early in the process of considering missions or exploring ministry options. Are you starting down the missions path as a teenager or college student? As a young professional or family? As a person approaching a second career or retirement? Regardless, don't wait until your plans are finalized to let us know you are interested in serving cross-culturally.

Here's how we want to help as we walk this path together:



Crossroad's Sending Process

Investing your life in missions involves a series of important decisions, often over a period of several years. Whatever the timeframe, Crossroads wants to be highly involved with those who sense that God may be leading them in this direction. The director of missions, the GO Team, and our pastors are all committed to walking through the decision-making process with potential missionary candidates from start to finish.

As you explore missions and prepare to go, we want to help you:

- ♦ seek confirmation of God's gifting and calling
- ♦ gain practical experience in cross-cultural ministry
- ♦ develop a strong relationship with church leaders and the GO Team
- ♦ evaluate your missions readiness and define any additional preparation needed
- ♦ research the best mission agency for you
- ♦ determine a good fit of assignment and location
- ♦ build strong ties to folks here at Crossroads
- ♦ overcome debt issues or other roadblocks
- ♦ share the challenges of raising up a dedicated support team

How Crossroads Partners with Our Global Workers

Here at Crossroads we take very seriously our responsibility to partner with our cross-cultural workers. Our role includes:

- ♦ **Prayer** for you, wherever you are on your missions journey
- ♦ **Pastoral care & guidance**
- ♦ **Physical & emotional support** to see you flourish
- ♦ **Resources** to help achieve our shared missions goals
- ♦ **Finances**

Come Talk to Us!

We are eager to help you determine how God wants to use us together to bless the nations. Let's schedule a time soon to begin the conversation.

Please contact [John Doe], our director of missions, in the church office, via email [] or call/text []. We want to sit down and hear about your vision, help answer your questions, and begin now to pray with you, seeking God's guidance together.

Biblical Guidelines for Crossroad's Global Ministry

- ♦ **ENGAGE.** We believe God has commissioned Crossroads Church to take a proactive role in global ministry—from next door to the ends of the earth as Jesus described in Acts 1:8.
- ♦ **SEND.** We believe that God gifts and guides individuals to cross-cultural ministry. He confirms this “sending” through Crossroads Church as He did in the Antioch Church in Acts 13:1-3.
- ♦ **EQUIP.** We believe Crossroads Church is responsible for resourcing, counseling, praying, and caring for its missionary partners, as the Philippian church did on behalf of Paul in Philippians 1:5, 19; 2:25; 4:15-18.