



*Guidelines to Assist Churches
in Missions Development*



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

This resource is provided at no charge due to the gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

Guidelines to Assist Churches in Missions Development

Introduction:

The purpose of this guide is to assist you, the pastor and/or mission leadership, to think strategically through some foundational mission principles that will equip your church for a holistic and powerful *Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections* mission strategy. This guide is not intended to provide every answer nor is it designed to give you a programmatic step-by-step process, because every church and mission adventure is different. This guide is designed to provide a basic framework for a church's mission ministries. God will provide the details and direction as you go.

The late Avery Willis, in his book, *The Biblical Basis of Missions*, describes Mission and Missions, on page 11: "By Mission I mean the total redemptive purposes of God to establish his kingdom. Missions, on the other hand, is the activity of God's people, the church, to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God to the world. The word mission comes from the Latin word *mittere* meaning **to send**. God is both the **sender** and the **sent** (in Christ). The Church is **sent** by God on mission and cooperates with God to **send** missionaries."

Jesus gives us the mandate and the method of His Mission in the following passages of scripture. These verse are God's marching orders for the local church to be on Mission with Him. These marching orders for the church is known as the Great Commission:

Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." NKJ

Acts 1:8; "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." NKJ

Questions:

1. Where do I start?
2. Is there someone who can sit down with me and coach me through a strategic mission's process?
3. How can I have a relationship with people who care about my church's heart?
4. How do I connect with all the SBOM mission opportunities through Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections' mission strategy?
5. How do I connect with other SBC mission opportunities?
6. Are there resources available to help my church develop and mature its mission plan?

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Lord willing, you find answers to these questions in the following pages as we in the Global Missions Office of the SBOM will guide you in discovering how your church can develop a missions plan and strategy for missions.

The resources in this guide comes experience over years of ministry. Much of the material is taken with permission from International Mission Board booklet of 30 pages entitled *Make the Connection...a field guide*, this guide was written several years ago and as a whole has great resources and gives sound guidance.

EXPLORE God's specific plan for your church

If God wants to be worshipped by all people groups and He has chosen the church to be His messenger, how does He want you, the church, to partner with Him in His plan? Who does He want you to reach, where will you reach them and with whom does He want you to partner in order to reach them? “make disciples of all nations!” (*panta ta ethne, Root:ethnos*)

(Matthew 28:19)

1. **Assemble A Team**--Involvement is crucial to mobilizing the whole church in the mission. Allowing others to be involved in the exploring process will create and invite ownership, which will in turn lead to even more involvement.
 - **Identify existing leaders with a missions passion**—mission team/committee, project leaders, staff, lay leaders, etc.
 - **Select team members based on spiritual health and skill set.** As exploring for God's will is a spiritual exercise, it is more important to select team members who have an intimate walk with God than people who have simply been active in missions. It is also important to remember that some people are fulfilled by doing, not by developing strategy. If you put “doers” on this exploration team, they may be frustrated. Placing the right individuals on the team in the correct roles will greatly impact the outcome of the process.
 - **Consider developing a temporary exploration team.** If you do not have a currently active and functioning mission team, it may be good to form a temporary team that will help develop a preliminary mission strategy for your church. This will give time to observe and identify those individuals best suited to serve on the team long term.
2. **DEVELOP MISSIONAL VALUES**—There are many opportunities to become involved in missions. To prevent unfocused, ineffective activity, develop values that will guide ongoing involvement and strategy.

Start with a biblical end vision:

- Strive for a comprehensive plan remembering that God wants ALL people groups to know and worship Him. (Revelation 5:9; 7:9)
- Plan to engage the least reached or unreached peoples both locally and globally. (Acts 1:8)

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- Plan for long-term commitment. Because discipleship is the goal, not just conversion. Therefore, long-term involvement is essential. (Matthew 28:18-19)
- Understand that the local church is God's plan for ongoing disciple making. Therefore, church planting among ALL people groups is a must.

Establish a foundational strategy:

- Seek God for His specific direction
- Understanding the end vision develops the process steps or activities that will be appropriate
- Begin to identify the personality and skill set of the church.

3. **You're State Convention Missions Strategy:** The SBOM/Global Missions Office Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections Missions Strategy seeks to connect Alabama IMB and NAMB and Alabama M's who call Alabama home. It is the desire of the Global Missions Office of the SBOM to establish networks of churches to connect with OUR missionaries through **PRAYER-PARTNERSHIPS- and PEOPLE GROUPS**. Alabama Baptist are represented with M's throughout the world serving with NAMB, ALABAMA SBOM and IMB's nine Affinity people groups; The Americas; The Central Asia; The Deaf; The Sub-Sahara; The North Africa and the Middle East; The South Asia; The Southeast Asia; The East Asia; The Europeans.

Example of a Foundational Missions Strategy



4. IDENTIFY YOUR EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

Has God already sent people out from your church to the mission field? The biblical model is that God calls out people from your church, and the church responds obediently by sending

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them. Sending depicts partnering. As God calls people out of your church, they are not disconnecting from your church but rather are sent out as representatives from the local church. There is a genuine responsibility of the “sender” to partner with the “sent” and a responsibility of the “sent” to be accountable to the “senders.”

- Missionaries who grew up in your church.
- Missionaries who have been sent from your church.
- Missionaries who have visited your church.
- Missionaries who have relatives in your church.
- Missionaries who come from within your association.

5. Identify Unreached Peoples

People group definition. A people group is a group of individuals, frequently speaking the same language, with a shared self-identity and worldview. Strategically, a people group is the large group through which the Gospel can flow without encountering a significant barrier.

- Identifying unreached people groups will require an intentional and careful look at your own community, nation, and the least reached parts of the world. Understand that disciple making takes time, energy, and love. Identify people groups with a plan to minister long term until they have experienced life and community transformation.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Possible discovery questions:

- What are the current mission activities/partnerships of your church and how effective are these activities as they relate to disciplining unreached peoples and the missional values?
- Within current relationships, are there any unreached peoples you can adopt?
- Are there unreached people groups on the heart of the pastor or the hearts of key leaders in the church?
- Are there pockets of lostness in the church community that are not currently being effectively engaged with the Gospel (i.e., students, cowboys, affinity groups, ethnic groups, geographical area, etc.)?

Possible discovery methods:

- **Websites:** peoplegroups.org || peoplegroups.info || Joshuaproject.net
- **Contact:** your local social, government, health, and school officials.
- **Contact:** www.IMB.org www.NAMB.net; www.alsbom.org/globalmissions
- **Demographic studies:** Go to namb.net, click on Mission Resources, then Missional Research, then Knowing Community, then Demographic Reports.
- **Global Research:** www.imb.org/globalresearch

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6. Choose A Focus People Group:

Study your unreached peoples as groups are identified, begin to study, know and love them.

Study their Culture:

- Primary language
- Primary religion(s)
- Discover cultural landmines that may prevent long-term effectiveness (i.e., clothing, touching with your left hand, showing bottoms of shoes, etc.).
- Identify barriers to understanding the Gospel.
- Discover where they live worldwide (locally and globally).

God has a specific plan for your church to engage unreached peoples both locally and globally. How can you equip your local church to be effectively engaged in what God has called you to do?

EQUIP the church to fulfill the mission

1. EDUCATE YOUR CHURCH FOR THE MISSION

Develop an overall mission education process that crosses all age and/or affinity groups in your church.

Include the whole church. Look for ways to educate the entire body, including those who do not attend small groups.

Penetrate all ministry areas of the church. Since missions is the mission of the church, all departments/areas of ministry must be included: students, men, women, worship, children, education, etc. Develop creative ways for every segment of the church to be involved at some level.

2. EDUCATE YOUR CHURCH WITH THE VISION

What is the end vision? What is your church striving to accomplish in penetrating lostness and your unreached people groups?

Communicate a clear definition of the mission. Communicate the scope and length of commitments.

- Will you adopt missionaries or unreached peoples for a specific time period?
- Will you adopt missionaries or unreached peoples until specific goals are accomplished?

Develop an ongoing communication process to inspire the church body to understand the vision and grow in love of identified unreached peoples.

Clearly communicate what you want church members to do. What are your church's members expected to do as it relates to the mission strategy and reaching the unreached?

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Adoption principle: for long-term impact and missional effectiveness, identify and adopt unreached people groups until they are able to reach and disciple their own people and begin to move toward cross-cultural missions themselves.

3. EQUIP YOUR CHURCH FOR THE MISSION

Increase Cultural Understanding. Equip your church to understand their personal worldview and how it compares to the worldview of the identified unreached peoples. Remember that the Gospel flows within the medium of culture. (Your Alabama IMB and NAMB missionaries can guide you to connect with their people groups they seek to reach)

- What are the distinguishing characteristics of the identified peoples?
- What is their primary language?
- What are some cultural landmines that could prevent long-term effectiveness?
- What are the barriers that may keep your adopted people group from hearing and receiving the Gospel?

Teach and embrace biblical, practical, and reproducible missiology. Use discernment as you work to understand possible cultural implications of your actions.

- **Beware of dependency.** While striving to make disciples, be careful to use resources and methods that your unreached peoples can ultimately model and reproduce themselves. Do not create an environment where outside resources are necessary to perpetuate the disciple-making process.
- **Guard against syncretism.** In many cultures, it is easy for the unreached peoples to simply “add” Jesus to the existing primary religion to which they already adhere. In the Hindu religion, there are more than 300 million gods, it would be very natural for them to add Jesus as “one” of their gods. Be committed to stress and preach the message that faith in Jesus Christ ALONE is the ONLY way to salvation and right relationship with the Father. Be sure to emphasize repentance from sin and false religion. (John 14:6)
- **Learn to contextualize the Gospel.** The message of the Gospel NEVER changes, but the methods used to communicate the Gospel must adjust so the people can understand it within their own culture (heart language). The goal of a mission strategy is not to work against existing culture in order to implant new culture. The goal is to understand and work within existing culture to share the Gospel in a way it can be understood **and** then disseminated to others within that culture. Allow the adopted peoples to worship in their context while at the same time adhering to biblical doctrine. (example: Mars Hill, Acts 17:16-34)

Uphold the basic unchanging principle of missions

- The ONLY hope for mankind is Jesus Christ! He is the only way of salvation. Truly, all the church has to offer the lost of the world is the message of hope in Jesus Christ.
- God wants to be known among ALL people. Realizing and embracing this concept leads

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His followers out of their comfort zones to reach those who are different from them.

- God desires and commands all of His children, Christians, to partner with Him in His mission. As part of the body of Christ, every authentic Christian must play his or her part in His plan. The overall goal of a church is to mobilize every part of the body of Christ to play its part in discipling the unreached peoples—whether it be through fervent prayer, sacrificial giving, going to proclaim, or sending others.

Embrace flexibility for the sake of communicating the Gospel through the medium of your adopted unreached people's culture. On the mission field, there are times when long-range planning has to change—sometimes daily!

- ✓ Be committed to the end vision but stay flexible in methodology.
- ✓ Be willing to die to personal culture so that disciples can be made.
- ✓ Learn to love the adopted peoples unconditionally.

Develop an ongoing training process for team leaders and team members.

- ✓ Team member training, team leader training, and more are tools that are available through IMB resources (imbresources.org). IMB believes it is essential for you to include Safe Travel Solutions in your equipping process. (safetravelsolutions.org).
- ✓ Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions through the Office of Global Missions offers Faith Focused Security Training through Fort Sherman Academy, of Pinehurst, ID. You can check current opportunities for Security training at www.alsbom.org/ffst
- ✓ Alabama Baptist State Board of Mission also provides every Alabama Baptist Church mission teams coverage under the Crowning Shield Program, an emergency intervention assistances if mission teams meet with circumstances they cannot handle themselves. More information about the Crowning Shield Program can be found at www.alsbom.org/cshield ; call 800-264-1225, extension 291.

Organize for effectiveness. IMB highly recommends that your pastor/mission leader register your church to utilize the Web-based mission tool called imbCONNECT.net. The leader signs up to obtain the credentials and password necessary to use the tool. Then the pastor/mission leader will invite all other team members into your church's private mission site. To obtain your credentials and password, go to imbCONNECT.net. Coaching to use this tool is available from your missional church strategist at IMB or call the church mobilization specialist assigned to your state at (800) 999-3113. This tool is useful for all local and global mission planning.

4. ORGANIZE YOUR CHURCH TO FULFILL THE MISSION

Develop teams that will move your church to be more effective in the mission strategy. Possible teams could include:

- **Acts 1:8 team.** Oversee and develop ongoing strategy, create necessary policies and

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procedures, and seek ongoing partnership opportunities. Possible team goals:

- Define partnership levels
 - Define your missions policies
 - Set parameters for new partnerships
 - Create budgeting and funding processes
 - Set policies for short-term trips, fund raising, new ideas, team leading, etc.
 - Create a sending process—be prepared for those God calls out for lifetime, cross-cultural work.
 - Develop and evaluate engagement strategies
 - Oversee ongoing church-wide mobilization process
- **Communication team.** Develop ongoing processes for utilizing available media or creating new media to continually update the church about your partnerships. This would include stories and/or needs from the field, service opportunities, missions understanding, etc.
- **Prayer team.** Develop ongoing processes to help mobilize your church to pray consistently, specifically, and fervently.
- Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions under the direction of the Global Missions Office and in partnership with Alabama WMU has a ministry called ***Beautiful Feet Connections*** where Alabama Baptist Churches can adopt missionaries to pray for in their behalf.
 - The SBOM also can assist a church in developing a prayer ministry for their congregation.
- **Identify and train leaders.**
- **Identify individuals with specific skills the people of your church possess.**
- **Remember, involvement leads to ownership.** As more and more people are invited to be a part of the mission strategy, ownership, in most cases, will increase exponentially. As needs arise, allow for more opportunities for more people to be involved at many different levels.

ENGAGE in God's specific plan for your church

1. LEARN EXISTING STRATEGY

Realize and support existing, effective field strategy.
Learn from those with greater cultural understanding.
When possible, work with—not in spite of—existing workers.

2. GO TO THE UNREACHED PEOPLES—to carry out what God has called the church to do.

Discovery trips, or Vision Journeys: Send groups to where the unreached peoples are located, whether locally or globally. Seek to:

- Learn culture
- Discover potential partners
- Identify needs

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- Search for potential opportunities to engage
- Seek the person of peace

Short-term teams. In fulfillment of the end vision and mission strategy, send trained and prepared teams regularly, consistently and often so trust can be earned and the adopted peoples may be disciple. Possible activities could include:

- Prayer Walking
- Evangelism
- Social ministry
- Local schools
- Skills training
- Leadership development
- Bridge building—sport camps, medical clinics, English classes, business training, etc.

Long-term

- Your church may, in many cases, be “the missionary.”
- Be prepared for the real possibility that a team member may feel called to a longer involvement, i.e., six months, a year, or more.
- Pray for and expect God to call some for life-time, cross-cultural missions.

Do what it takes

- Pray for God to identify ways to facilitate genuine life and community transformation.
- Be willing to take risks.
- Commit time and resources until the adopted peoples are reached and disciplined.
- Serve with passion, persistence, and tenacity.
- Sacrifice comfort and desires.
- Seek to involve other churches, individuals and/or organizations

3. Evaluate The Progress

- Compare progress as it relates to the end vision.
- Commit to function, not form.
- Be fluid, ready to respond to needed changes.
- Be flexible when on the mission field.
- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading.
- Seek to strengthen or modify relationships for the sake of greater effectiveness.
- Develop an ongoing evaluation process to compare current activity to the overall end vision.

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