

MISSION NEWS

JOURNAL

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ELDERS

EXTENDING

THE CALL

*Helping
Others Find
Their Place
in the Will
of God For
Missions*

Probably no other story illustrates our ambivalence about God's methods in calling out ministers of the gospel and missionaries than the one often told anecdotally in various forms throughout our country. Sometimes it is the Midwest farmer who reads the unusual formation of clouds making the letters "GPC" as a divine sign to "Go Preach Christ" but who was advised by his elders upon hearing his first homily that the proper interpretation was "Go Plant Corn!" In our mountains of Western North Carolina it is often told of the "moonshiner" who was 'called' to preach by the boys making fun of him for staying too long at the still. As he was awakening from his stupor, they hid behind the trees and moaned out "Go-o-o-o Preeeeeach the Gospel." Whereupon he promptly arose, announced his call, and spent the next fifty years preaching at any invitation while pastoring many churches, some small and some large, four of which he started himself!

Many would welcome a fellow laborer exhibiting such zeal regardless of the details of his pilgrimage. Others emphasize proper academic credentials before being recognized for ministry service. The Bible gives us many examples of individuals that God called into service from various backgrounds and through differing circumstances. Some churches, recognizing their responsibility, have sought policies that will guide them in the way they 'recruit' their young people into Christian service. Many others, if not most churches, have not clearly understood or accepted their role in finding the next generation of church and mission leaders. This role is often relegated to parachurch groups or Christian colleges. Church leaders often lack a plan to lead their young people into church and mission service. Sometimes the mixed counsel given to young people grappling with whether to commit their lives vocationally to Christian ministry is

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confusing in the absence of good shepherding.

Robertson McQuilkin, President Emeritus of *Columbia International University*, in his book that questions why so few attempt to take the gospel to the unreached, summarizes the contradictory counsel many have received when trying to discern a call to missions: everyone should go unless God stops them or no one should go if they can be satisfied doing something else; or you must not be listening for everyone is already called, the Great Commission is the only call you need! Some say, 'Don't move without a divine call', while others say, 'the need constitutes the call.' Still others counter, 'The need doesn't constitute the call – you need an apostolic calling' – while others insist, 'a missionary call is no different than a call to a secular vocation.'¹ The placement of unqualified or ill-equipped missionaries on the field who don't make it or worse stay on and do damage to the cause of Christ prods us to want to do better.

And while we as pastors are acquainted with our own vocational callings and while we are familiar with the academic discussions of what a missionary calling involves or whether or not it even exists, I wonder if a lack of clarity in our role of 'recruiting' others could be contributing to the crisis we are facing in contemporary missions – the lack of new missionary candidates responding to a lifetime calling.

I subscribe to many missionary prayer e-mail services. Some send out daily calendars to pray for missionaries on their birthdays. It troubles me how many days in the month that the number of retired missionaries listed exceeds the number currently serving on the field. At **THE MASTER'S MISSION** we have a family, Van & Kathy Davis, who are at retirement age, but for which we have no replacement. They have given forty plus years on the field and now are battling health issues including his cancer of the throat. They hope to hang on until someone comes out to replace them. And this is not due to a lack of national men stepping up, but to an abundance of new opportunities to go establish work further out in the bush.

Some new trends in mission activities have consumed much of our time, planning, and calendars. And while we live in a different age with many advantages that have influenced the way we do missions, nothing can substitute for the role church planting missionary pioneers play in extending the kingdom. Not money, not nationals, not support or short term personnel, not literature, computers, or radio and video media. We value these technologies and avenues of service and the work of many support missionaries and short-termers. But we are



running out of the veteran missionaries to send them to. Dr. Ralph Winter, of the *US Center for World Missions*, editorialized,

Sending money cannot take the place of sending godly people, godly families. This is what it means to respond to Jesus' call for us "to be my witnesses," not just send words. Sending money is not sending witnesses. In all the remaining untouched people groups there are, by definition, not any local pastors to pay to evangelize. Actions speak louder than words – or checks. The sheer example of a Christian family is the most often underrated factor in missions!²

Some churches hope that short-term missions trips would be effective in not only changing their youth's perspective on the world, but also result in sending more full time missionaries into the needy fields of the world. However the research is beginning to confirm what many have suspected.

As youth groups pump out tens of thousands of students across the nation and overseas each year for missions that last anywhere from a weeklong Spring Break to a three-month summer vacation, more researchers and mission experts are finding that STM [short term mission] trips may not be producing expected results.

1. Robertson McQuilkin, "Who's Calling?", **The Great Omission**, Baker Book House, 1984.

2. Ralph Winter, **Mission Frontiers**, November-December 2005, p. 4.

Fuller Theological Seminary's Center for Youth and Family Ministry cited recent research that found the explosive growth in the number of STM trips has not been accompanied by similar explosive growth in the number of career missionaries. Also, it's not clear whether or not participation in STM trips causes participants to give more money to alleviate poverty once life returns to "normal." And participating in a STM trip does not seem to reduce participants' tendencies toward materialism.³

Many argued that short term missions is here to stay and we just need to do a better job with short-term volunteers. But somewhere I heard the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result! There must be a better way!

As a young man I was converted in college. I had a Catholic background and was unfamiliar with the "language of Zion." God gave me a hunger for the Word, which I then began sharing with others. My peers began telling me that I was 'called to preach.' I didn't know what they meant. Later, a pastor was instrumental in helping me evaluate what was happening in my life. He helped me know and take the steps necessary for preparation for pastoral ministry. This kind of pastoral assistance is what is so needed in our day. It is consistent with the New Testament emphasis of the church recognizing and then "setting apart" those called of God to vocational/lifetime ministry. Acts 13 is striking in the parallels of both the Holy Spirit calling and sending forth and the church setting apart and sending forth. Can we improve our part of the process as shepherds and elders? The intent of this issue is to help us be more proactive with our youth and young families who could be led into Christ's service. I'm convinced it is part of our calling as shepherds. The following examples and action points can guide us.

Be Like the Prophets

The church needs pastors who set the agenda for missions education and involvement based on an exposition of God's message and the challenge given in Scripture. Missions then becomes a primary concern regularly addressed and not just a peripheral matter. It becomes a pointed and clear responsibility of the saints. When we consider the experience of those veteran missionaries we are seeking to replace and how they answered the call to missions involvement, we find some startling contrasts to what some think has become essential for today. The vast majority of those missionaries had never been overseas before they went. Many had never met a missionary personally. What were the key factors in their responding to the call? It wasn't a 'vision' trip but preaching that stirred their hearts for service. Messages regularly recalling, "Moses go down to Egypt and set my people free" and "Who will go for Me? Here am I Lord, send me" and "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men" and "forsake all" and "lose your life to find it." These messages had impact. Their pastors told them of the command of God to go and challenged them to respond to the authority of "thus says the Lord" passages. They were inspired as youth to go. They read and heard the stories of missionaries during summer camps and Wednesday night programs told through flip charts or flannel graph presentations. *Lay leaders and pastors regularly prayed publicly for*

God to call their members to give their lives to take the message to the ends of the earth. What makes the "loyal" generation so loyal? The more I interview them, the more I'm convinced it was a different kind of preaching they regularly heard growing up. I often hear them say, "Our pastors told us that God said go and that we must obey. So we went knowing He would make a way for us, because He promised to be with us." Rather than messages about how God could make their lives more satisfying and how to be more successful in their various roles, they were taught to expend themselves, to give themselves away for God's purposes, for His agenda not theirs. Consider these *Action points:* Start using the technologies we have today to emphasize the stories and reports of fruitful ministries

3. Audrey Barrick, *Think Tank Urges More Effective Short-Term Missions*, Christian Post, Wed., Mar. 14, 2007, 05:04 PM ET.

that are the result of long term commitments and special training and God's gifted people, not just the culturally untrained observations and emotional responses of short-termers from their trips. There is a place for both, but the former is more beneficial to the body. Uphold the model of what you are aiming for in consecrated service and preparation rather than an experience most can have with the adventure of a trip. Help the congregation know the aim or end goal is not a trip taken but the consecrated service of the missionary they went to serve or encourage. Visualize for the congregation not just the needs or poverty of exotic places, but the steps individuals must take in personal response to God, in overcoming obstacles, and in effective training to contribute to the lasting changes that only the gospel can bring in those places. Pray in public

services for more families to enter the harvest fields.

Who will go for me? Here am I Lord, send me.

Be like Eli

Sometimes we can become as dull as Eli in the presence of pervasive corruption and problems in our world and church.

Sometimes a lot of leaven can leaven us as well! But God still calls even in times of a dearth of the Word of God. Eli finally discerned that the Lord was calling the boy Samuel and told him how to respond to God and to be faithful in bearing even a negative message. *Action points:* Pray for God to help us perceive His activity in calling others who as yet may not even know the Lord and help them make a servant's response. Develop and project confidence in God accomplishing His purposes in the next generation, even when we have failures in our own. Challenge and equip the 'gen-X-ers' to exceed their parents' efforts.

Follow the Master's Example

Jesus molded his disciples by spending time with them. He modeled ministry, made assignments for them, debriefed them and sent them out again. He taught them how to travel: together, lightly and unencumbered while depending on others. *Action points:* Make your schedule work for your ultimate goals. Make time to spend with promising young men. Take them with you as you minister. Give them challenging assignments and help them grow. Remind them of what is essential for the task and not to be encumbered with unnecessary training and the debt that comes with it. Teach them to look to God as their source not just people. Train your current leaders to be alert to reproduce themselves in the young men and women they serve.

Be like Paul and Barnabas

Both these men drafted other disciples to serve with them in ministry. Paul wanted Timothy to go with him. Barnabas encouraged and used John Mark, even when he had disappointed Paul. *Action points:* Be on the lookout for those to train and assist in ministry. Don't overlook those who have initial problems or failures. Identify groups of people whom God could use. Those active in ministry already and who are well spoken of by others may be able to be drafted into service if you take the initiative to ask them. Consider the families with skills like construction or nursing that could be used effectively in extending the gospel. The children of current missionaries are another potential pool, but will take more effort on your part to know since they are separated from you geographically. They will need help in developing 'home church' relationships here in the states, out of which confidence can grow. Be encouraged: don't let your failures in 'recruiting' or the initial failures of some 'recruits' deter you from looking and working with more candidates now. And finally consider if God wants you as pastor or elder to go yourself.

As pastors we have a role in mobilizing the saints for missions. We are not alone in this task. God ultimately calls and equips. But He uses us to proclaim His Word and encourage and train those responding. As a pastor, myself, I want to be appropriately engaged in helping others find their place in God's will for missions. Guilt trips and manipulation are never appropriate. Guidance and shepherding are. Many of our members are responding as sacrificial supporters of those who go. But how many have heard from my lips that they should consider the possibilities of going themselves? It takes both. Let us pray for each other that the Lord of the Harvest will help us be fit vessels in extending His call to launch the next generation of church planters.

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www.mastersmission.org and

<http://mastersmission.blogspot.com>

Missionews Journal designer: Wren Haney

Which Program of Eschatology Promotes Missions the Most?

The kind that produces disciples:

- who, knowing the promise of deliverance *at His coming*, are sounding forth the Word **to all others in every place** who need to turn from idols to serve the living and true God. I Thes. 1:8-10
- who, while separated often in this life from loved ones, are realizing their joy and crown *at Jesus coming* will be **those who are permanently present** in that day because of their efforts. I Thes. 2:17-20
- who are cooperating with God in answer to the apostolic prayer that they increase and **abound in love for all men** as part and parcel of their hearts being established in holiness *at His coming*. I Thes. 3:11-13
- who are informed of the hope of the resurrection and transformation *at His coming* that brings them comfort for fallen comrades and encourages them to share the gospel with **the rest who grieve with no hope**. I Thes. 4:13-18
- who, while not preoccupied in the timing or schedule *of His coming*, recognize many will be unprepared and overtaken and destroyed just as those who are unprepared for the thief who comes in the night, and are living alertly in the light of his promise and are not overtaken, but are prepared to make a difference in this world by living soberly and faithfully, seeking that which is good **for all men**. I Thes. 5:1-15

Knowing that some aspects of the doctrine of last things are hard to understand, the Apostle Peter warned us not to be carried away from our steadfastness by the untaught, the unstable, and the unprincipled, who distort the Scriptures. He exhorted his readers and us to be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:14-18)

Peter's piercing question, '*what sort of people should we be in light of His Coming?*', can best be answered by the Apostle Paul's emphasis in eschatology.

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Where? At the Master's Mission, in the heart of the Smoky Mountains, site of a 1500 acre missionary training and sending facility that specializes in equipping career missionaries for remote area ministries. Area recreation electives include white water rafting, and the Qualla Boundary - Cherokee Indian Reservation

Why? We want to encourage our youth to keep themselves pure and help them develop the leadership skills that can be used in full time ministry. We want to expose them to different missions ministries around the world and challenge them to consider full time service in ministry or ministry support. We want to help the church evaluate its youth who indicate a desire to serve the Lord in missions or ministry. We want to equip youth workers to take the Great Commission seriously in their work with young people and challenge them anew to a missions commitment that will strengthen their church.

How much? \$90/week/person covers food, lodging, & insurance. (Cost subject to change)

The Next step: Notify us of your plans. We have a limited number of persons we can accommodate during the week, with priority given to supporting churches; Requests will be considered based on availability of space.

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Pastors Meet Jack Morrison

“Big (Insert your first name)” – that’s how you’ll probably be greeted once you meet Jack Morrison. For a vertically challenged pastor, being greeted as “Big Dave” has a nice ring to it. Jack is the big guy. Physically imposing, with close to 30 years experience, first in the Army as an artillery specialist, and then in the F.B.I. as a special agent assigned to the violent crimes and major offenders squad with service as a S.W.A.T. team instructor and anti-terrorism leader and investigator, he could be very intimidating. He could be, but what you find is a gentle man with a great heart for God who is intent on humbly following his Savior and being involved in discipling others. What motivates him? Initially it was the Scripture banner of John 15:13 at Ft. Sill, OK, which said “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” After he came to Christ, he learned more of what it means to live sacrificially for others. He and Nancy have two girls, Callie and Haley, and serve at *Grace Fellowship Baptist Church*. We are glad to have him on staff with TMM as our new Candidate Director. Pray for him as he explains and promotes the benefits of our training program with potential missionary candidates.



DOING WHAT WE WANT

Motives and the Will of God

Some argue the merits of the mystical in answering the call of God. Others look to methodically calculating pros and cons to guide. Some simply appeal to the mandate and 'kick in the pants' approach. God is gracious in giving us a better way to know and do his will. He changes our hearts!

Why do we do what we do? Can we ever know for sure given the nature of our hearts? (Jer. 17:9) Hebrews 4 gives me hope on several levels. First, God knows even the most hidden parts of me and while that is very frightening, He assures me that Jesus is a sympathetic Shepherd. He understands my dust. He gives mercy and grace when I come to Him. Mercy for my sins and failures - grace to enable me to be what He designs for my life. Second (if that wasn't enough!), He gives me His Word which can do what I can't - disclose the hidden things of my heart and help me discriminate the seemingly indivisible: my thoughts and the intentions of my heart. Finding the will of God for me was sometimes like deciding who has first pick in a sandlot baseball game. Remember? You tossed a bat and then put one grip over the other up the handle of the bat with your opponent until you got to the top. Whoever got there first prevailed. "Should I do this? Maybe its only my flesh ... but it could be the Spirit directing ... might be Satan ... *only* what I want ... maybe what God wants ... the devil ..." and on up the bat with my conflicting thoughts in discerning my future. Then the principles of Psalm 25 and 37:4 rescued me. I don't need a bat (or a fleece!) - I have God. Because of His nature and character He leads sinners in the way! I qualify. My task is to humble myself before Him and cease striving in my own efforts and rely on Him to be Himself. Hebrews 4 relates these concepts as entering into God's rest. But here is a paradox, "Labor to enter rest." Here is the provision: Christ in me (I Cor. 15:10 and Col. 1:29) - I can rely on Christ's life and grace in me to be

all I need to be for Him and others. I'm responsible to yield and trust *and* labor. He will enable me to labor by His power working mightily within me. Hebrews 4 characterizes this as "drawing near." Psalm 37:3-4 calls it: trusting, doing good, cultivating faithfulness, and delighting. And here is the promise: He will give us the desires of our heart. Read that: "Love Jesus and do what ever you want!" No danger - for if we are drawing near, He is transforming us and our desires. What a blessing, to get to the place of wanting to do God's will - no rather, God's will being that which I want to do! How gracious is God! The missionaries I know that are worth their salt are doing what they want to do. They love what the Savior loves. I once heard a preacher speak eloquently on serving God because we love the Shepherd, not the sheep. After all, sheep are troublesome and can be very dirty and hard to deal with. His premise was right (based on John 21:15-19) and he was correct that the romance of ministry or missions and the adventure of it would not be enough to keep us faithful once the newness wore off. We need a stronger motive. Glorifying God will do. But even then, we need to hear all of God's council. A lack of balance hinders. I see these kind of skewed missionaries too often. The "glorifying God duty boys" (and gals). They forgot the "and enjoy Him forever" part. Looking like they've been baptized in pickle juice, they press on, "*Bless God, we're doing our part for God while enduring these sheep!*" They are a lovely bunch, especially to those they are enduring! No, we need missionaries who like the Apostle Paul, have come to both motives: loving the Savior and those the Savior loves. The *Glory of God* and *Compassion for sinners* drives them. The sheep for these missionaries have become very dear and they have deep affections for them (I Thes 2). And the sheep can tell.



An Open Invitation



The Master's Mission welcomes pastors and missions leaders to come to our training center in the mountains of western North Carolina and see firsthand how we partner with local churches in equipping and sending missionaries for cross-cultural ministries around the world.

You're invited to bring your family or staff or come yourself for a few days of retreat and spiritual refreshing. While you're here, we will introduce you to our missionary training and sending ministry. The cost of meals is minimal and lodging is provided, so join us in one of the most beautiful settings God has created to learn of mission opportunities that will encourage and excite your church.

To schedule your visit, please contact us at

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