

BRIAN MURPHY

**THE CHURCH
NEED TO TRAIN
its MISSIONARIES?**



Why Does the Church Need to Train Its Missionaries?

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Brian Murphy



XL MINISTRIES
EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP



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Why Does the Church Need to Train Its Missionaries?

I'm going to begin this booklet with a confession. For most of my pastoral ministry I had no clue about missions, and knew even less about the fact that I was supposed to be training the missionaries we were sending from our church. What I know now is that I was the typical American pastor. I had the mindset that missions was "extra-credit" when it came to the budget and priority. My focus was on the people in the pew and those who were lost in my own community. Of course I thought about missions, but not much. Yes, it was a line item in the budget, but we got to missions only when the other "important" departments and programs were talked about first. Why on earth would I put missions equal with children's, men's, women's, and youth ministry? Why would I put missions above our local outreach? That seemed crazy to me.

Not only was missions a low priority in the budget, I most definitely wasn't placing a priority in training-up new missionaries from within my church. Again, I had to focus on equipping the saints in the pew. I had to keep programs going to disciple them and feed them and help them mature. On those rare occasions when someone from within the church came to me and told me they wanted to go to the mission field, my common response was excitement about them going with no thought about me helping them prepare to get there. Typically, when they would come to me with their plan, the other leadership and I would endorse it without much thought, commit to give them a pittance out of the "leftovers" from the budget, and pray for them to raise the money for their support and plane ticket. I might even lay hands on them before they left, put their prayer card up on my fridge, and then await their newsletters, telling of grand adventures and of hundreds coming to Jesus.

Does any of this sound familiar to you, pastors, missionaries, or prospective missionaries? Can I give you some hope? There is a better way and it's not too late to right the ship. Now, if you're reading this, you likely know that missions is not "extra-credit" and you're looking for a better way. Pastors, I pray this booklet will give you a clear biblical understanding of the priority of—and practical tools for—training your missionaries in your church before they go to the field. Prospective missionaries, I pray this booklet will challenge you to *not* go to the mission field before you are trained in your church and have developed significant relationships with your leadership and as many people in the church as possible. If you are a prospective missionary and your church does not currently provide training for missionaries, I pray you may humbly give this book to your church leadership and pray that the Lord will open their eyes to and equip them for their responsibility to train you before you take the gospel to the nations.

Let me begin with a portion of Scripture that I thought of often, even well before my eyes were opened to the need to train missionaries:

Ephesians 4:11–12

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ

I can't think of a passage that more clearly describes the responsibility of the local church to train and equip its people for "works of service." What are the works of service? They are wide and varied and include everything: serving, shepherding, teaching, admonishing, and benevolence, just to name a few. However, for too long I'm afraid most church leaders have read these verses with

only an inward, inside-the-church view. In this booklet, I hope to change our perspective so that we also look outward to the nations. I pray we take these verses seriously and equip those individuals in our church whom God has led by His Spirit to take the gospel to the nations.

Before we get too far, let me be clear, my fellow pastor: this is your job. Of course, your job is to train all the people in the church you serve and disciple them to maturity (Colossians 1:28). But it is also your job to train your missionaries to take the gospel to the nations, to see them plant churches, train up elders, and then come home when the indigenous church is strong and self-sufficient. I realize this may be a new concept to you, as it was to me after many years of ministry, but it is the truth. I don't say that with one ounce of a condescending tone. I'm also not saying *you* have to do all the training personally. Our team at XL Ministries can provide resources and assistance to help you. I'm confident that if you see this as the priority which it is, you will make the time for it as I did in my crazy schedule as a pastor. After all, if we are to equip the saints for works of service, how can that *not* include us training and equipping our own missionaries?

Not only must we be faithful to provide training for the mission field, but it is also our conviction at XL Ministries that missionaries who are going to plant churches must be trained to possess the qualifications of an elder as described in Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7. When they go and plant churches, a key part of that endeavor is to establish elders and train them to take over the leadership of the indigenous church. How can they possibly do that if the missionaries themselves are not trained to be elder-qualified in their own local church?

Have you ever thought about the qualifications for elders as applying to everyone in the local church? When you look at the qualifications of elders in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3, outside of the

qualifications of “able to teach” and “the husband of one wife,” these are attributes that all people in the church should strive for in their lives. For the sake of clarity, consider the qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3:

1 Timothy 3:1–7

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Who in the church should not strive to be above reproach, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, etc.? What differentiates an elder is he must have reached a high level of attainment in these things (summarized by “above reproach”), while all other believers should be striving for these attributes. I don’t believe there is a Scriptural warrant for women to be elders, but I do believe that both the husband and wife should be held to a high standard in character and theology before they are sent out to the mission field. As I’ll talk about later, these are not learned nor taught quickly.

At this point some of you may be asking: “Aren’t the sending agencies training our missionaries?” The short answer is that, with one exception (Ethnos 360), no, they’re not. Here is a quote from a university specializing in missions that I think is telling: “Missions agencies are Christian organizations that help missionaries quickly get on the field.” Note the phrase, “quickly get on the field.” Quick, fast, rapid, speedy. Are not those the mantras of the American mindset, both inside and outside the church? For most sending agencies, training takes more like two weeks to two months. Even when it comes to something as important as missions, as difficult as it is to really train missionaries well and give them the biblical and practical skills they need to plant a church in a foreign context, the plan is do this “quickly”?

They go on to define the role of the sending agency as: “They provide much of the training, accountability, resources, and on-field guidance for missionaries to be effective in various areas of ministry while also giving advice on how to maneuver life overseas and make disciples”—Bethany Global University. Reading this, it might seem that sending agencies are indeed “training” missionaries even if the time allocated to do so is too short. But, like a lot of things, the devil is in the details. You might be shocked at the curriculum most sending agencies are teaching your missionaries. It is an unfortunate fact that most sending agencies are teaching a missiology that is either outright unbiblical or unable to properly communicate the gospel and plant a biblical church. I could spend a lot of time explaining the acronyms CPM (Church Planting Movements) and DMM (Disciple Making Movements), examples of missiologies formulated by well-meaning people who are misguided in their understanding of the Scripture and of missions. However, for the majority of sending agencies, especially the largest ones, these are *the* missiologies heralded and taught to their missionaries. I cannot beg you enough to do your homework and find out what these “movements” are, if you don’t already know. To find out more about CPM, DMM, and a host of other erroneous-

to-downright-dangerous missiologies, please read, *No Shortcut to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions*, by Matt Rhodes. This is a must-read for any pastor or church leader interested in taking missions seriously and in understanding the culture of missions today. I would also encourage you to check out Radius International’s website, and particularly their blog page where you will find helpful information about these issues and many others: <https://radiusinternational.org/recommended-articles/>.

My fellow pastors and church leaders, for far too long churches and sending agencies have been sending out untrained, poorly vetted, and uninformed missionaries to the nations. These are precious young couples and single people with hearts for God and for the nations. They desire to see the gospel proclaimed. They are full of good intentions. But too often, they are hurried out into a dark world only to come home frustrated and defeated. We have lost a generation of missionaries—and are losing another generation—because the church, not the sending agencies, has failed to do its job. Let us open our eyes to the biblical commands before us, change our ways, and start to train our missionaries better. The Bible is full of redemption stories: people, nations, and churches who were on the wrong path, who were then exposed to the truth, and by God’s grace were enabled to change course for the glory of God. I pray that will be true of us as well.

I will end this section with a quote from my friend, Chad Vegas. Here Chad rightly urges the church to be urgent in the sense of sending missionaries to the lost. But he also correctly exhorts the church to take its time to train its missionaries before sending them out.

Chad Vegas, Pastor and Founding Member of Radius International

Given the command of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all nations, and the reality that those who have not heard are damned in their sins to eternal hell, the church ought to have a deep sense of urgency. However, we must be careful not to confuse this urgency with hastiness. It was the apostle Paul, the most urgent gospel minister in Christian history, who warned us to avoid being ‘hasty in the laying on of hands.’ Rather, he exhorted us to qualify and train faithful men who could carry the gospel to the nations. It is thus the privilege and burden of Christ’s church to take up that duty with the utmost seriousness.

Missionaries and Missiology

If we are going to effectively train missionaries, we must be clear on what we mean by a missionary and clear on biblical missiology—a biblical theology of missions. The word *missionary* can mean a lot of things today. We talk about missionaries as being those who help people dig wells, fight sex trafficking, and combat the spread of malaria, among other social justice issues. Of course, all of these issues and a host of others are important and vital endeavors for the well-being of millions of people. However, when I speak of a missionary and of the church’s need to train those missionaries, that’s not who I’m talking about. When I use the term *missionary*, I’m speaking of a person who is planning to spend a good part of their life on the field with the end goal of planting a church.

Why this focus on church planting? Because planting churches is the heart of the Great Commission, where Jesus commanded His

disciples to “make disciples.” Never in the New Testament do we see believers being disciplined outside of the context of a local church. As Christ-followers, we are to go, to make disciples, and to teach those disciples all that Christ has commanded. Everywhere the disciples went they planted churches, not just Bible studies. Paul went and planted the churches in Galatia, Ephesus, and Thessalonica. He didn’t plant small-group Bible studies and hope for the best. Instead, he brought in trained pastors like Timothy and Titus to establish the church and exhorted them to train up elders to help build up the body (2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5). Since this is the biblical model lived out by the disciples in fulfilling the command of our Savior, we pray that we may also be faithful to continue the work of planting churches around the globe. This is why our focus at XL Ministries is on training church planters as missionaries.

I’m not denying the fact that the faithful men and women who work tirelessly behind the scenes in support roles on the field are important. They are vital for those church-planting missionaries to succeed. However, because the purpose of this booklet is to encourage the church to train its missionaries, I’m narrowing the view of the role of a missionary.

When I speak of a missionary and a biblical missiology (as opposed to the missiology of CPM or DMM), I think of a person who will go to the nations and spend several years learning the people’s culture, worldview, and language to adult fluency, with the goal of translating the Bible, teaching the people to read and write, preaching the gospel, maturing those converts, and then establishing elders—all of this with the end goal of working themselves out of the job and coming home. Whew. That’s a mouthful, and it’s only the beginning of what’s needed on the part of a missionary to plant a church. Someone has rightly said that it takes a million miracles to get a missionary to the field, keep them there, and see them plant a church.

I might also add that it is my prayer that the vast majority of missionaries we train through XL Ministries might be missionaries who would choose a path to pioneer missions in unreached people groups throughout the world. The church has for too long kept sending “missionaries” to the same places around the world, and spent far too much money on those places. I pray the Lord of the harvest will continue to raise up those who will choose to go to the hardest places in the world to expand Christ’s church.

The vast majority of these unreached people now live in what is referred to as the 10-40 window—that is that area of the globe located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator. Almost without exception this window is now the most dangerous and difficult place to get into, stay in, and survive as a missionary. There is no doubt that people in accessible countries like Sweden, Romania, and Canada need Jesus. However, getting into places like India, China, and Sudan, and staying there long enough to learn a culture, worldview, and one or two languages—not to mention staying alive—is light years more difficult.

The days of getting into countries in the 10-40 window on a missionary visa are almost over, and in many places are likely gone forever. In fact, in many of these countries, proselytizing is illegal. Missionaries wishing to go to many of these places will not only need to know how to do culture and language acquisition (CLA) and church planting, but will have to have a skill that will enable them to get a job in a foreign country. A work visa is the only way these missionaries will be able to stay long-term in almost all of these places.

For more information on what it means to be a missionary and have a biblical missiology, I would strongly recommend the book, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, by David Hesselgrave. It is a

large book, but it has survived the test of time and is one of the most widely used textbooks on Christian missions.

I realize at this point many of you may be feeling a bit overwhelmed thinking about the many things that would go into training up your missionaries, and how on earth you're going to accomplish this in your church. In light of that, I hope I can encourage you. Please remember that since this is our calling and responsibility, the Lord will also provide the wisdom and strength to get this done. He never calls us to do something for which He does not also provide His Spirit to enable us to accomplish it. The training of our missionaries is worth every second of your time, and the Holy Spirit will strengthen you for this task.

As I end this section, I realize at least two things: none of what I've described above is easy or fast. It's easier to call anyone in our church who goes overseas on a short-term missions trip a missionary. I get it. It's faster to send people without first properly teaching them biblical missiology. But as my brother stated above, let us not confuse urgency with hastiness. Our people and the gospel are too precious to be neglected for the sake of expediency. As church leadership, we must eagerly invest the time and effort to be sure prospective missionaries understand their role and have a clear conviction regarding biblical missiology. But we must not stop there. We must make sure they not only understand their role on the field, but that they are fully equipped to fulfill it.

What Does the Missionary Need to Know?

I've stated above that it is our conviction at XL Ministries that missionaries doing pioneer church planting should be elder qualified before they leave the church for more specific missionary training. According to Titus 1:9, one of the qualifications of elders is to be "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with

the teaching, so that he will be able to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict.” Missionaries therefore must be grounded in the Scriptures and sound doctrine.

I wish I could say that I’ve always had this conviction about training missionaries in sound doctrine and theology before I sent them. But having learned the hard way, and now having had the privilege of training and sending to the field several sets of missionaries from our church, I have greater clarity on the things that are vital for missionaries to know.

They need to know the Bible. I know that seems obvious, but it needs to be said because the vast majority of missionaries being sent out today, even those doing pioneer church planting, simply don’t know the Bible. They can find books in their Bible when called upon, can quote a verse or two, and may even give you the theme of a New Testament book or two. But we are sending out people to plant a church and raise up leadership in that church, and so our missionaries need a far higher level of Bible knowledge than the average person in the pew.

I’m reminded of what the apostle Paul told young Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:1-2

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Paul taught Timothy, and now Timothy was supposed to teach those who were entrusted to him. That’s how discipleship works and how the church has survived for 2,000 years. But you can’t teach what you don’t know. We must ensure that our missionaries

know the Bible well so they can teach the people they are going to serve. To be more specific, what I mean by our missionaries knowing the Bible well is that they should minimally be able to recite from memory the overall meta-narrative of the Scriptures, as well as the following information for each of the 66 books of the Bible:

- The theme
- A general outline
- Key chapters and what’s in them
- Key verses and what they say
- Key people

Imagine every missionary leaving our churches having this understanding of the Bible! What a gift we are giving to them by holding them accountable to learn, and what a blessing they will be to the people they are sent to serve.

In addition to a solid understanding of the Bible, our missionaries must also have a robust understanding of theology. Our missionaries need to know sound doctrine so they can exhort some and refute others (Titus 1:9). Too often we hold missionaries to a much lower standard of theological understanding than we do American pastors. Yet missionaries will typically be required to explain and defend sound doctrine in cultures that have little, if any, biblical foundation and whose worldview is built on false teaching. They will hopefully have the opportunity to disciple new believers to obey all that Christ has commanded in a cultural context that is very different than their own. Without a depth of theological understanding, well-intentioned missionaries can easily bring either an external “American” Christianity or a watered-down syncretism to those cultures, rather than the clarity of biblical truth. The words with which Paul encouraged Titus should be true of every missionary we send.

Titus 2:1

But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.

Our missionaries should be able to define and biblically support, from memory, such vital doctrines as:

- Man in the image of God
- Sin
- The gospel
- Atonement
- Penal substitution
- Justification
- Regeneration
- Sanctification
- Inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture
- The Trinity
- Communicable and incommunicable attributes of God
- Omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence of God
- Role of the Holy Spirit

Of course, there is a host of other important doctrines and subsets of doctrines that can and should be added to this list. For example, as they define and defend the Trinity, they should be able to defend the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. As they discuss the role of the Holy Spirit, they should be able to define what the Scriptures mean by the “baptism” of the Spirit and the “filling” of the Spirit.

We need our missionaries to be theologians in every sense of the word, both the men and the women. Why train both men and women? Here is why. In a typical situation our missionaries will be part of a team. As an example, let’s say there are two married couples and one single woman on the team. If this team is doing pioneer church planting, they will likely have had to learn the trade

language first and then learn the heart language of the people group they are trying to reach. When, after all these years, they are finally able to preach the gospel and the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the blind and people come to Christ for their salvation, these five people will be the only people on the face of the earth that know this language fluently and can teach these people the Bible and the theology they need to know. These five, that's it. If they don't know this language fluently, they can't communicate clearly. If they don't know the Bible well, they can't teach it well. If they are not serious theologians, they can't teach the people the doctrines of the faith. No doubt the men will be preaching, but how valuable and needed would it be to have the three women in this example to know the Bible and know theology in order to be able to teach and disciple half the people in women's studies?

The bottom line is this: it is the responsibility of the church to train and teach their missionaries to know the Bible and theology before they are sent to the field. They will not get this training and information at a sending agency.

What about those potential missionaries in our church who have graduated from a Bible school or seminary? Obviously that's a huge plus and it will be extremely valuable for them to have had this exposure to good teaching. However, I would caution the church to not assume that just because their missionaries have gone to a Bible college or seminary they know what they should regarding the Bible and theology. How long has it been since they graduated? What school did they attend? How studious were they? These are all important questions to consider. It is the church's responsibility to ensure that our missionaries have the biblical and theological tools they need before we put them on a plane.

What Does the Church Need to Know about the Missionaries?

It is both vital and a command from Scripture for the church to train their missionaries in Bible knowledge and theology before they leave for the field. We should not expect all this training to be done in a Bible college or seminary. But the church must not only see that prospective missionaries have head knowledge about the Bible and theology, but that those truths are being applied in their lives. In other words, the local church needs to know their missionaries *before* they send them. Again, I've learned this the hard way. I wrongly assumed that just because I had wonderful people who wanted to go to the mission field, they had the maturity needed to get the job done on the field. Looking back now, I see that I sent them out too quickly, not taking the time needed to look deeply into their character, parenting, spiritual lives, etc. and to help them grow to maturity in these areas prior to them being sent to the pressure cooker of the field.

The first thing a church needs to know about their prospective missionaries is the true state of their spiritual lives. This cannot be discovered quickly. You need to know these folks over a long period of time. I would suggest a minimum of two years to discern their spiritual maturity through the ups and downs of life. Again consider the qualifications of elders and specifically the phrase "not a new convert" (1 Timothy 3:6). Elders are not to be new in their faith. Instead, they are to be mature believers with a proven track record of living consistent spiritual lives. The same must be true for our missionaries. Why in the world would we send someone halfway across the world to do this almost impossible job, in the most difficult of circumstances, if we did not feel they were mature in their spiritual walk? There is no way we can be confident of someone's spiritual walk in the course of a few weeks or even a few months. No way. This is true even if they come from a church and from people whom we know well and can testify to their spiritual walk up to that point. We learn by watching them, spending hours

and hours with them, inside and outside the church, in the season when things are good and when things get hard, when they're in a Bible study and when they're on the basketball court. What are they reading in their Bible and what are they learning? What books are they reading? What sermons are they listening to? To whose sermons are they listening? What are their spiritual disciplines or lack thereof? Can they hold their tongue or do they gossip? Are they servants or do they want to be served? Do they reflect the person of Christ or is it all about them? These and a host of other questions are what we should be asking to discern the spiritual state of our prospective missionaries.

The state of their spiritual lives is closely related to their character and integrity. Do they lie? Do they show up when they're supposed to? Are they people of their word? Do other people validate their character and integrity? Are they "above reproach" (1 Timothy 3:2)? Of course, this doesn't mean they are without sin. None of us outside of Christ can meet that standard. But, if you threw a bunch of accusations against them of various sins, would anything stick to them? If not, they are probably above reproach. Again, you can't find out about someone's character in a short period of time, nor can you help them grow to maturity overnight. You have to see them in the warp and woof of life. The most difficult of times is perhaps when our true character and our true relationship with the Lord comes out. Have you seen your prospective missionaries in these difficult situations? How did they respond? Do you really want to spend that kind of money and send them that far without knowing the answer to the question of their character?

The marriages of our missionaries is another area that must not be overlooked. The pressures put on a couple in the field are immense. They will be away from their family, friends, church, and everything else that is familiar to them. They will be in a new place with new smells, a new language, and a different culture and worldview possessed by everyone around them. To say that everything is

foreign is an understatement and we cannot underestimate the pressure this puts on any relationship, especially the couple's marriage. They will have a full-time job in CLA (culture and language acquisition)—trying to learn how to live in a place that is very different from anything they could have even imagined. No school can prepare them for what they are about to experience. The best marriage will be strained. A poor marriage may be the reason they come home, and that's not good for them or the people they've gone to reach.

If our prospective missionaries have kids, their parenting skills, or lack thereof, will be something for us to keep on our radar. Ask any missionaries who have been on the field for any length of time and they will tell you that parenting is a big deal, a very big deal. Good parenting skills can be a blessing to the rest of the team and can open doors for the missionaries on the field. Poor parenting skills can be divisive for the team and be the death knell that sends the missionaries packing for home. They may be brilliant theological scholars and have amazing language skills, but because they have not learned or are not disciplined in their parenting, it can send, and has sent, many a missionary couple home.

We need time to observe our missionaries and their parenting skills. Of course, there is not one "right" way to parent, and everyone has their own parenting style as they seek to apply the biblical principles in their unique family. However, we should be able to discern when things are not right in the home, and we must address it. This can be difficult and awkward, believe me. I've had these conversations and they have never been easy. Please do not underestimate how big of a deal parenting skills are to the success of a missionary couple on the field.

The last quality, in a sea of so many items we could add, is the criteria of being good teammates. How well our prospective missionaries work with others is the question we need to ask. As I've mentioned about marriage and parenting, the pressure put upon our missionaries on the field is immense, and working well with teammates in this pressure cooker is absolutely necessary to the success of the team and their staying on the field. In my many conversations with missionaries on and off the field, I've been reminded by them of how many missionaries come home because they were simply not good team players. There is a host of reasons for this to be the case. They might be prideful, arrogant, unteachable, and even narcissistic. None of these characteristics make for good teammates and we must know about these issues and be able to address them well before sending our missionaries to the field. We must identify these negative attributes if they are present and help them mature in these areas.

No doubt there may be other less critical items that may be able to be worked through while on the field, but the issues described above are most certainly non-negotiables. They must be identified and worked on in the context of the prospective missionaries' training in the local church. And I'll say it once more: they are not easily detected nor addressed in a short amount of time.

What Does the Missionary Need to Know about the Church?

Not only do the church leaders need to know several essential things about their missionaries, but I would also argue the missionaries themselves need to know several things about their sending church. I've spoken to way too many future missionaries who know little or nothing about their church leadership or the people in their church.

Our missionaries need to know their pastors and elders, not just their names, titles, or testimonies. They need to have spent time with them and their families. I realize it is unrealistic in all church settings for the missionaries to know all the leaders, especially in a larger church. But I also know this is the exception, not the rule. I know pastors are busy and have much on their plate. I've been there and I understand. However, I will never regret taking the personal responsibility to train and get to know each of the missionaries our church sent out. I know I could have delegated this to someone else and would have been absolutely justified in doing so. I delegated lots of things in my time in pastoral ministry. But I'm so glad I didn't delegate the training of our future pastors and missionaries. I can't think of anything that I enjoyed more or that, looking back, I think would have been more important. Our missionaries know me, and I know them. They know our elders, and our elders know them. Missionaries should know their leaders and have strong relationships with them.

Our missionaries should also know the people in their church. They shouldn't just know a few families. They should be well known to as many people as possible. To help facilitate this I encouraged (okay, sometimes demanded) that our missionaries be involved in as many small groups as possible. If they had kids, that might be one small group. If they didn't have kids, they might be attending up to three small groups per week. Why? This was the best chance to get to know people and allow people to get to know them.

Why an XL Ministries Internship?

In this short booklet, I've argued for the need for training missionaries in the context of the local church and described some of the specific training that is needed. I've argued that it is the church's responsibility, not that of the sending agency or even a missions training school, to be the primary trainer of our missionaries. There is certainly a role for the missions training school—to teach them how to learn a language, to translate the Bible into that language, and to learn a foreign worldview and culture. But the church can and must train our missionaries, as this is the very definition of "equipping the saints for the work of service." Jesus commanded us to go and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to obey everything He has commanded. In order for our missionaries to teach the people they have been called to reach by God Himself, they must be trained in Bible and theology. They must be sanctified by His Spirit and mature in their faith. They must have strong morals, marriages, parenting, and team-building skills. Thus equipped by the local church, they are much more likely to stay on the field and finish their God-given task.

It is with this in mind that XL Ministries is here to serve the local church. We have incorporated our experience of many years of training missionaries in our local churches into resources to help you. The foundation of this training is our two-year missions internship. We believe there is no reason for your church to have to reinvent the wheel and start from scratch when it comes to training your missionaries. Let us help you.

Please prayerfully consider allowing XL to help you train your missionaries. Our services and our materials are free. Our time is free. If we come out to your church to meet with you and your elders, it will be on our dime. We are here to serve and we mean it. We are thankful for our many donors who allow us to work and serve in this way, and we would love nothing more than to speak



with you about training your prospective missionaries to go to the nations for the sake of the gospel and the building up of Christ's church!

Appendix – Resources

Here is a list of the books and links recommended earlier in this booklet, plus some additional helpful resources.

Books

- *No Shortcut to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions* by Matt Rhodes
- *Missions by the Book: How Theology and Missions Walk Together* by Chad Vegas and Alex Kocman
- *A Brief Guide to DMM (Disciple Making Movements)* by Chad Vegas
- *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* by David Hesselgrave

Missions Training Schools

In my opinion, you have two options to send your potential missionaries to for receiving further training after you have invested in them for a couple of years. These training schools will teach them skills they will need from teachers with experience on the field in pioneer missions. When we graduated missionaries from our internship at the church I pastored, we mandated they went to one of these two schools before we would send them to the field:

radiusinternational.org

ethnos360.org

Additional Resources

These links will take you to a vast resource of sermons and discussions from past Radius International Missions Conferences, as well as other recommended helpful articles:

radiusinternational.org/conference-audio/
radiusinternational.org/recommended-articles/

XL Ministries Contact Information

xministries.org/contact



BRIAN MURPHY serves as the **Executive Director of XL Ministries** helping the church train up its next generation of missionaries, pastors and elders. Brian was one of the founding members of XL Ministries when it began in 1992 and served as a pastor in full-time ministry for 38 years before coming on full-time with XL Ministries. Brian is married and has four children and six grandkids.



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