

Five Steps toward Global Engagement

by Ellen Livingood

What are we supposed to do and where do we start?

Has your church missions team wrestled with these questions as you try to make sense of what seems like a host of disconnected efforts in global outreach?

Here's a simple outline that may help you think through progressive steps in launching or rethinking your global engagement. We've included some suggestions about who should drive each step and starter questions.

5 Steps toward Global Engagement

1. PRIORITIZE

Prayerfully define what you believe God designed for your church's global impact

2. STRATEGIZE

Develop a broad plan that will help you achieve your global priorities

3. ENERGIZE

Ignite your people's passion for God's glory among the nations and your global task

4. MOBILIZE

Create pathways for every person to invest their time, talents, and possessions

5. ORGANIZE

Establish and implement clear but flexible policies

1. PRIORITIZE

Prayerfully define what you believe God has for your church's global impact

Growing numbers of local churches are reclaiming the initiative for missions in a way that integrates global outreach into the very fabric of their congregation and powers their missions activity proactively rather than reactively. While continuing to support individual workers in many

locations, they focus energy and attention into a limited number of strategic initiatives.

Who Does It?

- Your pastoral staff
- Your elders and other key lay leaders

- Missions team members who can see and articulate a compelling vision
- People who understand something of today's global missions context

Key Questions

1. What has God built into your church's DNA that reveals how He wants to use you in fulfilling the Acts 1:8 mandate, particularly to your Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth?
2. Has God uniquely connected your hearts to certain global place(s), people(s), or type(s) of ministry? If so, what are they?
3. What circumstances, unusual open doors, or unique windows of opportunity is God using to point you toward His priorities for your congregation?
4. If you feel led to pursue a reactive, less focused approach to missions, what will help you build and maintain ownership and involvement?

2. STRATEGIZE

Develop a broad plan that will help you achieve your global priorities

How will you get from where you currently are in your missions involvement to the place where you can have the impact God has designed you to make? Express your action plan in a sentence that everyone can remember. Summarize the essential elements on one page.

Who Does It?

- Strategic thinkers—those who can lay out how to get from where you are now to where you need to be. This task is often done best by an ad hoc team of

people who are the creators, not necessarily the implementers, of this plan.

Key Questions

1. What are the building blocks necessary to effectively engage in your areas of priority?
2. What do you as a church currently lack to achieve your priorities and how can you fill those gaps?
3. What is your action timeline for the next three to five years?

3. ENERGIZE

Ignite your people's passion for God's glory among the nations and your global task

To put your plan into action, you've got to engage your congregation with a compelling vision. Sermons which exude a global perspective are important, but one-on-one mentoring/modeling often has even greater impact, and children are the most responsive. What set your heart aflame? Share it!

Who Does It?

- People God has gifted to be vision casters—certainly your pastor is key, but also teachers, small group leaders, and ministry coordinators who both model and guide the discipling of all ages
- Mentors, formal or informal
- The missions team by creating settings (events and hands-on experiences) that are deeply challenging

Key Questions

1. How can you help your congregation to constantly expand their understanding of God's global purpose and His heart for all people?
2. Since people are motivated by an opportunity to make a tangible difference in someone's life rather than by statistics of need, how can you challenge all ages in your congregation to see themselves as difference makers?
3. What are a broad spectrum of contexts in which you can tell real-life stories of your people making a difference?
4. In what varied ways can you expose your people to missionaries and nationals in one-on-one or small group contexts?

4. MOBILIZE

Create pathways for every person to invest their time, talents, and possessions.

Everyone in your church should know at least one more thing they could do to expand the worship of Jesus to the ends of the earth. You'll prepare go-ers to serve with excellence, supported with all needed resources and care.

Who Does It?

- Creative people who can analyze what needs to be done and see ways to use a wide variety of talents
- Those with teaching gifts to prepare people to fulfill various roles
- Organizers to care for all of the details

Key Questions

1. What are some of the untapped gifts and resources God has placed in your church body that could be used in global outreach?
2. What are the needs of your field partners and how could you help meet them?
3. How can you build into every missions experience the question, "What does God want me to do next?"
4. How should you be developing, identifying, preparing, sending, and resourcing more missionaries?

5. ORGANIZE

Establish and implement clear but flexible policies

Each church needs a set of missions guidelines which are detailed enough to make decision-making efficient but flexible enough to allow for exceptions when leaders feel that God's work would be better served in another way.

Who Does It?

- The missions team or a sub-group of the team drafts the policies
- The missions team is responsible for their consistent implementation

Key Questions

1. What guidelines are needed so that all missionaries and potential missionaries are treated fairly?
2. What expectations should you lay out for yourselves and your missionary family so that you practice biblical accountability in both directions?
3. How will you grow more leaders to maintain your momentum in missions?
4. Is your body of policies streamlined enough to be easily used and regularly updated—to best facilitate your ministry oversight?

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