

**DOING**



**MISSIONS**



How a church of any size  
can effectively reach  
the nations.

Sam Masters



**CRECER**  
FOUNDATION

While large agencies and churches have had great success in world missions, many churches often find themselves merely giving funds without personally engaging in the task of taking the gospel to the nations.

How can a church of any size effectively reach the nations? Through a deep affection for missionaries, the sending of partner teams, strategic partnerships, and ownership of the missionary call, every church can have a significant impact in the story of world missions.

We hope this preview chapter serves you well and that you will have a chance to read *Doing Missions* in full. Thank you for your partnership in the gospel.

In Christ,

Paul Jeffries

Executive Director // The Crecer Foundation



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Sam Masters grew up in Argentina and faithfully served alongside his parents for many years. He returned to the United States to attend college in 1981. It was there that he met his wife, Carita. Shortly after marrying, Sam and Carita moved to Miami to serve at the International Bible Baptist Church, ministering to both the English and Spanish-speaking communities. After nearly eight years of service in Miami, they were sent to Argentina. In 1997, Sam led a team that began Crecer Church in downtown Córdoba. God has blessed the church and five additional works have been planted. With the growth of the church also came the need for theological education. In 2006 Seminario Bíblico William Carey was started. Originally set up as a virtual campus, SBWC now has five study centers in the Americas and is reaching students in 8 countries.

Sam has a Master's degree from Reformed Theological Seminary and is finishing a PhD from Southern Seminary.

Sam and Carita have three adult children and four grandchildren.

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## chapter 1

# DOING MISSIONS

The great enterprise of Christian missions is almost as vast and complicated as the world itself. On every continent and perhaps in every country on the planet, the church of Christ is engaged in the great task of bringing men and women into the Kingdom of God. While these efforts have been ongoing for more than two thousand years, the pace has accelerated over the last two and a half centuries.

The task is complicated, and it is growing ever more complex. There are many thousands of missionaries from many countries supported by a great diversity of denominations, agencies and local churches. Many overlapping strategies and master plans exist. Techniques and technologies are applied with varying degrees of fruitfulness. Auxiliary activities such as medicine, business, education, and social aid are employed in hopes of furthering the Kingdom.

Recent technological advances have made new models available. The internet has opened incredible doors, both for sharing the gospel and for staying in communication with workers on the field. And increased air travel has made it possible to send teams for short-term projects to any corner of the world.

Most Christians understand that world missions is at the heart of God's purpose for the church. The question that might be difficult to answer is not SHOULD my church, or should I as an individual believer, be involved in world missions; but rather, HOW do I, or how does my church get involved effectively? I believe the question can best be answered by looking at the New Testament. In spite of all the changes we have seen in the world, the real task of missions remains the same.

*“HOW do I or my church get involved in an effective way?”*

## **New Testament Missions**

Every book of the New Testament is a missionary book. While each book has a specific focus, the context is always that of the missionary work of the apostles. Every book was written to advance the missionary cause by sharing the gospel with unbelievers or by strengthening churches planted during the apostles' missionary travels. Paul's letter to the Philippians is a great example. In fact, in this letter, the missionary subtext is so obvious that it

provides a helpful model for doing missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the midst of his missionary efforts, Paul had been imprisoned. While in prison, he wrote to the church at Philippi, a church he had planted. He sent the letter with Epaphroditus, a member of the Philippian church who had been sent to help Paul. He wrote with many purposes in mind. He wanted to thank the Philippians for their financial support and to explain why he sent Epaphroditus back so quickly. He also wanted to provide an update on his current situation and to tell them how in spite of his imprisonment, the work of missions was moving forward marvelously. In addition, he wanted to tell them of his plans and of his intention of sending a member of his missionary team, Timothy, to them very soon. He also reminded them that they shared in the work of missions with him and that they must love one another and stand firm in the truth of the gospel even if it meant suffering as he did.

We can distill many principles from this letter which will provide a sound biblical model for missions involvement both as individual believers and local churches. However, in this introduction, I want to emphasize one of the most important: effective missions depends on personal partnerships.

## **Personal Partnerships**

Missions often involves a lot of bureaucratic machinery.

Much of this is necessary. How else does a large organization handle an enterprise as complex as sending and caring for families and projects all around the world? Beyond this, the most effective missionaries are usually blessed with a reliable web of personal relationships. These relationships may undoubtedly include members of the sending agency. However, the most effective support networks typically extend far beyond the sending agency in a web of formal and informal relationships.

Let me give you an example. I am a second generation missionary. I returned to work in the same city as my parents, Córdoba, Argentina. My wife and I began a separate work from my parents, but we had a close relationship with them.

We went out under the same mission board as my parents. We are grateful for the quality of missionary care this board provides. They handle our funds, provide insurance and many vital services. Their dealings with us have always been professional and even caring. But we know that we are just one of hundreds of missionary families.

Every year on our birthdays and at Christmas we receive cards in the mail from the mission board. These cards are hand-signed by the director. I assume that he probably takes a chunk of time every year and sits down to sign hundreds of cards. I don't resent this at all. I know it is his way of saying, "you matter to us as an individual." I also realize, that given the number of missionaries the board



serves, this is the most we could reasonably expect in personalized attention.

Several years ago my Dad passed away on the field.

Dad had wanted to be buried in the land the Lord had called him to. Burials in Argentina usually occur from one day to the next, but since people from around Argentina wanted to attend the funeral, the church extended the wake.

My wife Carita and I informed the pastor of our home church in Miami, Florida. The next thing we knew, our pastor, Russell Johnson, was on an airplane. I have no idea what he must have paid for a last-minute ticket, but he was there for the funeral. He not only ministered to Carita and me, but to my grieving mother.

Our missions agency helped during this time with insurance and legal issues. But our pastor was the one who showed up for my Dad's funeral. It is these types of relationships that sustain and encourage men and women on the field.

## **The Philippian Model**

The letter to the Philippians contains profound spiritual and theological truth. But there is nothing coldly academic about it. We see a warm personal relationship between Paul and the people of the Philippian church. Paul sets the tone in the first chapter, "I thank my God in

all my remembrance of you . . .” (Philippians 1:3) Paul is aware that the Philippians were genuinely concerned for him and he wanted them to know that his difficulties had “really served to advance the gospel so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.” (Philippians 1:12-13)

*“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you... because of your partnership in the gospel from this day until now.*

In verses 23 and 24 of chapter 1, he spoke of the anguish his situation caused him. There is no distant reserve. Paul pours out his heart to his friends: “I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.”

Fruitful missions depends on this personal dimension. The web of relationships in missions includes the relations between a missionary and those who support the missionary, whether individuals or churches. When we rely too much on the organizational structure of our sending agencies, a relational distance can open up between the senders and the sent.

Consider a typical trajectory of a missionary’s journey to

the field. A teen leaves home to go to college. He or she becomes involved in a campus ministry which challenges the student's level of commitment. In the course of the college, the student's commitment to the cause of Christ increases, but at the same time, the connection to the home church grows more distant. Sensing a call to ministry, upon finishing college, the student decides to pursue theological training. While in seminary, the student joins a church in town. In some cases, this church becomes a new spiritual home, but often the primary source of spiritual growth is through the seminary itself. The church may have many seminary students as members, and while it cares for them, the large number makes it difficult to engage in close training and supervision.

Upon graduation from seminary, the student applies to a denominational organization or independent agency. The missions organization provides a salary, or as is often the case, the new missionary must raise personal support from contacts he or she has made along the way. These contacts will be spread out along the path that has brought the new missionary to this point. The original home church may commission the future missionary, but supervision is left to the sending agency.

*“they cannot replace the local church*

So, at this point, the new missionary's primary accountability relationships have been with para-church organizations: the campus ministry, the seminary, and the mission agency.

These para-church organizations play a vital role in preparing a future missionary for the field. They exist because they can provide specialized services that the average local church cannot. However, they cannot replace the local church in the care and supervision of missionaries on the field.

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." The word partnership in the English Standard Bible translates from the Greek word *koinonia*. Some English versions translate fellowship. I like both translations. Fellowship captures the idea of an affectionate, familial relationship. Partnership conveys the sense of a relationship that has a purpose.

Bringing the local church and its members back to the center of the web of relationships that support a missionary has many benefits. We will see many of these in the course of this book, but for now, let me briefly mention these:

1. It helps reduce missionary attrition.
2. It encourages greater support of missions in the church.
3. It enhances missionary effectiveness on the field.
4. It brings joy to both senders and sent ones.

I especially like the last reason. In Philippians 1:4 we see that Paul expressed the joy the partnership with the church and its people offered him. Throughout the rest of the letter, Paul strives to make it clear that this partnership in the gospel is for their joy as well.

My wife and I have received monthly support from a church in Hutchinson, Kansas since we became missionaries more than 25 years ago. It is a great church, and the pastor is a friend, although I have to admit I haven't spoken to him in some years. However, every so often we receive a letter from Betty, a senior citizen who is a member of that church. Honestly, we don't know much about her. We remember meeting her. And we remember she promised to pray for us. Her occasional letters show familiarity with everything we have ever written in our prayer updates. It is clear that for a quarter of a century Betty has never forgotten her promise to pray.

Missions is a partnership, and there are many individual roles to play. My prayer is that as you work through this study, it will lead to profound joy for you and your church as you seek partnerships in the gospel.

chapter 2 preview

# **WHAT IS MISSIONS?**

What do we mean when we talk about mission? Of doing missions plural? What does the word missional describe? And what is a missionary?

chapter 3 preview

# **IMPORTANT PRE-SUPPOSITIONS**

Certain key truths underlie any discussion of missions. For example, what is the nature of the gospel? What is the role of the church? How are we to understand the Great Commission? What is the place of prayer?

chapter 4 preview

# **THE MISSIONS TASK**

How much of missions is our work and how much is God's? Is missions just evangelism? Does the New Testament give us guidelines? What is the end goal of missions?

chapter 5 preview

# **IMPORTANT MISSIONS PRINCIPLES**

What do we mean by indigenous missions? What is the role of social ministry in missions? What is key to missions fruitfulness? (Hint: we find it in 2 Timothy 2:2)

chapter 6 preview

# **MEANS AND LOGISTICS**

How do we understand the role of strategy, tactics, and logistics in the missionary task?

chapter 7 preview

# **WHAT DO WE SUPPORT?**

How can my church or I make wise decisions in partnering with missionaries and their projects?



chapter 8 preview

# **THE PRIORITY OF YOU AND YOUR LOCAL CHURCH**

What doors are uniquely open to you? How can you make a tangible difference?

chapter 9 preview

# **QUALITIES OF A FRUITFUL MISSIONS CHURCH**

The importance of patience and perseverance. And above all, the importance of receiving specific guidance from the Lord.



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## ABOUT THE CRECER FOUNDATION

▲ Equipping & accelerating Spanish-speaking ministries.

▲ Helping any-sized church reach the nations.

We believe in equipping Spanish-speaking leaders for Kingdom growth by providing strategic support, funding, and planning for their work in Latin America and around the world. We accelerate growth by connecting churches and individuals in North America who are passionate about Kingdom-building with the Spanish-speaking “hands and feet” of the body who have cultural insight on how to best take the Gospel into their communities.

