

INVESTING IN PEOPLE WITH POTENTIAL



Barnabas encouraged Saul, who had been called so unmistakably by God. Saul was in the backwoods of Tarsus until Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Here his gifts were exercised for the benefit of the church until he and Barnabas were set free by the church to spearhead a new Gospel advance.

Later Barnabas helped John Mark through a ministry crisis into maturity. John Mark had failed seriously and Paul felt very strongly about it. Barnabas, however, committed himself to the restoration and development of John Mark. Through this he became a valuable member of the team again.

Jesus encouraged 12 young men. They were far from being the finished article, but he called them to be "with him." For 3 years Jesus walked with them and talked with them as he prepared them for their life's work. He sent them out on missions and encouraged them when they returned. He shared their enthusiasm about the way God had blessed and used them. When the Holy Spirit came, the Jewish religious leaders were struck by the courage of Peter and John and recognized that they had been "with Jesus."

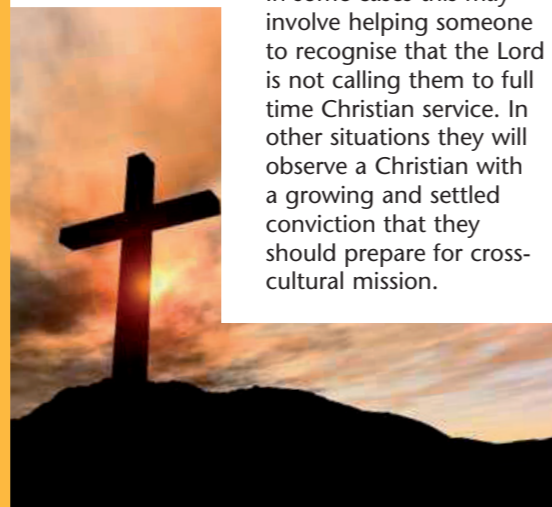
Paul encouraged Timothy, who was naturally timid and not very strong physically. Paul's confidence in him was so important to Timothy. As a young man he joined Paul and Silas and was able to observe them in their ministries. As Timothy matured he took on more and more responsibility. Paul constantly encouraged and equipped Timothy to strategic ministry and leadership responsibilities. He also encouraged him to pass on the truth to faithful men with the ability to teach others.

WHO SENDS? LOCAL CHURCHES SEND MISSIONARIES

In the New Testament cross-cultural missionaries were sent by their local churches. God commanded the leaders of the church in Antioch to set apart Saul and Barnabas for pioneer evangelism and church planting. The leaders of the church at Lystra commended Timothy to Paul.

It is important for church leaders to be sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians belonging to the church.

In some cases this may involve helping someone to recognise that the Lord is not calling them to full time Christian service. In other situations they will observe a Christian with a growing and settled conviction that they should prepare for cross-cultural mission.



Sending involves setting a person free from other responsibilities in the church in order to give all their time and energy to cross-cultural mission. Those the Lord calls are often wholeheartedly involved in the life and work of the local church. This is such a valuable preparation for cross-cultural ministry.

Sending out good people involves sacrifice for the local church. They may be key people in the church and will be missed, but often, as they are sent, others are raised up to fill their places.

The relationship with the sending church remains close. Modern means of communication makes it easy to keep in touch, and to share news. A visit from the home church to the missionaries is a great encouragement and gives new understanding of their ministry.

A new relationship will also develop with the church to which a missionary goes. In that church they enjoy fellowship and ministry and serve the Lord. They become fully involved in the church and are regarded as valued members.

UFM WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHURCHES

UFM does not send missionaries, but we work in partnership with local churches. There is a strong 3 fold cord bringing together the Sending church – UFM – and the Receiving church.

From the beginning of the application process a partnership is established between UFM and the sending church. We meet with the church leaders and discuss all aspects of the missionary candidate's call and future ministry. It is essential that all Christians applying to UFM, both for short term and long term ministry, have had their call tested and confirmed by their local church.

When candidates are interviewed by our Personnel Panel the pastor, or other church leader, is invited to join the Panel for the whole interview process. We see the process as both accepting the candidate and also establishing a partnership with the sending church.

When missionaries are serving overseas we make contact with the sending church regarding key decisions relating to the care of the missionary and their ministry. When missionaries are on home assignment it is a priority that they spend quality time with their sending church.

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145 Faringdon Road
Swindon Wiltshire
SN1 5DL

T: 01793 610515
F: 01793 432255

E: personnel@ufm.org.uk
W: www.ufm.org.uk

Registered Charity No 219946

Called and Sent



WHO CALLS?

GOD CALLS CHRISTIANS TO SERVE IN CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION

One of the automatic reflexes of a new Christian is to witness to their Saviour. The Samaritan woman Jesus met at Jacob's well hurried back to the town to tell her neighbours and friends about the Saviour. Ever since, new Christians have spontaneously shared the Gospel. They do it with a joy and simplicity which is compelling.

It is also a common experience for a new Christian to feel a compulsion to be a missionary. A new Christian feels very keenly the need of those who have never heard of Christ. Because of this they may seriously consider leaving everything to go to another part of the world to make the Gospel known. Such a passion to tell others about Jesus is a challenge and example to us all.

So, how should we respond when a Christian expresses a sense of call? It is so important to get alongside them and to encourage them in their desire to serve the Lord. The positive influence of a mature enthusiastic believer can be very significant.

What is a call? The New Testament makes it clear that all Christians have been called to faith in Christ through the Gospel. It is also clear that some Christians have a great desire to serve the Lord and to make this the primary focus of their lives. Their call may be to pastoral ministry, evangelism or cross-cultural missionary work.

This personal conviction stays with them and can be assessed and encouraged by the local church. Those nearest to us, who know us well, are in an ideal position to help and advise us as we seek to know the Lord's will for our life. It is important for church leaders and mature Christians to seek to discern what God is doing in the lives of Christians through his Word and by the Spirit.

The local church is a place for Bible teaching and pastoral care. It is also a nursery where Christians can be prepared and enthused for active service for the Kingdom of God. The great goal of the work of pastor/teachers is to equip God's people for works of service. We want to foster consecrated discipleship and evangelistic urgency.

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ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING MISSIONARIES

When applying and preparing to go

From the beginning of the application process a partnership is established between UFM and the sending church. The church is fully informed of the doctrine, practice and financial policies of the UFM. It may be possible for people from the church to attend our annual Family Conference or a Called to Serve missionary training weekend.

The sending church is provided with full details of the financial needs of their missionary and is invited to make a commitment to support them financially as they are able. The balance normally comes from other churches and Christians.

When we accept candidates for service with UFM we commit ourselves to work in partnership with their sending church. The partnership between the sending church and UFM is very important throughout the whole period of missionary service. It provides a vital base for cross-cultural missionary service.

When in country of service

When the missionary is in their country of service regular contact is maintained, especially when issues arise in their ministry or pastoral care. Missionaries provide their home church, and others with regular news for prayer. The Mission's magazine, 4 Corners, includes regular news of the various countries in which our missionaries work. Occasional DVDs are also made.

Missionaries who communicate effectively encourage prayer and involvement on the part of the sending church. Communication is now so easy. Missionaries can regularly communicate by letter, telephone, email, blog and Skype. In many countries video links are easily arranged. Photographs and short videos can be mailed or uploaded on the internet.

The sending church can greatly encourage their missionary in a number of ways:

- appoint a link person who receives regular prayer news to pass on to the church prayer meeting, missionary prayer meeting and church magazine.

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- encourage letters from church members, giving news of the church. Birthday and Christmas cards, and postcards when on holiday, will be a great encouragement to your missionary.

- sending the church magazine and news of church meetings will help the missionary keep in touch. Photographs of special events will also be gladly received. This can be done through the internet.

- providing DVDs or mp3 files of sermons of Bible ministry in the home church will meet a real need for missionaries who do not have such ministry in their country of service.

- missionaries also appreciate copies of newspapers and magazines of general interest and relating to specific personal interests.

- missionary children will appreciate contact with children from their home church.

- keeping in touch with parents of missionaries, both Christians and non-Christians is a great ministry.

When on home assignment

When missionaries return for home assignment help from the sending church in preparing for their arrival is a real encouragement. This may include:

- providing information on housing, schools, children's activities, cost of living
- remembering that single missionaries may not always want to live with their parents
- transport to and from the airport
- finding a suitable car
- filling the larder with the basic food needed to get settled in before the first visit to a supermarket.

UFM regards it as a priority for missionaries to spend time with their home church. It is good to give them an early opportunity to greet the church and give a brief report. Arrange for them to visit all the meetings of the church, including the children and young people.

Deputation ministry can be very tiring and it is really important for missionaries to get a good holiday and rest while they are on home assignment.