



Chapter 10

MISSIONS AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Fulfilling the Great Commission should be a major emphasis in every church. With this conviction, I want to share some practical ideas on how you can encourage and expand the heart for missions in your local congregation.

Take a moment to evaluate the role of foreign missions in your home church. Is God's love for the world a common theme? What percentage of your church finances is set apart for missions and what percentage of that amount actually goes to reach the unreached? Are people encouraged to share the Gospel around the world? No matter what your current situation, it may be that God has placed you in your particular congregation "for such a time as this," to help encourage your church to do more for the world.

1) Create an Atmosphere that Promotes World Missions.

When people enter your church, are they encouraged to think of and pray for other nations? In our home church many national flags—each representing one of our missionaries—hang in the sanctuary. A large world map and photos of our missionaries fill the lobby hall, and bulletin

boards often display recent newsletters from overseas. "Missions" verses from the Bible are displayed on several walls and a large wooden "wheat stalk" encourages everyone to keep their eyes on the harvest. In other churches, I have seen international display cases (with missionary souvenirs) and a line-up of clocks showing the various international time zones.

2) Start a Prayer Service or a Home Missions Prayer Meeting.

Our church has "Prime Time Praise and Prayer" which is a service set apart to pray for our city and the world. We also have daily corporate prayer to intercede for the needs of both our local church and foreign missionaries.

Another idea is to start a special home meeting, emphasizing world missions and prayer. The structure can be very simple, yet the effects will be far-reaching.

**Sample Format for a
Home Missions Prayer Meeting**

Greet everyone—open in prayer.

Time of praise and worship (possibly including international or missions-oriented songs).

Short teaching from the Bible (you could use ideas from the “family devotions” in this guide).

World update: Use *Operation World*, *The World Prayer Digest*, current newsletters, or recent news (perhaps videotape a recent international news segment, and use this as a focal point for prayer).

Pray specifically and fervently for international and missionary needs.

These meetings can also include fellowship and missions-oriented activities—such as conducting fundraisers, gathering items for care packages, corresponding with missionaries, welcoming missionaries on furlough, helping mail missions newsletters, holding international potlucks, or taking part in local evangelism (such as outreach to international students or international communities). A home missions prayer meeting can be a tremendous support to those who are overseas, and a practical way for those at home to become more actively involved.

3) Emphasize World Missions in Youth and Children's Classes.

In a missions-oriented church, youth will hear about the need for world missions. Many young people are earnestly searching for a worthwhile purpose in life, and will be fired-up when presented with an opportunity to take part in an adventuresome mission outreach. Youth may help with fundraisers or have their own prayer services for the nations. At times, they may participate in missions speech competitions, or international poster contests.

In children's church and Sunday school, missions can also be a major theme. At our church, the children support their own missionary family, and regularly hear missions

stories and testimonies. An international post-office box collects letters to church missionaries, and current missions pictures and maps decorate the classroom walls. Each summer, instead of the typical Vacation Bible School, our children and youth conduct a week-long “M.A.P.S. for KIDS—Missions Adventure Preparation School.” (See a complete explanation and practical instructions on how to conduct your own “M.A.P.S.” in Chapter 11.)

4) Incorporate Missions into Every Church Department.

Throughout the year, a missions-oriented church has short-term mission teams constantly coming and going—while other families are called out to full-time missionary service. Men's and women's ministries keep missions as a focus in their activities, and Bible teaching classes include the purpose of training up church members to fulfill the Great Commission. The church library and/or book store includes many missions-oriented books and missionary biographies which are available to encourage and inspire people of all ages.

Our senior pastor schedules regular short-term mission outreaches for himself and others in our body. Currently, he and his family are on an eight-month sabbatical overseas. During this season, my husband—a missionary evangelist—has been serving as our local pastor. Yet even during this time, he and others from the church have taken several short-term missionary outreaches. Despite their absence (or perhaps *because* of our strong missionary emphasis), the church has not suffered but continues to grow!

5) Raise Money for Missions.

You may want to help organize a church fundraiser to generate extra finances for missions. Following are a few simple ideas:

Car Wash

While the cars are being washed, the “customer” can read flyers on our upcoming outreach, along with salvation tracts. We have been most successful having free car washes with optional donations. Although some will not give, it is an excellent opportunity to witness—and those who do give usually make up the difference.



Collections

If you are raising donations for a missionary building, make a poster of a brick wall and then color in the bricks as you advance toward your goal. If you are raising money for Bibles, draw a picture of a stack of Bibles, or actually have stacks of Bibles representing your projected plan.

For missions offerings, your church could use attention-grabbing collection plates such as empty coconut shells or world banks. Youth or children may try a coin-giving race (with designated coins, such as pennies or nickels) and see who can get the largest amount. Or try taping these coins on a long streamer, and see who can reach a predetermined distance first.

Multiplying Your Talents

Another idea is a giving project where the church *hands out* ten-dollar bills. Members of all ages are encouraged to use this money—along with their talents and abilities—for a specified length of time. Perhaps youth may use the ten dollars to buy gas for a lawn mower (and then mow neighbor's lawns) or women may buy items from a craft store and sell the projects. Children may buy lemonade to sell on the street corner or make cookies for a bake sale. At the end of the time limit, each person then returns their original ten dollars along with the increase they raised.

Church Sales

Other projects can include having a church garage sale, children's carnival, or craft bazaar. Recently, a small church raised \$1600 from two garage sales. They were able to purchase a motorcycle for a national minister in Africa, and help in an overseas evangelism crusade.

There are so many other fundraising opportunities like church child care, "Mom's Day Out" babysitting, youth slave-for-a-day auctions (youth are "auctioned off" to the highest bidder to work for a day), or a special holiday missions banquet. Your imagination is the limit.

6) *Adopt an Unreached People Group.*

As a church, select a specific people group to "adopt" as your own. Write to the Adopt-a-People Clearinghouse or the Adopt-A-People Campaign for details. Pray about what action your church can take to help see these people won to Christ. See chapter 8 for information on adopting and researching unreached people groups.

7) *Take a Church Missions Trip.*

Your life will be changed as you see the need for missions first-hand, and your church will be strengthened as members join together to reach out. You may want to join with a missionary organization or plan an outreach trip to assist one of your church missionaries. (See Chapters 12 through 14 for information on taking a mission trip.)



Remember to Pray for...
THE CHURCH FAMILY

Pastor Nels & Lorrie, Nathan, Amy, Heather, Seth, Joshua, Justin,
Jeremy (and Nels' mother, Florence Church)

...as they serve the Lord in The Philippines.





"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world." (Romans 1:8)

To Send Letters/Personal Correspondance:
Nels & Lorrie Church

To Send Financial Support:
Make Checks Payable to:



Name _____			Thank You
Address _____			
City _____	State _____	Zip _____	
New Address? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
 HARVEST MINISTRY			
 Jon & Ann Dunagan			

Volume 8 - No. 2



"Lift up your eyes and look to the fields..." (John 4:35)

HARVEST

REPORT

A Monthly Newsletter from Harvest Ministry: Jon & Ann Dunagan - FEBRUARY, 1995

REMOTE KARAMOJONG TRIBE RESPONDS TO THE GOSPEL

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

This month, Jon and a crusade team traveled to a very remote village/city called "Kotido" in East Africa. There, they were able to minister to an isolated group of people called the "Karamojong," who are known as warriors and cattle-rustlers. Living in the hot and dry area of northeastern Uganda, this tribe still practices many ancient customs including drinking blood and milk for their staple food, "wrestling down" their wives in traditional wedding ceremonies, scarring their bodies, and numerous witchcraft-related practices. Although there was one small church in Kotido (pastored by a native Karamojong believer who also served as Jon's interpreter) there had never been a public Gospel crusade, and most people in the area had not yet heard the salvation message of Jesus Christ -- not even once!

ETERNITY IN THEIR HEARTS

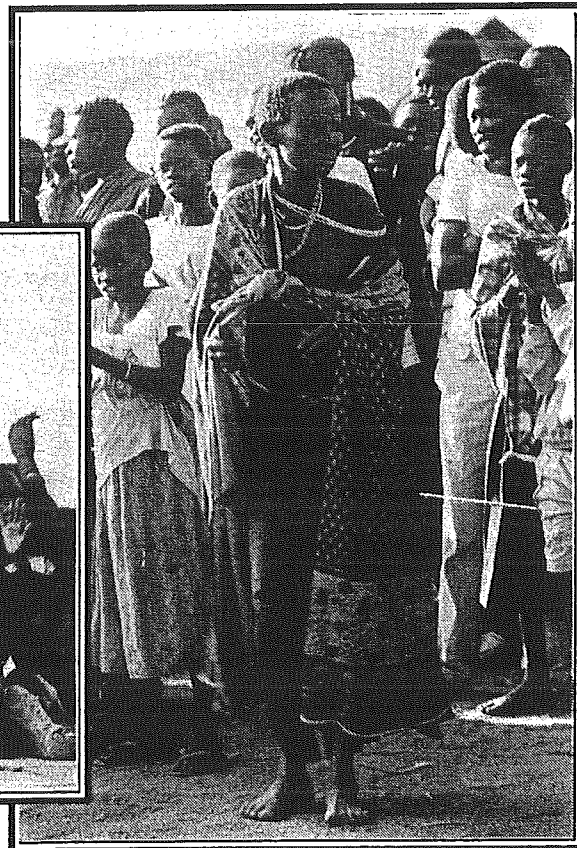
During the time while they were there, Jon kept thinking of the words "He has put eternity in their hearts," taken from Ecclesiastes 3:11. He tried to find out all he could about these

people and their religious practices, in order to know how to present the Gospel in a way that they could understand and relate to. Jon was fascinated to discover that these people traced back their religious roots and heritage many hundreds of years to their Ethiopian ancestors. When these people prayed, they even bowed toward Ethiopia to recall where their customs and traditions originated from.

Amazingly, many of these practices were definitely passed down from the Jewish religion centuries ago (*remember the Jewish Ethiopian Eunuch from Acts 8?*) Some of these religious traditions included: 1) believing that there is only one

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(Photo Above: Many Karamojong People Respond to the Gospel of Jesus.)
(Photo Right: Karamojong Woman from the Kotido Harvest Crusade)



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God who created the earth (whom the Karamojong people call "Akuuj;" 2) practicing animal sacrifice, including shedding the blood of a lamb and then placing the blood on their forehead, thumbs and large toes, and finally roasting and eating the lamb; 3) confessing the sins of an individual onto a "scape goat" which is then released outside the village and driven into the wilderness; and 4) tithing ten percent of their crops to God.

HUNDREDS RESPOND

The people listened attentively as Jon shared about how God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross as the final sacrifice for man's sin. Between three and four thousand people were in attendance at the crusades each night, and by the fifth and final night, approximately 500 Karamojong people had made public decisions to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior -- including several of the tribe's notorious warriors.

As a result of the crusade, the local Christian church was filled to overflowing with new believers. In addition, a second church (pastored by another national) was firmly established to help meet the needs of the new Christians in this area. Both of these national pastors were greatly encouraged at what the Lord had done.

CHALLENGES IN THEIR NEW LIFE

Please continue to keep the needs of this Karamojong tribe in your prayers. These believers and newly established churches face many challenges in their new life with Jesus. Although we did not go to preach against their culture and



traditions, the Gospel in itself will bring changes. Many new Christians know that they must stop drinking blood, stop killing for cattle, and begin wearing some type of clothing. For many, these changes will be difficult. However, these people were so happy to receive the Good News of Jesus Christ, and to know that their sins could be forgiven. What an honor to proclaim the Gospel to people who had never yet heard this news.

Thank you so much for your support and prayers which helped to make this outreach possible! We appreciate your partnership with us!

In His Harvest,

Jon & Ann Dunagan



(Photo Above: Jon with several notorious Karamojong warriors who had received Christ at the crusade. Man with glasses was Jon's interpreter -- and a local Karamojong pastor)

(Photo Left: Line of Karamojong girls listen to the Gospel in Kofido, Uganda. Feb. 1995)

Harvest Ministry is a Christian evangelistic outreach of Jon & Ann Dunagan. Our sole purpose is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Since 1988, Harvest Ministry has reached out to the lost on over sixty international outreaches on five continents. In addition to evangelism crusades (primarily in isolated "secondary cities"), a major outreach of Harvest Ministry is a sponsorship program called "N.E.T.S." (standing for "National Evangelism Team Support") whereby qualified national ministers are supported full time around the world. For more information about the N.E.T.S. program or Harvest Ministry, please write or call.

"For the harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few." (Matthew 9:37)