

The Core Missionary Task — Six Components

We believe that a faithful reading of Scripture applied to practical missiology denotes six basic components that we've labeled the core missionary task. The missionary task is our roadmap. It's the path on which mission is accomplished. It's what guides our mission efforts.



SIX CORE COMPONENTS OF THE MISSIONARY TASK

- Entry** Entry is the component of the missionary task that considers how to access people who need to hear the gospel. This part of the task includes four primary elements: research, presence, identity, and communication ability. Strategies for entry are often prayerfully crafted with a view toward potential progress in each of the other missionary task components. Entry plans are often evaluated by their potential to impact the other components of the missionary task with a view toward exiting to partnership.
- Evangelism** Evangelism is the responsibility of every follower of Jesus. Evangelism is an element in the job description of every IMB missionary. Even in areas where the focus of the work is on leadership training, and local believers and churches are actively sharing the gospel, IMB missionaries must engage in evangelism as a model of what is expected of every believer.
- Discipleship** The central command of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) is to make disciples. Discipleship involves the intentional transformation of the heart, mind, affections, will, relationships, and purpose, without pitting the importance of one against another. Essential tools for discipling new believers include the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the people of God.
- Healthy Church Formation** A church is a group of baptized believers in Jesus Christ who are committed to be the body of Christ to one another and who meet regularly to carry out the functions of a biblical church. IMB is committed to planting healthy churches that multiply. IMB plants churches that align with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Leadership Development	The New Testament specifically identifies two offices of church leadership: pastors/elders/overseers and deacons. As IMB personnel develop leaders in local churches, they prioritize training pastors/elders/overseers.
Exit to Partnership	IMB's goal is to complete the missionary task in each people group or place and then to exit to partnership with the new churches from that place or people in the ongoing task of global evangelism. We begin our work with this end in mind, and then regularly evaluate progress toward this end.

ENTRY

Unengaged	A people group is unengaged when there is no church planting strategy consistent with evangelical faith and practice underway. This means that a people group might remain unengaged even when it has been adopted, is the object of focused prayer, or is part of an advocacy strategy.
Unreached	An Unreached People Group (UPG) is one in which less than 2% of its population are evangelical Christians.
Great Commission Christian Partners	A Great Commission Christian (GCC) is a term used to designate partners, both international and domestic, that work for the fulfillment of the Great Commission and share evangelical alignment.
People Group	A people group is the largest group through which the gospel flows naturally, and churches can form without encountering significant barriers of understanding and acceptance. People groups can evolve over time. One or more of the following factors may define or assist in the identification of a particular people group: ethnicity, language, culture, religion, citizenship, geography, caste, clan, tribe, self-identity.

EVANGELISM

Gospel Witness	Gospel witness is defined as an opportunity to share some portion of the gospel through verbal witness. Witnesses engage individuals in conversation about the claims of Christ, share testimonies, or explain biblical truth so the hearers have a better or more complete understanding of God.
Opportunity to Respond	During or following a gospel witness, individuals are asked to respond to the claims of Christ, a personal testimony, or an explanation of biblical truth. People are explicitly asked to accept Christ and to allow those witnessing to share more about Christ.
Seekers	Seekers are individuals who, after hearing a gospel witness and having an opportunity to respond, return to ask more and deeper questions regarding the claims of Christ and spiritual matters.
New Believers	New believers are individuals who have recently accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and continue to seek after Christ.

Baptisms Baptisms represent the number of individuals who have come to faith in Christ and were baptized by immersion as an act of obedience and testimony to the Lord.

DISCIPLESHIP

Ongoing Bible Study Participants Ongoing Bible study participants represent the number of individuals engaged in the study of God's Word that leads believers through basic, essential Christian beliefs, doctrines, and personal application. These Bible studies may be conducted in groups, home Bible studies, churches, cell groups, and Bible storying groups.

Being Personally Mentored This statistic represents the number of individuals being personally mentored. Personal mentoring includes activities, Bible studies, trainings, or discipleship events where IMB personnel or their partners mentor potential or growing leaders.

HEALTHY CHURCH FORMATION

Group A group is a gathering of people led by someone who intends for them to become a church according to the Baptist Faith and Message definition of church. These groups represent a group of believers and non-believers meeting together in the early formation stage of church.

Church A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. (For further definition, please see the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 or IMB's Foundations document.)

Generation Generation is a term used to explain the interval between a parent church and other churches planted through the members and leaders of the parent and subsequent multiplying churches. Healthy churches plant churches that plant churches and so on. A church planting movement is typically identified when there is sustained church planting reproduction into the 4th generation and beyond. IMB's reported 3rd generation church numbers include all 3rd generation and beyond churches in a single category, which may sometimes be a very large number.

Baptized Believers Meeting A baptized believers meeting represents the total number of individuals who have come to faith in Christ, were baptized by immersion as an act of obedience and testimony to the Lord, and who are now meeting together in groups or churches.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Pastoral Training Pastoral training equips local church or group leaders to carry out the functions of a church in a local setting. It is indigenous people group ministry centric and provides practical pastoral teaching and equipping.

Church Planting Training	Church planting training equips individuals with necessary skills to facilitate church formation and takes various forms depending on the local situation. Church planting training focuses on major elements of the missionary task (Entry, Evangelism, Discipleship, Healthy Church Formation, Leadership Development, and Exit to Partnership).
Advanced Theological Training	Advanced theological training equips individuals to serve inside, outside and beyond the local church ministry. Advanced theological education can be in seminaries or through other culturally relevant forms. While practical, it is often more abstract and conceptual in design than pastoral training.
Other Training	Other trainings equip church or group leadership and believers to be more effective in their Christian life. It includes training for service, tools for evangelism, and other elements of biblical teaching not covered through pastoral, church planting or advanced theological trainings.

EXIT TO PARTNERSHIP

Globalization	Globalization is the intentional work with national partners to help them embrace their role in the Great Commission, seeking to encourage and expand their capacity to send and receive national partner missionaries. All over the world, national Baptists and other followers of Jesus are recognizing that they are no longer a mission field, but a potential mission force to take the gospel where it has not been received from Western missionaries. Many who have been nurtured and discipled by IMB missionaries are now asking IMB for training help to send their own missionaries to the nations.
Global Missionary Partner	A global missionary partner (GMP) is a national partner follower of Jesus, who is called by God to be a cross-cultural missionary, assessed and sent by their local church and sending entity, affirmed by IMB field personnel, and working in cooperation with an IMB field team.
Self-sustaining Ownership	Self-sustaining ownership is a term used when a people group has baptized believers and churches sufficiently discipled to take indigenous responsibility for their role in the fulfillment of the Great Commission through the making of disciples of all nations and the planting of healthy multiplying churches. It is a key indicator in the move toward exit to partnership.

A NOTE ABOUT STATISTICAL REPORTING

IMB reporting statistics are based upon ministry faithfulness and the resulting impact from the Lord in six core components of the missionary task. Any statistical numbers reported represent work done by IMB personnel and their baptistic partners, as reported by IMB field leaders. Care in reporting has been taken to provide accurate numbers that represent IMB's commitment, like the Apostle Paul, to not report upon work done outside of the sphere apportioned to us by the Lord (2 Cor. 10:12-18). This means that statistics may change from year to year due to changes in reporting relationships with partners. Changes in statistical reporting may or may not reflect actual progress or regress in the missionary task.